



Big Society and Australia

How the UK Government is dismantling the state and what it means for Australia

Dr James Whelan
Public Service Research Director

with Christopher Stone, Miriam Lyons, Natalie-Niamh Wright,
Anna Long, John Ryall, Greta Whyte and Rob Harding-Smith.

May 2012

About the author

Dr James Whelan is the Research Director for the Public Service Research Program at the Centre for Policy Development. Dr Whelan's research history includes lecturing and leading social science research programs with several universities and research institutions on topics including deliberative governance, environmental politics, popular education and social movements. He has published widely and contributed to national and international conferences. James has also been a campaigner and strategist with social and environmental justice organisations and networks.

Acknowledgments

This publication was funded by the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU), the Becher Foundation and Slater & Gordon to contribute to the debate on public sector reform in Australia. The analysis and conclusions of this report are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the views of its funders. CPD would like to thank the Public Service Program's funders for making this publication possible.

This report was subject to an informal peer review process. Thanks to Miriam Lyons, Martin Stewart-Weeks, Eric Sidoti, Tessa Boyd-Caine and Nick Bastow for their helpful feedback. All conclusions and any errors that remain are the author's own.

Our 'Big Society' research was a team effort, with significant input from CPD program interns Natalie-Niamh Wright, Anna Long, John Ryall, Greta Whyte and Rob Harding-Smith. The intern team conducted a considerable amount of the primary research and contributed to our evolving analysis about 'Big Society' over weekly policy pow-wows fuelled by spicy Chinese pancakes. Special thanks also to CPD researcher Christopher Stone for the section on outsourcing in Australia and case studies of Serco, employment services and ABC Learning. Miriam Lyons took a lead with the 'Good Society' section and boosted our intellectual grunt. Fiona Katauskas created the excellent cartoons and Antoinette Abboud helped us unpack 'Big Society' framing.

About the CPD

The Centre for Policy Development is a progressive think tank dedicated to seeking out creative, viable ideas and innovative research to inject into Australia's policy debates. Find out more at <http://cpd.org.au>

About the public service research program

Attempts to ensure that core public services can meet the needs of a changing society over the long term are being held back by our flawed policy processes. We need to move from top-down, short-term ad hoc reforms to long-term, systemic renewal based on consistent principles, widespread participation and a realistic understanding of how we live now. CPD's public service research program combines big-picture thinking on the role of government in the 21st Century with practical research on options for public sector reform.

All CPD papers are released under a Creative Commons license. Extracts, summaries or the whole paper may be reproduced provided the author, the title and CPD are attributed, with a link to our website at <http://cpd.org.au>. For more details on the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia licence that applies to this paper, see <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/>

Be part of our ongoing public sector discussion on Twitter #ozbigsociety and #ozpublicservice

Contents

Main Points	5
1: Declaring war on the public sector	7
Introduction	7
Research methodology	8
‘Big Society’ ideas and their origins	10
‘Big Society’ doublespeak	13
‘Big Society’ apparatus in action	15
Reef, fish and sharks	18
‘Big Society’ in Australia	19
2. ‘Big Society’, volunteerism and philanthropy	23
Volunteerism: Helping ourselves by ourselves	23
Encouraging volunteerism and removing obstacles	27
Volunteerism: A bottomless well?	28
When is a volunteer not a volunteer?	30
Philanthropy and social investment	33
3. Outsourcing to community sector organisations	37
‘Big Society’ impacts on the not-for-profit sector	38
<i>Immediate funding cuts</i>	39
<i>Diminished services</i>	40
<i>Working conditions in the not-for profit sector</i>	42
<i>Silencing dissent: Reconciling advocacy and grant dependency</i>	43
<i>Big fish, small fish</i>	44
4. Commissioning corporations: Diversity or cartels?	47
Any Willing Provider	48
Commissioning corporations in the UK	51
Outsourcing to corporations in Australia	53
<i>Service Delivery</i>	54
<i>Law making, rule making and policy development</i>	55
<i>Tax collection and managing government finance</i>	55
<i>Monitoring and enforcing laws and regulations</i>	56
<i>The Australian Government’s position on outsourcing to corporations</i>	56
Outsourcing Australia’s employment services	57
Serco: A big fish growing bigger	59
<i>Why Serco?</i>	59
<i>Social justice and human rights</i>	60
<i>Value for money</i>	60
<i>Diversity</i>	61
<i>Accountability and transparency</i>	61
ABC Learning Centres: The perils of small government	62

5. 'Big Society' and social justice: 'Capitalism with a conscience'?	65
Big Society's social justice promise	65
Measuring social justice in the UK and Australia	66
Doubts and concerns	67
Australia's commitment to a 'safety net'	68
Reality bites	70
6. Unpacking spin from substance	73
Elements of the 'Big Society' frame	75
<i>'Broken' Society</i>	76
Neutralising opposition; Staking out the middle ground	77
<i>Oxymorons and lies</i>	78
7. 'Big Society' or 'Good Society'?	83
Principles and policies for a good society	86
<i>Principle: Recognise and harness the inherent strengths of all three sectors</i>	86
<i>Principle: Some work is best done by government</i>	87
<i>Principle: Some work is best done by the community and private sectors</i>	88
<i>Principle: A strong state does not preclude strong private and community sectors</i>	89
<i>Principle: Democracy requires a strong state</i>	89
<i>Principle: A strong state equips societies for tough and changing times</i>	90
<i>Principle: Value volunteerism and philanthropy but don't expect them to 'fill the gap'</i>	90
8. Responding to 'Big Society'	91
Resistance and protest in the UK	91
Energising a public sector debate in Australia	93
<i>Convergence of the public sector policies of both major political parties</i>	94
<i>Complacency and the lack of a perceived threat</i>	97
<i>Public sector campaigns and debates tend to be issue-specific</i>	98
<i>Australia's mainstream media ignores broader public sector debates</i>	99
Appendix: 'Big Society' glossary	100
References	101

List of tables

Table 1	Methods employed for 'Big Society' research	8
Table 2	Interviewees	9
Table 3	'Big Society' rhetoric and impacts	14
Table 4	Pros and cons associated with 'mutuals'	50
Table 5	Percentage of staff holding the following opinions of centre care	63
Table 6	CPD's vision of the 'Good Society'	84

List of figures

Figure 1	Status quo: three sectors	12
Figure 2	'Big Society' reconfiguration	12
Figure 3	'Big Society' timeline 2010-2012	16
Figure 4	Proportion of the Australian population participating in volunteerism	25
Figure 5	Number of Australian citizens participating in volunteer activity	25
Figure 6	Hours of work generated by volunteer activity in Australia	25
Figure 7	Australia's 2011 'World Giving Index'	34
Figure 8	Senior public sector managers' views toward privatisation	51
Figure 9	Four dimensions of public service work	54
Figure 10	Comparison of 2008 public spending as a proportion of GDP	80
Figure 11	Taxation levels for a worker with an average wage (single, no children)	81
Figure 12	Total tax burden as a percentage of GDP	81
Figure 13	Public opinion toward 'Big Society' July 2010 – February 2011	93

Main points

It is just over two years since David Cameron was elected as British Prime Minister. Since his election, Cameron has implemented a range of policy changes that are considered to have ‘redefined the role of the state’ and, correspondingly, the roles of the private and community sectors. These ‘Big Society’ changes were first articulated by Phillip Blond, director of UK think tank ResPublica in his 2010 book ‘Red Tory’. Blond drew on ideas, assumptions, values and policies that have previously been associated with the ‘Third Way’, including a commitment to a smaller state and an expanded role for the community sector.

Cameron drew on Blond’s ideas in the context of major cuts to public spending, and many critics view ‘Big Society’ as a new way of presenting a longstanding neoliberal preference for shrinking government through budget cuts, privatisation and outsourcing. The UK’s ‘Big Society’ changes have certainly enabled an expanded role for corporations in the provision of public services. By commissioning services to ‘any willing provider’ the UK Government has contracted corporations to play a dominant role in delivering a wide range of services that were previously administered by public servants or community groups. Some ‘Big Society’ champions espouse ‘private sector primacy’ – the belief that businesses are intrinsically more effective and efficient than public sector organisations. Cameron and other Ministers associated with the ‘Big Society’ changes have promoted the idea of funding a more diverse range of service providers including new or hybrid forms of service delivery organisations such as mutuals, spin-outs and cooperatives. In reality, existing corporations have dominated the outsourcing process. Despite Cameron’s enthusiasm for philanthropy and social investment, these alternative revenue streams have failed to fill the gap left by the withdrawal of government.

Impacts on diversity of providers

- » Corporations and the largest charities have dominated the commissioning process: 35 of 40 Work Programme (employment agency) contracts were awarded to corporations, dominated by large corporations such as Deloitte, A4e and Serco.

Cameron, like Blond, has argued that citizens and community groups can reduce their dependence on the state by exercising responsibility and self-direction. His ‘Big Society’ changes, however, have been criticised by many community leaders for their negative impacts on the voluntary sector. In the UK, as in Australia, volunteers already play a major role in the lives of their communities. Cameron’s changes assume that community members are willing to commit much more time and energy to providing services previously delivered by public servants: an assumption that is not supported by surveys and potentially compounds existing inequalities.

‘Big Society’, volunteerism and the community sector

- » About 40% of citizens in both countries volunteer each year. Australia is ranked third on the World Giving Index which amalgamates three ‘giving’ behaviours: helping a stranger, volunteering time and giving money (we were number one in 2010).
- » Australia’s not-for-profit sector organisations employ 900,000 people and generate approximately \$43 billion per annum, 4 per cent of Australia’s GDP.
- » Cameron’s ‘Big Society’ changes include a £5 billion funding cut for the UK’s community sector (2012-2014).
- » 2,000 UK charities experienced funding cuts of £110 million in 2011.
- » During 2010-11, the number of people employed in the UK’s community sector fell by 70,000 (9 per cent of its workforce).

The UK's 'Big Society' appeals to widely-held values about citizen empowerment, co-production, diversity and community autonomy while implementing changes that have transferred public wealth to corporations, disempowered non-government organisations and weakened the public sector. These changes have coincided with two national budgets that have slashed public sector funding, resulting in massively reduced local government budgets and community sector funding and the retrenchment of hundreds of thousands of public servants. 'Big Society' has generated widespread criticism and sparked a social movement that upholds some of its values – such as the support for a strong and diverse community sector, and the need for public services to be responsive and accountable to their users – while rejecting Cameron's policies and programs.

'Big Society' budget cuts

- » Cameron's first budget included an £81 billion cut in public spending over four years including an average 19 per cent budget cut to government agencies, 60 per cent cut to the budget for new public housing and £7 billion cut to the welfare budget.
- » The UK's public service is expected to shrink by up to 710,000 public servants over six years.
- » Local government budgets were cut by more than a quarter in 2010-11 resulting in staff cuts of 10-20 per cent and widespread cuts to programs.
- » During 2010-11, public sector employment fell by 4.3 per cent. Private sector employment increased by 1.5 per cent.

In Australia, 'Big Society' ideas are generating interest and support amongst conservative think tanks and politicians. During Phillip Blond's Australian visit in mid-2011, he was introduced as a "friend of Australia" by Tony Abbott to address a forum convened by the Liberal Party's think tank, the Menzies Research Institute. During his visit, Blond briefed senior Liberals and local government officials. Elements of Cameron's agenda have been endorsed by the Centre for Civil Society, the Centre for Social Impact, the Sydney Institute and by the Institute of Public Affairs whose director, John Roskam, urged Tony Abbott to adopt the 'Big Society' program.

This report presents a comprehensive analysis of the UK's 'Big Society' policies and programs and examines their potential impact if adopted and implemented in Australia. It is intended to contribute to an informed debate about the merits of 'small government' ideologies and policies that often receive less than critical media and political commentary here.

1: Declaring war on the public sector

“ *Bush declared war on terror, Blair declared war on crime and it's like Cameron has declared war on the public sector.*

Police Constable Clive Chamberlain¹

Introduction

The United Kingdom is in the throes of a historic reconfiguration of public, private and community sectors: the “biggest shakeup of what the state provides in half a century.”² This report traces the rise of ‘Big Society’, a set of government policies and programs championed by UK think tank ResPublica and its director Phillip Blond, and examines the significance of these changes and their potential impact in Australia.

David Cameron was elected British Prime Minister in May 2010. Having formed government Cameron released his ‘Big Society’ manifesto, which promised to “redefine the role of the state as a provider of public services.”³ Communicated as a strategy to empower communities, encourage a diversity of service providers, and foster volunteerism and mutualism, the ‘Big Society’ changes have been accompanied by an £81 billion reduction in public spending, including massive local government cuts, reducing the number of government employees by up to 710,000 over six years and effectively dismantling the National Health System. These changes have galvanised an energetic national debate about the role of the state in British society. By contrast, the size, role and function of government receive much less critical debate in Australia. Our research shows that there are compelling reasons to invigorate this debate. Some elements of ‘Big Society’ have been present at both the state and federal levels of government in Australia for many years. From the impact of the much more rapid and systematic implementation of this approach in the UK, we can learn a great deal about the implications of similar trends in Australia.

This report coincides with a rising interest in small government here in Australia. Opposition Leader Tony Abbott and Shadow Treasurer Joe Hockey have both championed policies that would significantly diminish the role of the public sector. Some policies that bear a resemblance to ‘Big Society’ have recently been introduced in Western Australia⁴ and others are believed to have been recommended by a recent Victorian audit commission report.⁵ It is timely to examine how one expression of ‘small government’ is being implemented in a nation very similar to our own.

Research methodology

This multi-method study utilised qualitative and quantitative research methods as summarised in Tables 1 and 2 (below).

Table 1: Methods employed for ‘Big Society’ research

Literature review	Our analysis of ‘Big Society’ is informed by a synthesis of public policy documents published in the United Kingdom by the British Government and the corresponding commentary and analysis of non-government organizations.
Semi-structured interviews	Interviews were conducted face-to-face or by telephone. Throughout this report, verbatim quotations from these interviews are identified with the symbol □.
Quantitative analysis	Analysis of volunteer data and other indicators of community sector service provision from sources including reports published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and Productivity Commission.
Media monitoring and analysis	<p>CPD began monitoring ‘Big Society’ in early 2011. Our analysis of public sector issues identified the changes occurring in the United Kingdom as the most controversial public sector intervention. During the last year, we have collected and analysed more than 400 articles from media outlets including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » UK print media: <i>The Guardian; The Telegraph; The Mirror; New Statesman; The Independent; Leicestershire Mercury; The Morning Star</i> » Australian print media: <i>The Sydney Morning Herald; The Australian; The Age; The Canberra Times</i> » International print media: <i>Wall Street Journal; The Monthly; New Yorker; Huffington Post; The Globe and Mail; The Vancouver Sun</i> » Journals: <i>The Political Quarterly; Dissent; Cosmopolitan Civil Societies; Grantham Journal</i> » Online media and electronic newsletters: <i>ABC; BBC; Online Opinion; Politics First; Public Finance; Financial News; Rabble; EGov Monitor; Third Sector; The Financial Times; Left Foot Forward; Insight Public Affairs; Grist; Review; Recruiter</i>
Political commentary	A comprehensive analysis of commentary by Australia politicians: CPD researchers analysed the Hansard Parliamentary record from 2007-12 and political commentary reported by the mainstream Australian media during 2011-12.

The study was informed by interviews with twelve prominent public sector commentators, leaders in the not-for-profit sector and public administration researchers including five professors of public administration. These interviewees included people whose positions on ‘Big Society’ were understood to be strongly supportive and others who were expected to be strongly opposed to these changes. Verbatim quotations from these interviews are included in this report to illustrate their range of perspectives, and not to suggest that their views are either authoritative or uncontested. Quotes from interviews should not be assumed to represent the views of the Centre for Policy Development, and interviewees should not be assumed to agree with the conclusions reached in this report.

Table 2: Interviewees

Interviewee	Organisation and position
Dr Tessa Boyd-Caine	Australian Council of Social Service (Deputy CEO)
Professor Geoff Gallop	University of Sydney (Professor of Public Policy) Former Premier of Western Australia
Vern Hughes	Centre for Civil Society (Director)
Ged Kearney	Australian Council of Trade Unions (President)
Professor Richard Mulgan	Australian National University (Professor Emeritus, Crawford School of Economics and Government) Author: <i>Holding Power to Account. Accountability in Modern Democracies</i> , Palgrave Macmillan 2003.
Rev. Elenie Poulos	Uniting Justice Australia (National Director)
Professor Peter Shergold	University of New South Wales, Centre for Social Impact Australia’s Public Service Commissioner (1995-98) Secretary, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (2003-08)
Martin Stewart-Weeks	Institute of Public Administration Australia (Policy Submissions Subcommittee) Australian Social Innovation Exchange (Chair) CISCO (Senior Director, Public Sector) Martin contributed in a personal capacity.
Cath Smith	Victorian Council of Social Service (CEO)
Eric Sidoti	Whitlam Institute (Director)
Professor Paul Smyth	University of Melbourne (Professor of Public Policy) Brotherhood of Saint Laurence (Director of Research)
Professor Helen Sullivan	The University of Melbourne (Director, Centre for Public Policy)

The scope and methodology of this study was determined by available time and other resources. These constraints mean that this report does not purport to provide a comprehensive analysis of the political theories that shape 'Big Society'. In particular it does not cover the theological elements of the 'Big Society' ideology or the religious orientations of its advocates and detractors. Each of these topics warrant investigation in their own right. Issues that emerged during this study such as the accountability and transparency of public services and the merits of 'coproduced services' (the idea of delivering public services in collaboration with their users)⁶ warrant further in-depth exploration in their own right, but were considered beyond the scope of this report..

'Big Society' ideas and their origins

'Big Society' is generally attributed to Phillip Blond, a theologian, lecturer and founder-director of the conservative UK think tank ResPublica. Blond was an advisor to David Cameron before the 2010 election and published his prescriptions for downsizing the state in his book *Red Tory: How the left and right have broken Britain and how we can fix it.*⁷ There are other explanations for where 'Big Society' originated. Some attribute the ideas and their branding to Steve Hilton⁸ who was another of Cameron's strategic advisers.⁹

The ideology underlying 'Big Society' echoes former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's relentless rejection of the welfare state. Like Thatcher, Blond's ideas are a reaction to what he calls 'passive welfare dependence'. 'Big Society' appeals to 'strict parent' rhetoric¹⁰ and asserts that citizens have a "moral obligation to undertake voluntary activity in the community and to take responsibility for their own individual welfare needs."¹¹

“ You know, there is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women, and there are families. And no government can do anything except through people, and people must look to themselves first.¹²

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, 1987

Unlike Thatcher, who remained committed to a strong state in order to enforce market mechanisms, Cameron has advocated a transfer of risk and responsibility to citizens, a stance that has been described as anti-state.¹³ In this sense, Cameron's philosophy is more in line with the neoliberal idea of 'private sector primacy', which CPD fellow Ian McAuley summarises as the conviction that "the private sector is always to be preferred to government, regardless of evidence or argument."¹⁴ In Australia, private sector primacy is expressed by commentators such as Gary Sturgess who has argued that,

The public generally believes that the private sector is more efficient than the public sector. By and large, they don't need to be convinced that - where performance can be measured - the private sector delivers better outcomes than government, particularly when it is exposed to competition.¹⁵

Sturgess was Cabinet Secretary in Premier Nick Greiner's New South Wales government and directed the Serco Institute from 2003-2011. His summary of community attitudes contradicts many of the studies of community attitudes. CPD's recent 'State of the Service' report¹⁶ synthesised attitudinal studies conducted in Australia during the last twenty years and revealed a strong preference for public sector service delivery, enduring opposition to privatisation and a higher level of confidence in public institutions than in major companies.

From this premise that the public sector is inherently ineffective and inefficient, 'Big Society' asserts that societies should rely instead on the community sector. Blond and other 'Big Society' champions invoke the concept of the 'little platoon', which was first described in 1790 by Edmund Burke, the 'father of modern conservatism'. 'Platoons' (an oddly militarist expression) of community members, Burke argued, are the "cornerstone of loyalty to nation and humankind" and serve to organise self-directing communities. Community involvement in directing and controlling local services also formed part of George Bush's "compassionate conservatism" speeches during the 2000 US Presidential campaign. Like Blond, Cameron and Thatcher, Bush advocated "competition by private groups for the provision of public services" and sought to "usher in the responsibility era."¹⁷

The idiosyncratic blend of values woven to craft 'Big Society' also resonates with the 'Third Way', a doctrine that embraces the value of community, a commitment to equality of opportunity, an emphasis on responsibility and a belief in accountability.¹⁸ Third Way politics have been embraced by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, US President Bill Clinton, German Chancellor Gerhart Schröder and former Labor opposition leader Mark Latham.¹⁹ Like Third Way, 'Big Society' envisages a smaller state.

The relationship between the public, community and corporate sectors is depicted in simplified form in the two following figures. The difference between the first and second figures is intended to signify 'Big Society' changes – a contraction of the state (or public sector) and corresponding expansion of the size, scope and resourcing of the private (or corporate) and community sector. The most substantial difference, at least in theory, between 'Big Society' and the longstanding neoliberal approach to small government is the idea that the community sector should take over at least as many of the former functions of government as the private sector. This stated difference increased its appeal to several community sector advocates, although its appeal waned for many²⁰ once it became clear that it would be accompanied by major community sector funding cuts and would be implemented in a way that continued to advantage large corporations over small community organisations.

In Chapter 7, we suggest an alternative way of thinking about the relationship between sectors. Rather than assuming that the corporate and community sectors will always perform better than the public sector and should therefore grow at its expense, we propose an approach that recognizes the different and complementary benefits provided by each sector, ensuring that they are each strong enough to play to their strengths.

Figure 1: Status quo: three sectors

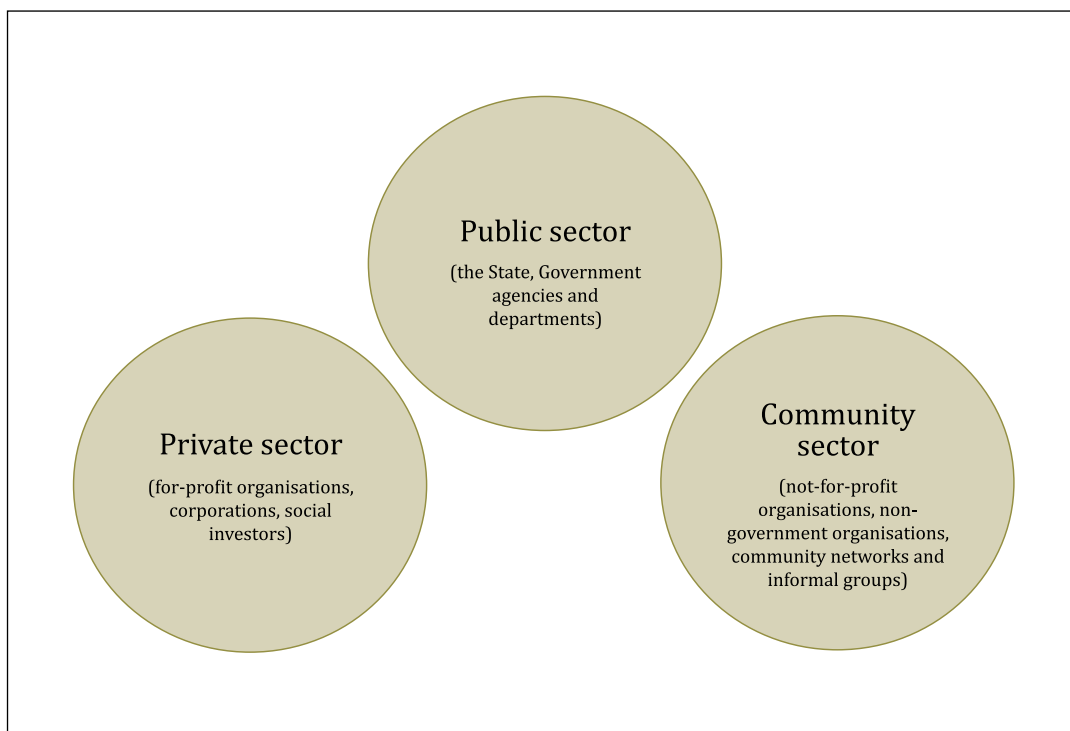
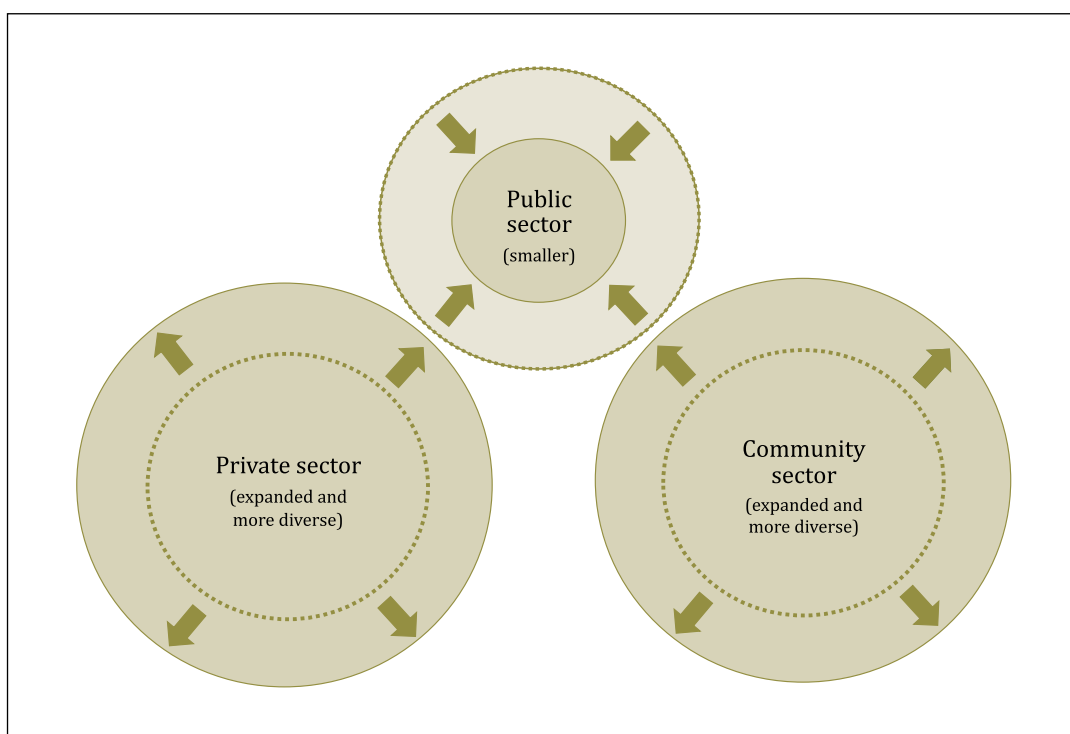


Figure 2: 'Big Society' reconfiguration



‘Big Society’ doublespeak

The tensions and contradictions of ‘Big Society’ have energised a public and political debate. The dynamic relationship between the public, community and corporate sectors as providers of community services is infrequently debated in Australian television and print media news. In contrast, ‘Big Society’ and the issues it raises are the subject of sustained, detailed and often heated debate in the UK. This has meant that the conversation about the relationship between sectors is no longer restricted to obscure journals, columns and blogs, as it often is in Australia. A Google search for ‘Big Society’ returns approximately 50 million results (32,000 results from Google News), and it frequently dominates the mainstream media in the UK.

It is a highly polarised debate, characterised by elaborate public relations strategies, emotive appeals and a constant tension between those ideals and their implementation. ‘Big Society’ framing and its persuasive and misleading language is explored in Chapter 6 of this report.

‘Big Society’ has a carefully crafted rhetorical foundation. Few people would refute the assertion that society is a good thing. Who wouldn’t want a bigger one? Beneath this simple logic, the ‘Big Society’ mantra promises outcomes that are embraced widely and deeply: decentralising power from government and dispersing it more widely to communities and individuals; allowing citizens more control over their lives; encouraging cooperation and initiative; inclusive governance and co-production (collaboration between providers and users in service design or delivery). ‘Big Society’ critics rarely question these aims. In fact, many support them wholeheartedly. But the impacts of many ‘Big Society’ programs have contradicted and undermined these ideals. This stark contrast is captured in the table below.

Table 3: ‘Big Society’ rhetoric and impacts

Rhetoric	Impacts
Provide “more of what you want” (i.e. services). ²¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » £81 billion cut in public spending over four years including an average 19 per cent budget cut to government agencies, 60 per cent cut to the budget for new public housing and £7 billion cut to the welfare budget.²² » 710,000 public sector jobs to go over six years.²³ » Health care provisioning broken up and outsourced in a way that has been described as ‘dismantling’ the National Health Service.²⁴
Enable a diversity of service providers including new entrants to reduce reliance on government services and increase the voluntary sector’s involvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Corporations and the largest charities have dominated the commissioning process: 35 of 40 Work Programme (employment agency) contracts were awarded to corporations, dominated by large corporations such as Deloitte, A4e and Serco.²⁵
Foster localism; more freedom and local control.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Local government budgets were cut by more than a quarter in 2010-11 resulting in widespread cuts to programs and staffing of 10-20 per cent and flow-on impacts on volunteer support and coordination.
Support community initiatives: “The Big Society bank that can lend money and grant money to organizations... who want to expand and grow and do... brilliant things.” ²⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Community sector funding cuts of between £3-5 billion are expected between 2012 and 2014²⁷ » 2,000 charities experienced funding cuts of £110 million in 2011.²⁸
Encourage volunteerism and a more ‘socially active’ Britain: citizens have “a moral obligation to undertake voluntary activities” and to “do their “duty” by running services themselves.” ²⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » National Citizen Service for thousands of teenagers in 2012, increasing to 90,000 by 2014. When it was initially proposed, this program was to have been compulsory and involved the military. Employment programs have compelled some welfare recipients to discontinue their volunteerism.
Ensure accountability through a ‘payment on results’ approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Southern Cross, a corporate-run chain of aged care facilities, received public funding, realised a profit of £600 million then collapsed, leaving 30,000 people at risk. » The chair of A4e, a for-profit employment services provider, paid herself over £8 million in dividends in 2011, whilst the company was accused of failing to meet targets. A fraud inquiry was launched into the company in February 2012³⁰
Leverage philanthropy and social investment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » In 2010, only 10 organisations invested ‘meaningful injections’ of capital into the existing ‘social investment market’; just 6 contributed 90 per cent of the total £165 million, compared to the much larger footprint of the community sector which had an income of over £35 billion in 2007.

‘Big Society’ apparatus in action

Critics have described the ‘Big Society’ as a vague grab bag of ideas, and surveys^{31,32} have confirmed that few community members understand the term, its rationale and its implications. Regardless of how well people understand it, ‘Big Society’ has been implemented by the Cameron Government with a sense of purpose, at a break-neck pace and at an unprecedented scale. Cameron was quick to establish the Office of Civil Society and an annual Social Action Day, release his ‘Open Public Services’ White Paper and invite the first round of tenders for outsourced service provision (‘commissioning’), review the legislation that governs charities and local communities as service providers, create the ‘Communities First’ fund and Big Society Bank to fund local initiatives and launch a National Citizen Service volunteering program for tens of thousands of 16 year olds.³³ The timeline on the following page presents a summarised sequence of ‘Big Society’ initiatives.

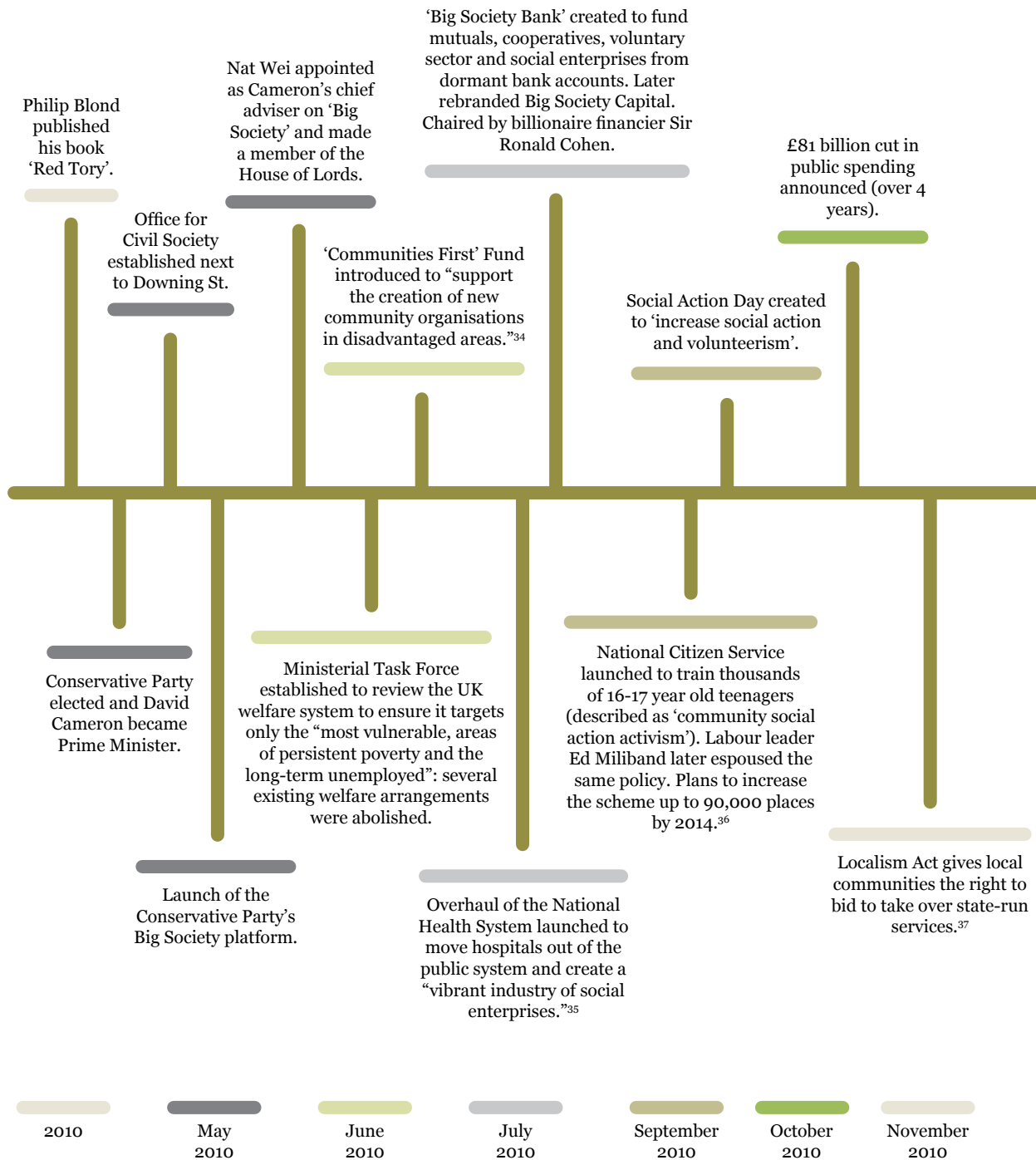
Although this timeline gives the impression of a coherent and planned program, some observers point out that ‘Big Society’ has not been perceived or experienced that way in the UK. On the contrary, according to Professor Helen Sullivan, Cameron’s ideas and policies have been viewed in the UK as disjointed and at times contradictory.

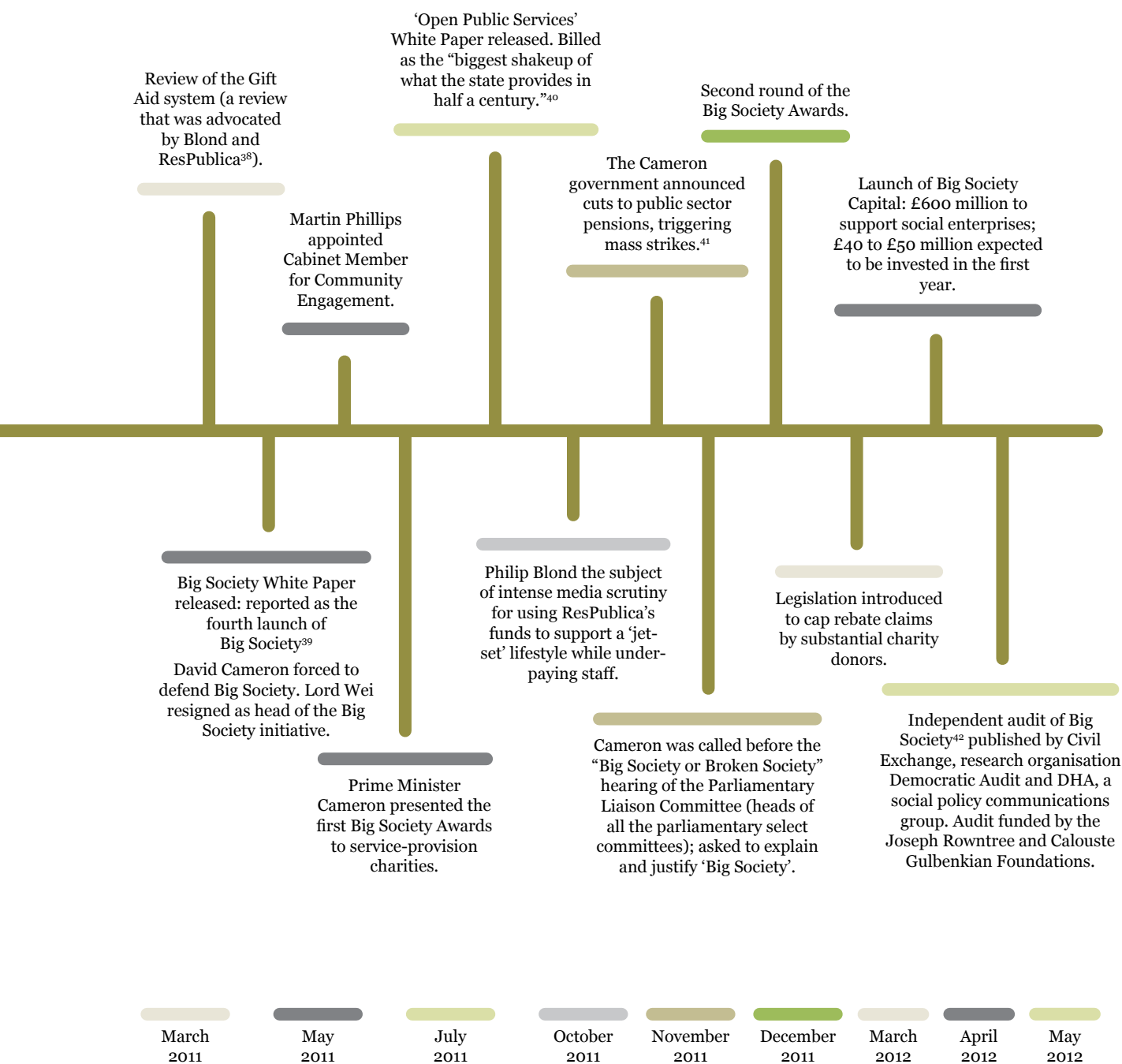
At the heart of the ‘Big Society’ apparatus is ‘commissioning’ – the process of tendering the provision of community services to ‘Any Willing Provider’. ‘Big Society’ starts from the premise that services should not be delivered by a government entity unless a compelling case can be established.⁴³ Instead, public services should be open to non-government providers in order to end the ‘state monopoly’.⁴⁴ This logic has been applied to the widest conceivable range of services including parks, libraries, post offices, hospitals, welfare-to-work employment programs, prisons, court and tribunal administration, payment processing, fraud, debt and identity-related services, police information and communication technology and training, ‘infrastructure and back-office functions’, health services, housing, planning and schools.

In addition to conventional for-profit and not-for-profit organisations, the commissioning process has encouraged tenders from public-private hybrids including employee-owned cooperatives or mutuals, new ‘neighbourhood councils’ and ‘spin-outs’⁴⁵, government agencies that have evolved into social enterprises or joint ventures. Of course, mutuals, cooperatives and other non-government organisations that provide services of value to their communities existed long before ‘Big Society’ appeared. The difference is the assumption that such organisations can and should deliver all of the services that were previously provided by the public sector.

The expanded role for community and private sector organisations in service delivery includes ‘social impact bonds’, a performance-based investment that invites corporations, not-for-profits and ‘social investors’ to receive a dividend on the basis of results and reduced costs. Investors in a post-release prisoner program, for instance, will receive a dividend of up to 13 per cent if the program reduces the rate of re-offending by 7.5 per cent.⁴⁶ If the target isn’t met, their capital is surrendered.

Figure 3: ‘Big Society’ timeline 2010-2012





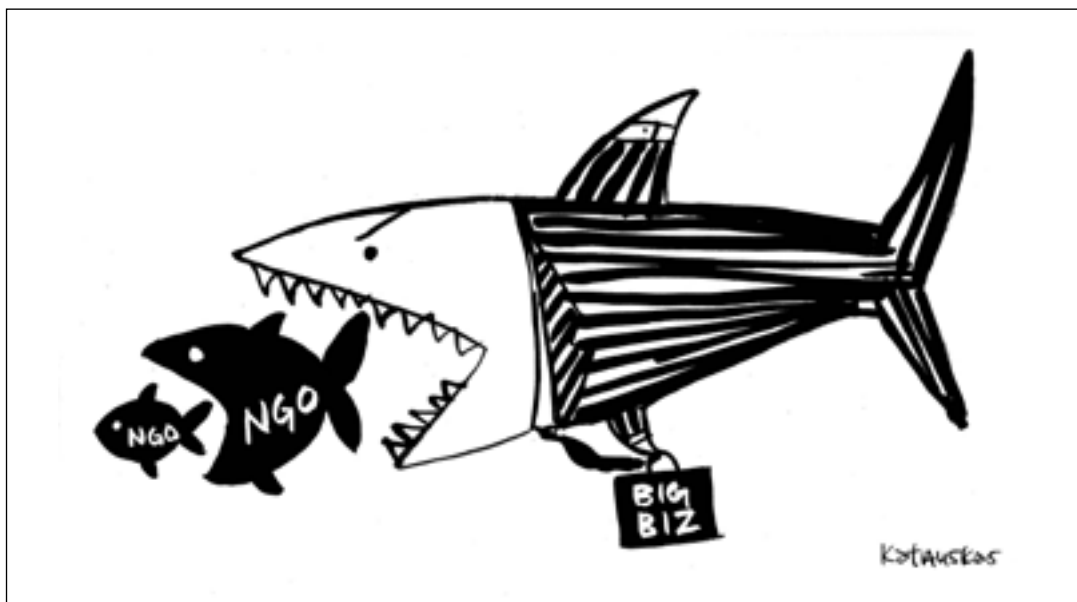
Reef, fish and sharks

“ The coalition wanted to end the Big State, and bring in the Big Society. We are ending up with neither. ”

Daniel Elton, 'Left Foot Forward' 47

The Cameron government has been accused of taking funding away with one hand while promising, but failing, to deliver with the other. The Big Society Bank, for instance, promises funding for non-government service delivery enterprises, but this funding is dwarfed by the funding cuts experienced by government agencies, local government and not-for-profit organisations, leading MP Lisa Nandy to label it ‘the big con’.

One of the stated objectives of ‘Big Society’ is to maximise the diversity of organisations that provide community services. In his maiden speech, Cameron’s Big Society adviser Lord Wei compared ‘Big Society’ with a “coral reef” where public, community and private sector providers (the ‘coral’) collaborate in the design and delivery of complementary services and developing innovative service models.⁴⁸ In Wei’s metaphor, local citizen groups (the fish) “extend, vivify and shape this landscape.” The ‘Big Society’ changes have, instead, favoured corporations and the largest not-for-profit organisations. Smaller charities are ‘squeezed out’ of existing arrangements, diminishing their capacity to make a difference in their local communities.⁴⁹



Outright abuses of charities are also occurring because the commissioning process creates a tiered arrangement for service funding and delivery. ‘Prime contractors’ tender to deliver services on a large scale then sub-contract to local providers who, in turn, can engage voluntary community groups to deliver aspects of these services such as drug and alcohol counselling, training or other employment support services. The local providers and smaller community groups that depend on funds through this arrangement are particularly vulnerable. Many UK charities now fear bankruptcy, having received no business from their partner prime contractors, sparking complaints that they have been cynically used by private companies as ‘bid candy’ to secure contracts.⁵⁰ There have also been claims that private firms “cherry-pick” the easiest cases, leaving those most in need to the cash-strapped charities.^{51, 52}

A4e's role in the commissioned Work Programme is a case in point. Having secured five of forty welfare contracts from the Department of Work and Pensions, A4e was expected to work with subcontractors including private firms, charities and social enterprises. Some of these organisations now complain that A4e has given them hardly any work to do at all. Others claim that the company takes a big cut of their funds, and does little in return.⁵³

'Big Society' has not favoured the 'fish'. In the UK, community-based non-government organisations rely on local government funding which, in turn, is derived from the national government. Local government funding cuts have impacted deeply on the non-government sector, leading many to shed staff and programs, or to close. As a result, many communities have significantly reduced access to services including planning, housing, libraries, museums, transport services and infrastructure, environmental services such as refuse collection and recycling, child protection and youth programs, public toilets and swimming pools.⁵⁴

The impacts of 'Big Society' on not-for-profit organisations, community groups and the corporate sector are examined in detail in chapters 2, 3 and 4 of this report.

'Big Society' in Australia

What does this critique of changes occurring in the UK mean for Australia? Why should Australians and our elected representatives follow this agenda with interest? CPD's analysis of political changes in the UK is prompted by our interest in the parallels with and possible implications for Australia. Keen observers of Australian political discourse will already have recognised elements of contemporary domestic politics in the account offered to this point. The connections are tangible.

Before describing the significance of the 'Big Society' program for Australia, it is important to note three differences between the UK and Australia. First, the UK does not have state governments.⁵⁵ Its national government devolves funding and responsibility for the delivery or management of many services to local governments, but is not constitutionally obliged to negotiate with them if it wishes to change how services are delivered. Australia's federal government delivers some public services directly, and usually has to negotiate with state governments, using its greater access to tax revenue as a bargaining tool, if it wants to influence the delivery of services that have traditionally been provided by the states. Second, total UK government spending is much higher than that of Australian governments (see Chapter 6). At the time of David Cameron's election, UK government spending was 47 per cent of their annual gross domestic product (GDP) compared to Australia's 35 per cent.⁵⁶ And third, the economic circumstances of the two nations are very different. Budget cuts in the UK are framed as 'austerity measures' and aim to reduce a deficit of £245 billion over five years. The UK government's net debt (gross debt minus financial assets) in 2010 was over 69 per cent of GDP compared to Australia's modest 5.5 per cent.⁵⁷ Even with the modest increase in net debt since 2010 in both countries (Australia's appears set to peak at 9.6 per cent this financial year⁵⁸), Australia is clearly in a much stronger economic position.

Because of these differences, a concerted push to introduce the ‘Big Society’ approach in Australia might diverge in some ways from the path taken in the UK:

- » The state-federal divide could lead to more piecemeal implementation. For example, Australia’s hospital services are funded by both federal and state governments, but delivered at the state level. Any attempt to mimic a UK-style transformation of its hospital system into an open market might be more likely to combine a break-up of Medicare at the federal level (perhaps in the form of the ‘Medicare Select’ model floated by the National Health and Hospital Reform Commission in 2009⁵⁹) with a major push by one or more state governments to privatise existing public hospitals. Likewise the ‘open commissioning’ of prison services which is to be rolled out en masse as part of UK’s Big Society⁶⁰ would take place on a state-by-state basis in Australia (several states already have some private prisons⁶¹).
- » Our lower overall levels of government spending and stronger economic position could lead to an Australian ‘Big Society’ being introduced without the major public sector spending cuts which accompanied its UK incarnation. On the other hand ‘Big Society’ could well appeal to a political party looking to significantly cut public spending despite our different economic circumstances.



It is also important to consider the implications of ‘Big Society’ in the context of a vigorous cross-fertilisation of public sector policies between the two nations. This is facilitated when Prime Ministers exchange staff and when think tanks in each country look to their counterparts in the other for ideas and analysis. Public policy observers are familiar with this revolving door and with the ‘copy cat’ relationship between governments of both conservative and Labour/Labor leanings in Australia, the UK, Canada, New Zealand, the USA and sometimes Scandinavia.



We have a long history of the to-and-fro between Australia and the UK (on both sides) in terms of the political ideas, programs and the packaging of those things.

[Eric Sidoti]

Elements of the ‘Big Society’ are influencing public sector policies and opinion in Australia. Many of these elements are nothing new: anti-big government sentiment has been a feature of public life in Australia since Federation. A range of formerly government-managed services have been privatised and outsourced for some time, and public sector cuts are generally framed in terms of responsible fiscal management. This report covers some existing examples of outsourcing in Chapter 4 – not to suggest that they were inspired by ‘Big Society’ but that there has been a parallel evolution in Australia of trends that reshape the role of government. What is new is the misleading rhetoric used to justify changes in terms of widely-held values that are either unrelated or inversely related to these changes: appealing to widely-supported ideas on citizen empowerment, co-production, diversity and community autonomy while implementing changes that transfer public wealth to corporations, disempower non-government organisations and weaken the public sector. This rhetoric and its consequences are explored in detail in Chapter 6 of this report.

Phillip Blond visited Australia in mid 2011 to address a conference convened by the Menzies Research Institute, the Liberal Party’s in-house think tank on Friday June 3rd. Introducing Blond as a “friend of Australia”, Opposition Leader Tony Abbott drew parallels between Liberal Party support for smaller government, Edmund Burke’s notion of formal and informal networks and ‘Big Society’.⁶² Blond also briefed Tony Abbott, deputy leader Julie Bishop, Shadow Finance Minister Andrew Robb, other senior shadow cabinet members and local government officials.



I don’t think Tony Abbott necessarily agreed with all that Blond was arguing and I’m not sure how much he related to Blond’s message. I’m confident he picked up the importance of empowering community organisations, but Blond has a much more radical message.

[Professor Peter Shergold]

During his visit to Australia, Blond published a critique of the Australian political landscape, which prescribed ‘Big Society’ changes to combat “social and familial fragmentation.”⁶³ He was also interviewed on ‘Late Night Live’.⁶⁴ Radio National has broadcast several programs on ‘Big Society’ and published articles on their website including an episode of ‘Encounter’ on this theme based on interviews with twelve British church and community leaders on the impact of the local government budget cuts that have accompanied ‘Big Society’.⁶⁵ Radio National’s ‘Religion and Ethics’ program included interviews with Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams⁶⁶ and John Milbank, the chair of ResPublica.⁶⁷ None of the media coverage of Blond’s interactions with the Liberal Party or the ‘Big Society’ changes has to date featured Australian public sector commentators expressing concerns about ‘Big Society’.

Tony Abbott is not alone in his support for the application of ‘Big Society’ ideas in Australia. Six months before the Menzies Research Institute conference, John Roskam, the Director of the Institute of Public Affairs urged Tony Abbott to adopt a “positive policy agenda” and pointed to the UK’s “ambitious ‘Big Society’ program.”⁶⁸ IPA research fellow Chris Berg, on the other hand, felt the conference held “little but giggles” and concluded that the Australian Liberal Party would not find “philosophical guidance which is both coherent and electorally appealing” in Blond’s Red Toryism.⁶⁹

Elements of ‘Big Society’ have also been promoted by the Centre for Social Impact (CSI), who have observed that despite the absence of an ‘enabling environment’ for ‘Big Society’ changes in Australia, cooperatives and mutuals are delivering health and housing services in remote and Indigenous communities.⁷⁰ With the support of JBWere and the Macquarie Group, CSI lobbied the former New South Wales Labor government to conduct a pilot of Social Impact Bonds,⁷¹ one of the more controversial and untested elements of ‘Big Society’.⁷² The trial, recently implemented under the O’Farrell Coalition government, explored the potential for non-government investment in juvenile justice, parenting support for vulnerable families, disability, homelessness and mental health services. CSI researcher Professor Cheryl Kernot described this as a “pioneering initiative” with “innovative possibilities.”⁷³ During a recent public sector conference, CSI’s Professor Peter Shergold (previously Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet) expressed his support for some elements of ‘Big Society’.

While expressing strong reservations about Social Impact Bonds and the lack of community involvement in decisions concerning the NSW trial, Centre for Civil Society director Vern Hughes is enthusiastic about other aspects of ‘Big Society’. According to Hughes, it is, “Exactly the kind of social and political movement lacking in Australia... we desperately need this kind of thinking.”⁷⁴ Further support for ‘Big Society’ ideas and changes has been expressed by Tom Tolchard, project director of Social Innovation in Western Australia, a not-for-profit organisation that supports social enterprise and entrepreneurship, and the Community Council for Australia. Inspired by the UK’s ‘Big Society Capital’, Tolchard advocates the establishment of a ‘Better Australia Bank’ to “support the not-for-profit sector by lending money drawn from a pool of unclaimed funds.”⁷⁵

2. ‘Big Society’, volunteerism and philanthropy

Big Society involves an unprecedented and abrupt attempt to shift risks and responsibilities from the public sector to the community sector. Its advocates want to outsource many of the core functions of government to volunteers, community-based groups and not-for-profit organisations. This includes risks and responsibilities that, in some instances, the public sector is better (or uniquely) equipped to fulfil. The proposed shift has significant consequences that deserve close, well-informed public scrutiny.

The community sector comprises both paid and unpaid labour. Volunteerism and professionalism are both essential to the vigour of the sector, and they are inextricably related. Both Australia and the UK have high levels of volunteerism and their governments are committed to supporting and removing obstacles to community volunteerism. The changes associated with David Cameron’s ‘Big Society’ program have hit the community sector hard, diminishing the sector’s capacity to mobilise volunteers and to continue its vital role in British society. Throughout the United Kingdom, a wide range of services have been scaled back or withdrawn entirely, impacting most acutely on those community members most reliant upon services but also affecting others on middle and higher incomes.

This report considers the implications and impacts of ‘Big Society’ on volunteers and community-based organisations that rely primarily on volunteers first before then examining impacts on non-government and not-for-profit organisations.

“ Our ambition for the UK is clear: we want every adult in the country to be an active member of an active neighbourhood group.”

*Conservative Party Policy Platform 2010*⁷⁶

Volunteerism: Helping ourselves by ourselves

Cameron, Blond and other ‘Big Society’ champions argue their case for dismantling the state on a set of assumptions and beliefs about volunteerism:

1. Moral and mutual obligation: “the implicit idea that ‘responsibility’ ought not to be defined by individual citizens... rather, it is principally about citizens having a moral obligation to undertake voluntary activity in the community and to take responsibility for their own individual welfare needs”;⁷⁷
2. The notion of untapped and unbounded volunteerism;⁷⁸
3. Increased volunteerism can offset a reduced investment and contribution from the state;
4. Optimism that the volunteer workforce can play a much more active role in fulfilling functions that have traditionally been fulfilled by public servants;
5. The related assertion that governments have stifled volunteerism through unnecessary regulation and restrictions and should ‘get out of the way’; and
6. An idealised role for the state in fostering volunteerism and providing citizens with the “opportunity to contribute.”⁷⁹

Each of these assumptions is problematic in that evidence suggests the contrary, or the principle has been undermined by ‘Big Society’ policies in practice. Research in both the United Kingdom and Australia suggests that volunteers play a very active role in the lives of their communities, that there are limits to volunteerism, and that volunteerism relies on the active support of the state. This Chapter discusses these assertions, their factual basis and the potential impacts of ‘Big Society’ on volunteerism.

Big Society takes the simple idea that more people spending more of their time engaged in voluntary community-oriented activities is, by definition, a good thing and ties it to the far more problematic assertion that communities benefit when volunteers replace public servants and non-government professionals.

Trends in volunteerism in the United Kingdom have until recently been assessed through the annual *Citizenship Survey* which examines both formal volunteering (unpaid help given as part of a group, club or organisation to benefit others or the environment) and informal volunteering (unpaid assistance to someone other than a family members). The 2010 survey⁸⁰ reported that:

- » 25 per cent of those surveyed had participated in formal volunteering at least once a month;
- » 40 per cent volunteered formally at least once in the last 12 months;
- » 29 per cent gave informal help at least once a month; and
- » 54 per cent had volunteered informally at least once over the last 12 months.

A separate study conducted by Volunteering England estimated that 22 million adults volunteered during 2010, contributing 90 million hours each week.⁸¹ These and other UK studies suggest a modest decline in some indicators of volunteerism during the last decade.

Contrary to the ‘Big Society’ rhetoric about society being ‘broken’ and citizens ‘atomised’, these and other indicators of civil society in the UK suggest high levels of social capital: “Membership of voluntary associations, levels of charitable endeavour and informal sociability [are] comparatively high”⁸² and many community services, programs and enterprises rely primarily or exclusively on volunteers. As one long-term, committed UK volunteer observed, “Were it not for me and the vast army of other volunteers who involve themselves in the works of national and local charities right down to local support groups, the society we are living in would be a worse place.”⁸³

This is equally true in Australia, where levels of volunteerism have risen steadily during the last two decades. About 40 per cent of Australian citizens volunteer each year, a comparable proportion to the British figures above. Our culture of volunteerism is graphically illustrated in the three figures below. They depict trends over fifteen years in the number of volunteers, the proportion of the Australian population volunteering and the number of hours they volunteer each year. These trends are indicative. Different agencies and departments of the Australian Government report somewhat different estimates of volunteerism, relying on a range of indicators. The Department of Families and Community Services, for instance, reported that Australian adults contributed 836 million hours of voluntary time in 2005⁸⁴ and the Productivity Commission reported that nearly 5 million volunteers contributed \$14.6 billion in unpaid work in 2006-07.⁸⁵

Figure 4: Proportion of the Australian population participating in volunteerism⁸⁶

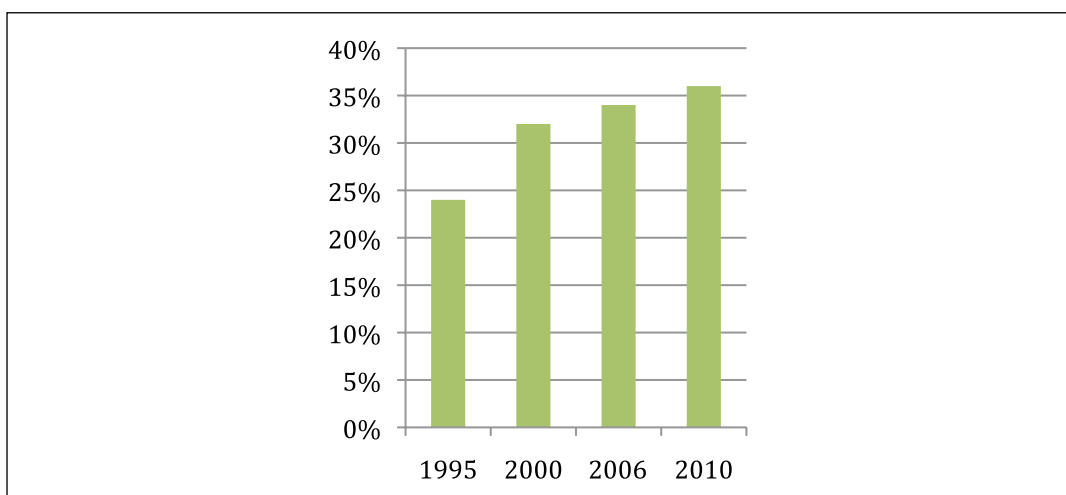


Figure 5: Number of Australian citizens participating in volunteer activity⁸⁷

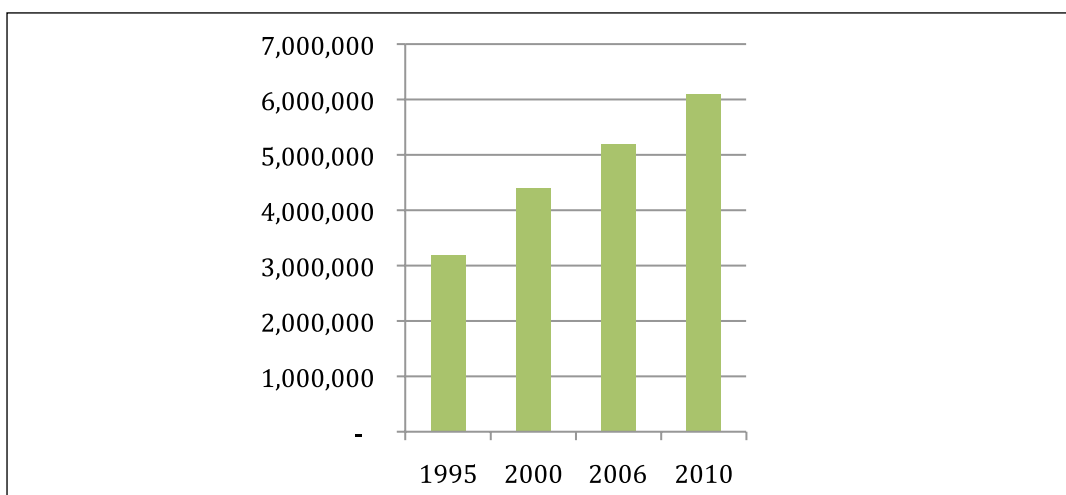
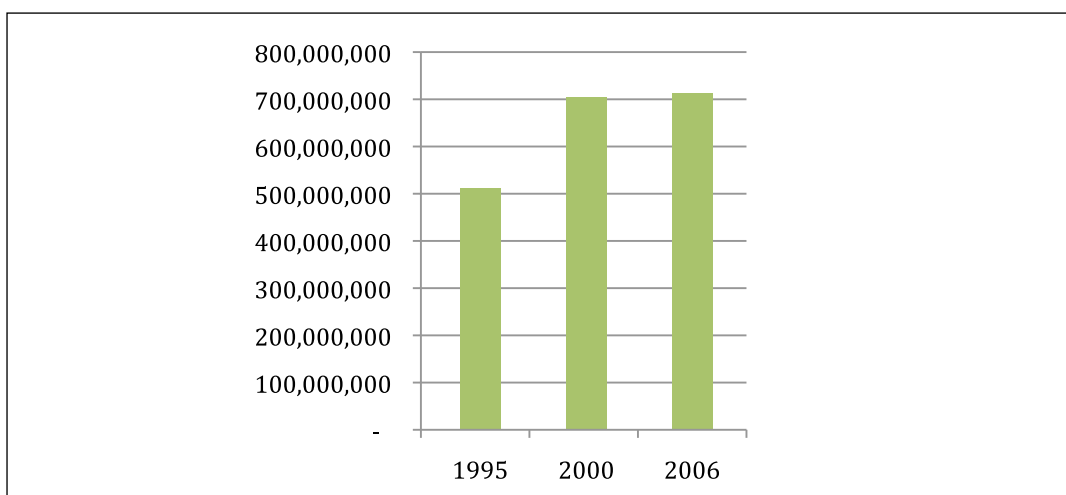


Figure 6: Hours of work generated by volunteer activity in Australia⁸⁸



Far from painting a picture of a social capital crisis, these trends suggest a healthy growth in volunteerism in Australia. Considered alongside the (related) growth in the size and capacity of the not-for-profit sector, these trends indicate that Australians are increasingly active in their communities, just as citizens in the UK actively contribute to shaping their communities.

Some researchers^{89,90} caution against relying too heavily on the indicators cited here: the number of volunteers, the proportion of the community they represent, the hours they work unpaid and the estimated economic value of those hours. They argue that these indicators are surrogates for longer-term community outcomes that include advocacy and expression, employment, health and progress toward social and environmental justice and a 'truly civil society'.⁹¹ Rather than investing in the development of tools that could measure progress toward these desired community outcomes, though, governments in both the United Kingdom and Australia are reducing rather than building their capability to monitor and understand these indicators of volunteerism and their community outcomes.

At a time when governments in both countries are expressing their conviction that citizens can and should play an even more active role in communities, the agencies responsible for surveying the extent of volunteerism are being scaled back. The Cameron Government considers their Citizenship Survey which measures volunteerism "complex and expensive"⁹² and will no longer fund or conduct the annual study. In response to the demise of this important annual survey, the (UK) Centre for Environment, Society and Health conducted their 'Measuring Big Society' survey during 2011. The survey generated ideas and opinions on how to assess communities' readiness for Cameron's 'Big Society' changes. The research team argued that radical social changes called for comprehensive data collection and impact evaluation, and advocated a range of measures to quantify voluntary sector capacity.

Big Society funding cuts are also impacting on the UK Audit Commission which collects data from local government. Councils will now opt-in to report annual outcome data, a change described as hollowing out of research capacity.⁹³ Social scientists argue that longitudinal studies of volunteerism and other indicators of community capacity and resilience are more important than ever during a period of abrupt and potentially disruptive change. In the UK, they have expressed strong concern about the withdrawal of funding for these studies.⁹⁴

Public service budget cuts risk a similar impact in Australia on our capacity to track the health of our voluntary sector over time. Recent staff cuts in the Australian Bureau of Statistics may contribute to a 'hollowing out' of government research capacity. Public service budget cuts of \$2.2 billion⁹⁵ in November 2011 have led to the loss of at least 125 Bureau staff.⁹⁶

Encouraging volunteerism and removing obstacles

The UK and Australian governments share a commitment to removing obstacles to volunteerism. During his first year in office, Cameron established the Big Society Deregulation Taskforce. The Taskforce's report 'Unshackling Good Neighbours'⁹⁷ was released late 2011. It described several obstacles to increased volunteerism including the administrative 'red tape' encountered by community groups who needed to review the criminal record of prospective volunteers and the daunting nature of professional workplaces for potential volunteers who have experienced long-term unemployment. The taskforce also found that citizens were discouraged from giving time by the risk of litigation and necessity for motor vehicle insurance. Following the taskforce's recommendations, the Association of British Insurers brokered an industry agreement not to impose extra premiums on volunteers who use their cars for 'social driving'.⁹⁸

“ Who do people see as their community: is it an area, a street or Facebook friends? If someone wants to be involved, how will they find and engage with the opportunity? Some people might see so many barriers that they give up before they start. Then, there is the perceived barrier of insurance. People might be told they can't help because there is no protection, but this is often not the case. Appropriate insurance provides the protection, support and confidence individuals and organisations need to act, innovate and take on new challenges. Zurich can provide specific insurance for community organisations, charities, volunteers and trustees.

Paul Emery, Head of Community and Social Organisations, Zurich⁹⁹

Zurich's new 'Big Society' insurance package received prominent media coverage, being trumpeted by conservative Parliamentarians as evidence of the corporate sector's willingness to help create self-reliant communities.

Cameron's Cabinet ministers have enthusiastically declared their commitment to a strong and growing voluntary sector. Conservative MP Andrew Lansley, for instance, asserted that, "There is no reason why the voluntary sector can't deliver services at the heart of healthcare, not just at the margins."¹⁰⁰ Chancellor George Osborne reassured community organisations that the commissioning process would be streamlined and simplified so they were not excluded: "We will not expect you to be able to spend weeks filling in procurement forms."¹⁰¹ And Ian Watmore, permanent secretary of the Cabinet Office, informed a hearing of the Public Administration Select Committee that small, local, voluntary groups would be supported during the commissioning process to help them secure service-delivery agreements.¹⁰² Contrary to these measures and the accompanying assurances, volunteer-based organisations have been significantly disadvantaged by 'Big Society' changes.

Governments have the capacity to encourage volunteerism and alleviate obstacles encountered by potential volunteers. Although Australia enjoys a high level of volunteerism, more than two-thirds of community-based organisations report that they need more volunteers.¹⁰³ In Australia, there have been some significant attempts to recruit and affirm volunteers. Minister for Human Services, Tanya Plibersek, launched the National Volunteering Strategy in December 2011. The Minister challenged Australian governments and businesses to, “create a stronger and more sustainable volunteering sector.” Like Cameron’s taskforce report, the Australian strategy aims to overcome obstacles to volunteerism. On Australia Day in 2011 and 2012, Volunteering Australia partnered with the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) in a campaign identified as ‘Help Australia Day’. The campaign associates volunteerism positively with national identity to recruit for community-based organisations:

Every day volunteers make an important contribution to our way of life. But more help is always needed. On Help Australia Day last year volunteers answered the call to assist with flood recovery in Queensland. This year the ABC and Volunteering Australia have highlighted areas of need for volunteers, including health, sport, the arts, environment and education.¹⁰⁴

There are parallels between Help Australia Day and David Cameron’s ‘Social Action Day’, which is intended as the centrepiece of his drive to increase social action and volunteerism. Like the UK Government, Australia’s state and Commonwealth governments also have a stated commitment to strengthening the voluntary sector. Members of Parliament regularly present volunteering awards. Volunteerism is central to the Australian Government’s Social Inclusion portfolio and agenda.

Volunteerism: a bottomless well?

“The trouble with socialism is that it takes up too many evenings.”

Oscar Wilde

For the state to minimise its role in funding, delivering, coordinating and monitoring community services, ‘Big Society’ envisages volunteers will play a much more active role in this work. In the UK, this assumption has been the subject of considerable scrutiny: “One of the most cogent critiques of the ‘Big Society’ is that it presumes a desire on behalf of busy or apathetic citizens to participate in extracurricular democracy-building.”¹⁰⁵

During the 2010 election, Labour mocked Cameron’s vision as ‘D.I.Y. Britain’, releasing a video in which a beleaguered mother, surrounded by post-it notes and a putrefying roast chicken, attempts to feed children between shifts as a teacher, a social worker, a doctor, and a crossing guard.¹⁰⁶ At the launch of his election platform, Cameron was asked to provide evidence that people want to be “prised away from the telly” in order to run public services in their local communities. Cameron’s response was to “dismiss the cynicism of the questioner and profess ‘profoundly’ to believe that people want to be more involved in running their schools, hospitals and the rest.”¹⁰⁷

These reservations about citizens’ willingness to volunteer were explored by the University of Birmingham’s 2011 Policy Commission which was established to consider the future of local public services following the release of Cameron’s ‘White Paper on Open Public Services’. Commissioner Professor Helen Sullivan was interviewed for this report. During their deliberations, commissioners heard from many public service providers who were, “designing new approaches to their services based on active citizenship,” but, “relatively little evidence about the local public’s preparedness to be engaged in this way.”¹⁰⁸

Further evidence that undermines Cameron's 'limitless volunteerism' conviction is apparent in the results of surveys commissioned by the UK Cabinet Office. Although more than 80 per cent of Britons say that they support 'more community involvement' only around a quarter say that they care to get involved.¹⁰⁹ Similar conclusions emerged from a national survey commissioned by Lord Wei, one of Cameron's Big Society champions. Only 2 per cent of respondents expressed any interest in setting up and operating new schools, just 5 per cent wanted any involvement in providing services¹¹⁰ and many citizens were nonplussed about participating in neighbourhood police teams or Neighbourhood Watch meetings.

Wei's optimistic interpretation of the survey's results and his assertion that, "We can create more time" was described as a "kick in the teeth" for citizens who already juggle long working hours with family and caring commitments.¹¹¹ 'Big Society' critics and the UK media noted with interest when Wei reduced his own voluntary community commitments (variously reported as two or three days each week) which he said prevented him having "more of a life."¹¹² There have been other prominent examples of Tory politicians' actions contradicting their stated commitment to and confidence in volunteerism. David Cameron has been challenged to describe his own voluntary work and British tabloids have reported that only 8 per cent of Coalition MPs take part in voluntary work.¹¹³ Cameron's current Big Society Ambassador Shaun Bailey, recently shut down his charity My Generation.¹¹⁴

The notion of limitless volunteerism was ridiculed at a public meeting held in January 2011 in Oxford town hall. Speaking to a packed audience, novelist Phillip Pullman expressed his doubts about the veracity of Cameron's faith in the context of local government funding cuts and pending service closures:

Who are these people whose lives are so empty, whose time spreads out in front of them like the limitless steppes of central Asia, who have no families to look after, no jobs to do, no responsibilities of any sort, and yet are so wealthy that they can commit hours of their time every week to working for nothing? Who are these volunteers? Do you know anyone who could volunteer their time in this way? If there's anyone who has the time and the energy to work for nothing in a good cause, they are probably already working for one of the voluntary sector day centres or running a local football team or helping out with the league of friends in a hospital. What's going to make them stop doing that and start working in a library instead?¹¹⁵

Pullman described David Cameron's conviction that libraries, including the twenty facing closure in Oxfordshire county, could be readily staffed by volunteers as a "fatuous idea" and "patronising nonsense".

Does (Cameron) think the job of a librarian is so simple, so empty of content, that anyone can step up and do it for a thank-you and a cup of tea? Does he think that all a librarian does is to tidy the shelves?¹¹⁶

Others have extended this concern to community services where specific knowledge, skills and expertise are required. One commentator remarked, "Nobody fancies swimming in a pool where well-meaning volunteers have guessed how much chlorine should be added."¹¹⁷ Another asked, "Will volunteers soon be climbing into burning buildings swinging an axe?"¹¹⁸ The image of 'Dad's army' has been invoked on several occasions, conjuring up images of ad hoc and unreliable service delivery arrangements.

In the end, it may come down to the willingness of civil servants and other professionals to trust the public, when handing over control of services, and in some cases funds, to groups of well-intentioned amateurs. Inevitably, some of these groups will turn out to be bungling amateurs, but ministers say they are relaxed about this too.¹¹⁹

Some commentators take issue with the assumption that volunteerism either can or should replace (rather than extend) community services that are properly funded and staffed by professionals. Although Australians respect and value the efforts of voluntary rural fire service associations and brigades, most people would be alarmed by the suggestion that professional firefighters are not also necessary. Interviewed for this report, ACOSS Deputy Director Tessa Boyd-Caine commented that, “Pro bono is a top up. It’s an add-on, not the soul of service delivery.”

Reservations such as those expressed by Pullman and Boyd-Caine are not intended to deride or devalue volunteerism. Even commentators who share Cameron’s faith in the potential for volunteers to play a more active role in addressing community needs express reservation about the scale and pace of the change demanded by his ‘Big Society’ program. “Cultivating the citizenry for a post-welfarist society will not happen in a single parliamentary term,” observed ‘Big Society’ blogger Pathik Pathak.¹²⁰ “It requires a generational shift of social values.”

When is a volunteer not a volunteer?

Cameron’s drive to increase volunteerism in the UK includes National Citizen Service, an initiative that was purportedly inspired by the Prime Minister’s cadet experience at Eton.¹²¹ The program, launched in September 2010, aims to “see every 16-year-old given the chance to participate in a two-month summer scheme of outdoor activities and community service.”¹²² During the August 2011 riots in London, Cameron took the opportunity to promote his Citizen Service program as a remedy to social unrest:

Declaring ‘all-out war’ on gangs, the Prime Minister vowed to ‘turn around’ the most troubled families in the land and said he wants to see every 16-year-old complete a civilian version of national service.¹²³

Initially, the scheme was going to recruit 10,000 participants in its first year and involve the military. Following public criticism from youth groups and the military, the program was scaled back and made non-compulsory.

The Cameron administration has also modified the national Jobseeker Allowance that provides unemployed people with a living allowance. The scheme now compels 16 to 24-year-old allowance recipients to participate in unpaid ‘work experience’ for two to eight weeks. Participants can lose their Allowance if they leave a work experience placement. Perversely, this arrangement has actually resulted in some volunteers relinquishing their existing community volunteer commitments.

Ms Reilly, who is 22 and gets the princely sum of £53.45 in weekly benefits, had to stop doing voluntary work at the Pen Room Museum in Birmingham when she was sent to work at a branch of the budget store, Poundland. Ms Reilly was told she risked losing her Jobseeker’s Allowance if she turned down the two-week placement.¹²⁴

A 2012 Freedom of Information Act search¹²⁵ revealed that more than twenty charities provided these mandatory work placements. Three of these host charities, Marie Curie Cancer Care, Scope and Shelter, subsequently withdrew from the scheme, arguing that claimants should not be forced to do unpaid work by the threat of cuts to their payments.



The push to rely on volunteers rather than professionals has extended well beyond those community services and activities that Australians typically associate with volunteerism. Across the UK, volunteers are being relied on to fill the gaps created by funding cuts to essential services including post offices and even police stations. Thames Valley Police, for example, relies on 600 volunteers for administrative support, caring for police dogs, chaplaincy support and completely staffing police stations (or 'posts') in some smaller communities.^{126, 127}

Although citizens might be expected to protest the voluntarisation of a staffed local police station, this example of volunteer action was positively reported as 'Big Society in Action'. The notion of self-help often receives sympathetic media treatment, assisted by the concerted efforts of Cabinet Ministers to ensure a positive spin.



Up until now people have been used to the Post Office being run by the Post Office, now they'll have a Post Office only if some people in the community decide to get together and run it. When it gets to that point, it starts to be seriously challenging.

[Martin Stewart-Weeks]

When heavy snow was experienced across the UK this February, local government authorities coordinated a massive volunteer effort that included developing lists of people with four-wheel-drive vehicles willing to volunteer to help assist vulnerable and isolated community members. Cabinet Minister for Community Engagement, Martin Phillips, proudly claimed this as a win for his government's 'Big Society' agenda: "It's a Big Society ask, and we know our county has so many community-spirited people who'd be so willing to help our vulnerable people during the winter."¹²⁸

The Minister's optimism was echoed by Tweeter @danielratchford who observed that it was, "gr8 2 C lots of #sutton residents cleared their pavement ovr the wknd w/ free grit from the council #bigsociety #behaviourchange #localgov." Two corresponding Tweeters presented an alternative interpretation of the relationship between 'Big Society' and the active role of volunteers during the snowstorms.



I cleared the pavement outside yesterday. This is NOT an endorsement of the #BigSociety, just being helpful

@WalfordE20, 6/02/12

@VictoriaPeckham get everyone who hasn't been to Eton to clear posh people's paths. And be bally-well quick about it. Oiks #bigsociety

@patsy20 6/02/12

This exchange, and other tweets to the lively #bigsociety Twitter debate, highlights the contested nature of 'Big Society' claims. Several related ideas, each with policy implications, are conflated here. Governments should not claim credit for volunteerism that occurs without their intervention or assistance, especially if this is used for public relations purposes to justify unrelated policy interventions. It is also duplicitous to talk up and rely heavily on volunteerism as a substitute for government-funded services during a period of cut-backs, as appears to be the case in the UK. There is a strong case for valuing existing levels of volunteerism and being cautious about removing forms of government involvement that facilitate and support volunteerism. Abruptly withdrawing the funding that enables community sector organisations to recruit and support volunteers, or suddenly expecting volunteers to play a much more active role in managing community services may weaken rather than strengthen volunteerism.

Although there is no evidence that Cameron's programs have increased volunteerism in the UK, government ministers and others tend to claim instances of self-help as the direct result of their programs and policies.

Philanthropy and social investment

“ *Rolling back the state seems not to unleash a culture of volunteering, and charitable investment seeks to anticipate corporate investment rather than need.*

Jonathon Davies and Madeleine Pill, ‘Empowerment or Abandonment?’¹²⁹

In David Cameron’s idealised ‘Big Society’, an expanded community sector is supported by significantly increased philanthropy. Funds that have been derived from ‘big government’ are instead leveraged from individuals, businesses and social entrepreneurs. The Conservative Party’s 2010 election platform suggested that behavioural economics would facilitate both philanthropy and volunteerism.¹³⁰

In the absence of a framework to monitor and evaluate the impacts of ‘Big Society’ against its intended outcomes, Whitehall and some elements of the media have interpreted isolated instances of philanthropy as confirmation that Cameron is succeeding. In rural Essex, for instance, there was enthusiastic media coverage when community members signed up for regular direct debit donations to fund the local post office.¹³¹ This would be more accurately reported as a rescue package by a determined community than as an indicator of a self-reliant or enriched community.

The reported impacts of ‘Big Society’ contradict the British Prime Minister’s stated aims. The recent caps on tax rebates for large charitable donations to community sector organisations have led charities to express concern that this will discourage rather than encourage philanthropy.¹³³ As this report goes to print, more than 2,000 charities have joined the ‘Give it Back George’ campaign against the tax law changes.^{134, 135} Members of Parliament on both sides of politics are equally critical, accusing Cameron of undermining his own agenda and delivering “Less Big Society, more Big State” and “bad society, not big society.”¹³⁶

As in the United Kingdom, philanthropy plays a vital role in enabling and shaping Australia’s community sector and the consequent relationship between our community, public and corporate sectors. Financial and other support from individuals and approximately 5,000 philanthropic trusts and foundations directly support more than 700,000 not-for-profit organisations in Australia.¹³⁷

In 2003-04, total philanthropy in Australia was \$11 billion (about 1 per cent of GDP), comprising \$7.7 billion from 13.4 million individuals (87 per cent of the population) and \$3.3 billion from 525,900 businesses, representing 67 per cent of all businesses.¹³⁸ During the last two decades, philanthropy in Australia has increased. Between 1997 and 2004, individual giving increased by about 88 per cent, or 12.5 per cent per annum.¹³⁹ In the 2008-09 financial year, individual taxpayers claimed \$2,093 million worth of gifts, a decrease of 10.8 per cent from the previous year - the first decrease recorded in over a decade.¹⁴⁰

“ The Big Society has always existed. Good people have always given of their time, energy and money to plug the gaps. ”

*Helen Smith, Grantham Journal*¹³²

Australian community sector organisations have less access to philanthropy than their counterparts in the United States. Australians give slightly less than citizens in the UK and Canada, and significantly less than the USA.¹⁴¹ Whereas giving represents approximately 0.7 per cent of GDP in Australia, it is closer to 1.6 per cent in the US. This difference, combined with the United States' much larger population and economy contribute to a philanthropic 'pool' that is many times larger.



Compared to the UK and the US, we simply have a much smaller critical mass of philanthropic private funding to put into community services (and) support for people on low incomes. (There is a) seriously underwhelming response from corporate philanthropists.

[Tessa Boyd Caine]

Although philanthropy is quite limited in Australia, it usefully complements the funds that charities and other NGOs receive from governments, by facilitating innovation and activities that governments are less likely to fund.

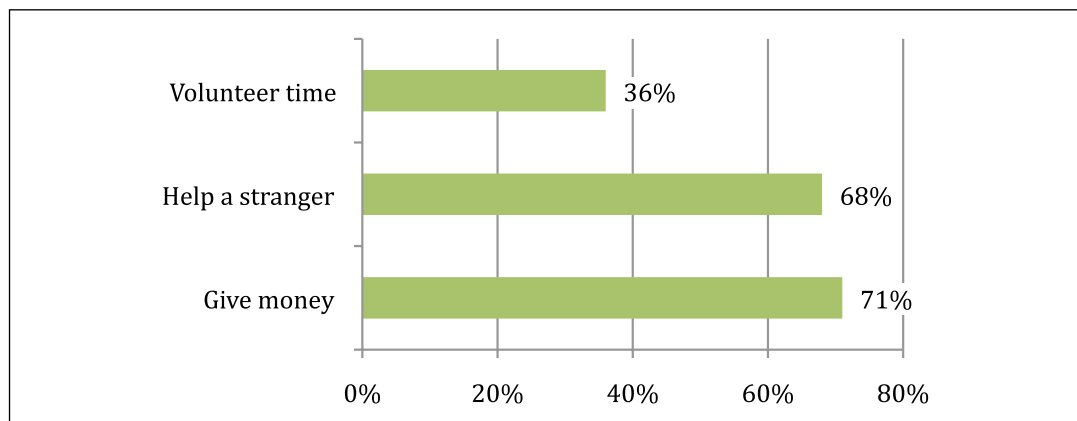


Philanthropy in Australia is a really small amount but it's really important because it's not government money (and) it leverages innovation and new approaches. It can test new methodologies of practice; it can fund evaluations and advocacy.

[Cath Smith]

Financial donations are not the only, or necessarily the most important, way that citizens support community action. Other measures compare Australian 'giving' more favourably. The World Giving Index amalgamates three 'giving' behaviours: helping a stranger, volunteering time and giving money. On this index, Australia is currently ranked third, behind the US and Ireland, having slipped from first in 2010. The 2011 results, summarised in Figure 7, show that giving money is the most common giving behaviour, followed closely by 'helping a stranger'.

Figure 7: Australia's 2011 'World Giving Index'¹⁴²



‘Big Society’ highlights the potential impact of over-reliance on philanthropy. The sudden withdrawal of government funding has devastated many parts of the community sector.



Anyone can give to charities but they should not be relied upon to provide what we think the state should provide. We don't want to end up like in the US where there's no public housing, it's all charitable housing. Charity has a place, absolutely, and volunteerism is important but it should not necessarily be used to replace services that would otherwise be provided by the state.

[Ged Kearney]

Australian governments encourage philanthropists to share responsibility for functions that many citizens consider are appropriately the responsibility of the public sector. One example is the challenging task of addressing the disadvantage faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers. Having failed this challenge for decades, Australian Governments welcome philanthropic ventures such as Generation One¹⁴³ - the not-for-profit organisation founded by Australia's second wealthiest individual, Andrew ('Twiggy') Forrest, and funded by billionaires James Packer, Kerry Stokes and the Lowy and Fox families. Similarly, the Australian Government is now considering strategies to encourage philanthropists to increasingly fund both public and private schools. The Gillard Government recently commissioned prominent businessman and philanthropist David Gonski to review Australia's education system. Gonski identified philanthropy as one revenue source for under-funded schools and advocated legislative changes to facilitate tax-deductible donations to public schools.

Philanthropy can come with strings attached, and the Gonski review drew attention to the potential influence of corporations and other philanthropic donors on the organisations they fund. Funders often have strong preferences for what they fund. For instance, relatively few philanthropists fund administration, despite these costs being a crucial precursor to viable and effective services:



Philanthropists and donors... don't want to fund organisations for their administrative costs... They don't want to fund them to make sure their board knows what it's doing, knows what it's supposed to be doing and does it... to make sure that their financial accounting and organisation are up to the mark.

[Tessa Boyd-Caine]

There are other reasons for reservation about philanthropy as an alternative to government funding. In the UK, philanthropists have not tended to invest in the innovative and specialist services provided by voluntary organisations.¹⁴⁴ Withdrawing public funding would effectively – and quickly – lead to the demise of these services.

Philanthropists' preferences can have significant social outcomes. Whereas democratically elected governments are accountable to communities, philanthropists' proclivities need not align to those of the communities where they fund services and other programs.

In this context, Treasurer Wayne Swan's recent comments on philanthropy by the wealthiest Australians are noteworthy. Observing that Andrew 'Twiggy' Forrest's company effectively pays no tax, Mr Swan commented that, "Charity is not a substitute for paying tax."¹⁴⁵ Billionaire philanthropist Warren Buffet has lobbied consecutive US governments to raise taxes paid by the super wealthy, pointing to the fact that he pays a lower tax rate than many of his employees, and suggesting that most rich philanthropic donors would not mind paying higher taxes as well. The 'Buffett Rule' which was championed by President Obama in his latest State of the Union address will require taxpayers with incomes over US\$2 million to pay at least 30 percent in federal taxes.¹⁴⁶ Attitudinal surveys in Australia frequently find that people are willing to pay higher taxes in order to fund better public services.¹⁴⁷

3. Outsourcing to community sector organisations

Big Society asserts a simple dichotomy between paid and unpaid labour; between volunteers and professionals. Its architects avow their intention to significantly boost unpaid labour without acknowledging that volunteerism is just part of the community sector and that it is directly influenced by funding, professional staff and other resources. In reality, the relationship is much less straightforward. To consider the implications of ‘Big Society’, it is important to consider the context within which most volunteerism occurs.

Social scientists typically distinguish between three sectors: the public sector (government or state); the private sector which comprises for-profit companies and investors; and the community (or not-for-profit) sector. At times, the third sector is described as the ‘voluntary’ sector. This can be misleading, though, as the community sector incorporates a significant amount of paid professional work. Volunteerism is an important part of a much bigger picture.



There is this misplaced notion that the voluntary sector is made up of volunteers but of course it's not. Some of them are volunteers but an awful lot get paid. One thing worth exploring is the extent of which NFP organisations are having to readjust their own expectations between paid and unpaid employees or workers they have and what that means for the capacity they have, the training they do, workers' rights...

[Professor Helen Sullivan]

Professor Paul Smyth illustrated this blend of volunteerism and professionalism when he described the Brotherhood of St Laurence.



We would see ourselves as still a genuine voluntary organisation... we're not just some multinational contracting agency doing a government job. We've got a thousand or more volunteers and we've got links with Rotary and Anglican parishes with their social justice groups... We think it's vital for the health of an organisation like the Brotherhood to have these living links and relationships with voluntary principles in our community.

[Professor Paul Smyth]

In addition to these volunteers, the Brotherhood has a large team of employees. Australia's not-for-profit sector organisations collectively employ 900,000 people, making the sector “equivalent to manufacturing, second only to retail and five times as many as mining.”¹⁴⁸ The sector's economic activity represents almost 4 per cent of Australia's gross domestic product, just under \$43 billion, and in recent years has grown at 7.7 per cent per annum.¹⁴⁹ Of Australia's approximately 700,000 NFP organisations, 59,000 are considered ‘economically significant’.¹⁵⁰ By comparison, the UK's National Council for Voluntary Organisations estimated in 2010 that there were 171,000 voluntary sector organisations with approximately 668,000 paid staff.¹⁵¹

Delivering community services is by no means the only work undertaken by not-for-profit organisations, but it is core business for many. Through their contractual arrangements with government to deliver services such as education, health and social welfare, some have multi-million dollar budgets and employ hundreds of professional staff.



We're seeing a professionalisation of the community sector... an introduction of standards around service delivery and employee standards where they didn't exist previously such as certification of workers for example in childcare... the community sector relies on a workforce that has, at minimum, tertiary education and many have post-graduate education. The work is funded and delivered by people who are trained and experienced, who have expertise. The assumption that you can replace that with a volunteer workforce is highly flawed.

[Tessa Boyd-Caine]

Notwithstanding this professionalisation, many community sector organisations rely heavily on volunteers. Government agencies contribute only 70 per cent of the costs of programs delivered by NFPs who also rely on fees, charges and donations for the balance.¹⁵² Without motivating and mobilising volunteers, many of these organisations would be unable to meet community demand for their services.

'Big Society' impacts on the not-for-profit sector



The problem with what David Cameron is saying today is it comes at the same time as there are very big cuts in funding to the voluntary sector. This is essentially a nineteenth-century or U.S.-style view of our welfare state, which is: Cut back the welfare state and somehow civic society will thrive.

Ed Miliband, Labour Party Leader, July 2010¹⁵³

At the same time as Cameron's government has introduced their 'Big Society' changes, they have presided over historic cuts to public sector budgets. Sympathetic observers have argued that this makes any fair assessment of the impacts difficult. A more critical perspective, expressed by some public sector analysts, is that 'Big Society' was always intended as the spin for the systematic dismantling of the state, the gutting of civil society groups and a massive transfer of wealth from these two sectors to corporations.

In either case, it is impossible to ignore the impact of funding cuts in any evaluation of 'Big Society' impacts, or to consider these concurrent changes separately. The compelling evidence that the not-for-profit sector has suffered deeply would strike even the least critical observer. Contrary to the rhetoric, most NFPs have experienced funding cuts and many have been forced to scale back services, reduce staffing or to close. The initial optimism of many community sector leaders has turned to criticism and protest.

'Big Society' commentary has focused on five adverse impacts on the not-for-profit sector: diminished funding; (correspondingly) diminished services; deterioration in NFP working conditions; silencing or diminishing the advocacy role of NFPs; and large NFPs 'crowding' out smaller ones, leading to a less diverse sector that is more detached from the grassroots.

Immediate funding cuts

Cameron's first budget, adopted just one month after the May 2010 election, was described as an 'austerity' or even 'emergency' budget. Its impact shocked the community sector and was felt acutely by organisations relying heavily on volunteers.



Within the first twelve months of the new government, community sector organisations faced reduced allocations of between £3 and £5 billion.^{154, 155} For many, these cuts came at time of increased demand and rising costs, leading to concerns that many may be forced to close.

Funding available to community sector organisations was further reduced in the March 2011 budget. Within twelve months, the number of people employed in the community sector fell by 70,000. The budget cuts had the greatest impact in this sector, which lost almost 9 per cent of its workforce. By comparison, employment in the public sector fell by 4.3 per cent during the same period, while private sector employment increased by 1.5 per cent.¹⁵⁶ The year was described by some in the community sector as an 'annus horribilus': most organisations lost funding, employees and their capacity to recruit and support volunteers. Community sector research demonstrates a direct correlation between the withdrawal of funding and a decline in volunteering.¹⁵⁷

The funding cuts have drawn widespread criticism and protest from sector advocates including the National Council for Voluntary Organisations. The UK Charity Commission accused Cameron of “pulling the rug out from under” his agenda for change.¹⁵⁸ Religious leaders in the UK have spoken out about the impact on civil society. Interviewed on ABC Radio National’s ‘Encounter’ program in 2011, Reverend Malcolm Brown, Director of Mission and Public Affairs for the (Anglican) Archbishop’s Council concluded that the ‘Big Society’ vision and objectives were impossible in the context of massively reduced community sector funds. Reverend Tim Stevens, Bishop of Leicester, agreed that the cuts were damaging, rather than building, civil society:

Very large amounts of money (are) being taken out of the public purse, taken away from local government, and taken out of the pockets of people who might be giving to charities and churches. Voluntary organisations of every kind, are all having to contract right at the time when they’re being exhorted to encourage volunteering in active citizenship and you can’t do these two things at the same time.¹⁵⁹

Union leaders were also damning in their assessment of community sector budget cuts. Dave Prentis, General Secretary of (public sector union) Unison declared that ‘Big Society’ should be renamed “the big cop-out. The Government is simply washing its hands of providing decent public services and using volunteers as a cut-price alternative.”¹⁶⁰ Brendan Barber, General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress which represents fifty-eight British unions, has suggested that, “Big Society is looking more and more like a big con... These deep cuts to voluntary groups across the UK show that government claims that charities can replace direct services currently provided by central or local government are false.”¹⁶¹

“*In a rather arbitrary way, what the Coalition is doing is simply withdrawing from the responsibility for providing particular services. The principal reason for withdrawing is to save money. The stated reason for withdrawing is a belief that this service is better provided by the local community. That’s where there is, at worst, a lie and, at best, obfuscation at the centre of this policy.*

Tessa Jowell, Labour MP¹⁶²

Even Phillip Blond, the self-promoting architect of Big Society, has expressed concern that communities in the UK haven’t had enough time or support to respond to the challenges of a diminished state. Blond commented in 2011 that, “the drive for cuts and deficit reduction is perhaps running too fast to give people the chance to take over the state and create the conditions for a civic economy.”¹⁶³ This and similar observations by ‘Big Society’ creators and advocates could be interpreted as pre-emptive justification for its failure.

Diminished services

These changes resulted in the closure or partial closure of a very wide range of services including refugee and asylum seeker support, youth crime prevention, libraries, ranger services, community housing, youth counselling, community arts, alcohol addiction, theatre, flood defence, community legal support, public toilets, community radio, fire stations, museums, recycling, and rape crisis centres.¹⁶⁴ These closures and the withdrawal of the services they provided have been

widely reported, but no comprehensive assessment has yet been attempted.¹⁶⁵ It appears that the services most likely to close are those that might be described as difficult: services that are, by definition, expensive and unprofitable, and those dealing with intractable problems where payment by results is less feasible or attractive.



There is irony - and tragedy - in the loss of these valued community services. The community sector has not thrived through the withdrawal of the state: on the contrary. Paddington Development Trust, for instance, lost £350,000 (10 per cent of its annual budget) and was forced to lay off seven of fifty-two staff.¹⁶⁶ The organisation had previously been described by Civil Society minister Nick Hurd as 'Big Society' in action. The UK's extensive network of almost 400 Citizens Advice bureaux similarly experienced a 10 per cent funding cut in August 2011, at a time when demand for advice had almost doubled.^{167, 168} UK citizens also have reduced access to legal advice. Community legal centres lost £350M, requiring them to replace law centres and advisers with a telephone 'gateway'.¹⁶⁹

Australian research reinforces this direct relationship between economic circumstances and the vigour of the not-for-profit sector. PricewaterhouseCoopers, Fundraising Institute Australia and the Centre for Social Impact regularly survey more than 100 NFP organisations. The most recently published version of the survey¹⁷⁰ reported that, in the context of the global financial crisis:

- » The income of three-fifths of surveyed groups had dropped by 10-15 per cent during the preceding six months;
- » Only 17 per cent had not experienced a change in income;
- » In response to declining income, most NFPs were increasing their fundraising and volunteer recruitment activities; and
- » One-third of NFPs had implemented cost reduction measures, and more were planning cost reductions in the following year.

It is important to note that these circumstances coincided with increasing demand for the services provided by NFPs. If these community sector organisations had simultaneously experienced a sudden withdrawal of government funding (as has occurred in the UK), the impacts would certainly have been more drastic.

Working conditions in the not-for profit sector

In the UK, as in Australia, public sector workers tend to have somewhat better working conditions than their counterparts who perform similar work in other sectors. Dismantling public service agencies can impact on employees' working conditions, even if the same people are then re-employed in community sector organisations. When the Australian Government outsourced employment services to the private and not for profit sectors through the Job Network, for instance, there was an immediate reduction in general wages and conditions for frontline workers in the sector.¹⁷¹ Some 'Big Society' critics have also described it as an attack on unionism.¹⁷² Workers in community and corporate sector organisations tend to be less inclined to join unions and, accordingly, less well represented in their negotiations with employers.

In Australia, the gap between community and public sector working conditions is set to narrow. Fair Work Australia recently ruled that the work of community sector workers was underpaid and ordered that an estimated 150,000 employees receive pay increases of between 21 and 45 per cent over 8 years.^{173, 174} In this instance, the Australian and state governments will provide additional funds to ensure that a higher wages bill does not 'squeeze' NFPs to scale down their community programs, though NFPs including Anglicare are not convinced that this will be straightforward.¹⁷⁵

NFPs were certainly 'squeezed' when the Australian Government outsourced the Job Network. Between 2003 and 2008, the government put organisations such as Catholic Social Services Employment under growing pressure to reduce their costs while delivering employment outcomes. Fees paid for their services remained almost static while the Consumer Price Index rose 9 per cent and the costs of delivery rose more than 16 per cent. As a result, "While fees were declining in real terms, contracts were becoming more prescriptive and providers were required to spend more time administering the increasingly intensive job seeker compliance regime."¹⁷⁶

In Australia, as in the UK, there is already a strong trend from secure to insecure employment. Casual workers represent almost one quarter of Australian employees, and fixed-term contracts, independent contracting, labour hire and new forms of outwork are all growing: 40 per cent of Australian workers are employed in insecure jobs, providing impetus for the current inquiry by former Deputy Prime Minister Brian Howe.¹⁷⁷ By compounding and accelerating these trends, an Australian version of 'Big Society' may result in unintended social changes. The consequences of insecure work and fluctuating income include poverty, anxiety and loss of dignity. Guy Standing¹⁷⁸ suggests the trend toward insecure employment is a global phenomenon and describes a "new and dangerously angry class" – the 'precariat', whose working conditions provide, "No paid holidays, no sick leave, no subsidised training, no worthwhile pension to look forward to, and no assurance that if they lose their job they will be able to rely on state benefits or other assistance."¹⁷⁹

Silencing dissent: Reconciling advocacy and grant dependency

Besides delivering community services, not-for-profit organisations play a vital role in a healthy democracy by representing community interests. When they become an extension of the apparatus of government – acquitting the former responsibilities of the state and depending on the state for their funding – there is a risk that they become less critical or outspoken in their advocacy.

‘Big Society’ promises ‘people power’, but commentators question the likelihood that the Cameron administration will welcome criticism of government programs and policies or campaigns to challenge government, corporations or financial institutions.¹⁸⁰

The potential to silence non-government organisations has been highlighted by researchers in Australia.^{181, 182} The ‘Compact’¹⁸³ developed between the Australian Government and the not-for-profit sector seeks to protect the right to advocacy, but is by no means a guarantee that non-government groups will remain outspoken against unpopular policies. The impact is not necessarily intentional – non-government service providers may simply self-censor in order to safeguard their funding. Interviewed for this study, Martin Stewart-Weeks observed that the challenge of maintaining autonomy while relying on the state’s funds is a “characteristic challenge to the government-civil society conversation that we are quite a long way from resolving, regardless of ‘Big Society.’” Vern Hughes concurred, commenting that:



The big non-government organisations in Australia are in the business of service delivery. They will never stop and say the service delivery paradigm is broken because they’re running it. The service delivery providers are not going to be a part of that debate because they’re conflicted. Most of the funded advocacy bodies in these policy areas tend to identify more with government and service delivery organisations than they do with consumers.

[Vern Hughes]

Professor Paul Smyth highlighted another reason why contracted NFPs may be less committed to independent critique and commentary on government policy: they can begin to identify more with government than with the community they exist to serve.



Now you’ve got people with huge investments in their own NGO and it becomes a conflict of interests... of looking after your organisation and looking after the people who need your services. Some of the providers have the sense that there’s nothing wrong with the system, they’re doing a good job and it’s the fault of the unemployed themselves for not turning up to interviews or not being compliant with their service delivery. It can be a tendency for them to defend the system against the welfare clients and blame the clients if the system isn’t working.

[Professor Paul Smyth]

One 'Big Society' initiative intended to strengthen civil society is the Community Organising Programme. This program seeks to train 5,000 community organisers during the first term of the Cameron government. The program is managed by Locality, a non-government organisation, and entails a twelve-month on-the-job training program hosted by local NGOs. In 2011, 500 people enrolled in the program, "learning the skills they need to identify local leaders and bring people together to act on what matters to them, including using new powers devolved from government to citizens."¹⁸⁴ Civil Society Minister Nick Hurd has described the program as a remedy to the failings of government agencies who impose programs without understanding each community's unique problems. The Minister has asserted that the Community Organising Programme will,

allow local people to work together, take control of their lives and create the change they want to see. We're giving power back to people and supporting them to make their communities better places to live. This is part of a much wider drive to help revive social action and build a bigger, stronger society.¹⁸⁵

Like National Citizen Service, the Community Organising Programme has drawn considerable criticism. For one thing, the program only supports participants for one year, providing them with considerably less structured training and professional development than the professional community development workers they are expected to replace. After just one year, the organisers are expected to be self-funding, having gained the skills needed to raise funds to pay for their own salaries.

Secondly, organisers must work within the constraints of reduced public sector funding and its impacts. Their community development efforts inevitably lead citizens to identify problems that have been created by government cut-backs. As one program participant observed, "All the youth centres have been taken away. You wonder why the crime rate has gone up. If the young people had somewhere to go, the crime rate wouldn't go up."¹⁸⁶ Renowned U.S. activist educator Saul Alinsky, whose community organising endowment is identified as the inspiration for the program, would have an immediate answer to this dilemma: organisers should support communities to mobilise and hold their elected representatives to account through people power including, where necessary, protest, withdrawal of cooperation and confrontation. 'Taking sides' in these explicitly political ways is clearly not an intended outcome of Cameron's program.

Big fish, small fish

The fifth and final impact discussed here is the tendency for 'Big Society' to favour larger non-government organisations. Just as larger not-for-profit organisations have been favoured through the Big Society' commissioning process, their counterparts in Australia have garnered an increasing proportion of outsourced services. This outcome is directly contrary to the stated intention of 'Big Society' and its architects: to engender diversity.

The dynamics that favour large non-government organisations are well documented in both the UK and Australia. Several of the public sector analysts interviewed for this study expressed the view that a larger number of small, local NGOs would deliver better, fairer and more enduring social outcomes than a smaller number of large NGOs, and suggested reasons for the observed trend toward service provision by very large NFPs.

Larger NFPs, like corporations, have access to capital, they are able to borrow and are more likely to have reserves they can draw on. This gives them an advantage as they are better able to invest in infrastructure and staff, negotiate complex tendering procedures and diversify their services. These factors are influencing the outsourcing process in New South Wales where, “The ability of providers to borrow, coupled with tax and other concessions that reduce housing costs, make community housing an attractive partner for the NSW Government in delivering affordable and social housing in high-need areas.”¹⁸⁷ Australian research has pointed to a ‘capital crisis’ in parts of the not-for-profit sector, including organisations delivering aged care and schools, and suggested that larger and church-supported organisations have a distinct advantage.

Several interviewees observed that bigger NFPs are also advantaged by an inflexible ‘one size fits all’ administrative approach.



What characterised the 1990s and the 2000s when you saw the Productivity Commission push business models into service delivery, many of the small providers disappeared off of the scene, the ones that had been spawned from genuine voluntary activity because they weren’t business-like. They couldn’t handle all the red tape and couldn’t compete against the big guys who got the contracts. So we ended up with a scene dominated by large quasi-government NGO creatures operating like little or big corporates.

[Professor Paul Smyth]

Professor Smyth was not alone in his concern that the trend away from small and diverse community sector organisations to ‘quasi government creatures’ appears likely to continue: “What future will the voluntary sector have? Will it just continue to suffer and die at the margins or will other things intervene to create a new larger role for it?”

Cath Smith elaborated on the ‘red tape’ reference, suggesting that onerous accountability arrangements are a key factor in the trend toward fewer, larger contracting NFPs:



You start off with diversity but then what appears to happen is that isomorphic thing where government prefers to work with agencies that are like governments. Gradually over time you end up with government supporting a smaller number of large NGOs that may as well be small government departments in their own right because they’re so driven by KPIs, looking upwards rather than managing risk for clients.

[Cath Smith]

Government agencies may be inclined to minimise the number of non-government entities they contract in order to simplify transactions and management. Richard Mulgan described how this dynamic influenced the Howard Government’s outsourcing of information technology services during the late 1990s.



They talked about setting up a hub of local IT entrepreneurs and turning Canberra into Silicone Valley. Soon after, you found that many of the contracts were held by international companies who were better equipped and easier to deal with.

[Richard Mulgan]

Another explanation for the 'big fish' phenomenon suggested by Professor Mark Lyons was that regulations and standards apply to entire industries and fail to recognise the capacity of NFPs or the distinction between community and private sector organisations. As a consequence of this and other factors, Lyons observed that, "the gap between the charitable model and the commercial model has begun to disappear."¹⁸⁸

4. Commissioning corporations: Diversity or cartels?

“ *Business is the most powerful force for social progress.*

David Cameron, February 2012¹⁸⁹



Any Willing Provider

“ *In the services amenable to commissioning, the principles of open public services will switch the default from one where the state provides the service itself to one where the state commissions the service from a range of diverse providers.*

Open Public Services White Paper 2011¹⁹⁰

Arguably, the most significant element of ‘Big Society’ is the plan to outsource or ‘commission’ the widest imaginable range of previously government functions to ‘Any Willing Provider’. Commissioning is based on a set of asserted benefits. According to ‘Big Society’ advocates, outsourcing functions that have traditionally been the domain of the state will result in:

- » Innovation and freedom from the ‘red tape’ that Blond and other ‘small government’ proponents associate with the ‘big state’;
- » Decentralisation: centralisation is typically depicted as the antithesis of innovation;
- » Services that are responsive to local needs, giving local people a greater say and influence over how money should be spent and services delivered.¹⁹¹ According to Phillip Blond, “If everybody gets the same, needs are never met”¹⁹²;
- » Competition on a level playing field;
- » Entrepreneurialism and innovation:¹⁹³ ‘Big Society’ champions promote as a truism the innovative advantage of the private sector; and
- » Diversity: Wei’s coral reef metaphor depicts a diverse ecosystem that supports a wide array of large and small co-existing and mutually dependent organisms. He referred to the state as the seabed, supporting and facilitating diversity.

“ By enabling all sectors to compete for contracts on a level playing field citizens and communities will benefit from greater choice and more responsive services.”

Nick Hurd, UK Minister for Civil Society¹⁹⁴

These aspirations will be familiar to observers of public sector debates in Australia. As in the UK, there is considerable enthusiasm here for many different types of organisations to provide services in an equally diverse range of approaches. And governments can play a useful role in creating this diversity. Interviewed for this study, Professor Geoff Gallop argued that to encourage and facilitate mutuals and cooperatives, governments need to identify and address legislative obstacles: “If you’re really serious about empowering people to do things for themselves, you’ve got to make it possible.” Gallop identified community meetings to establish local branches of the Bendigo Bank as an example of this kind of community initiative. Professor Richard Mulgan spoke of the potential for governments to, “stimulate local entrepreneurial activity and market behavior” through outsourcing: “We should be outsourcing the maintenance of Aboriginal schools to local Aboriginal maintenance firms to encourage people to set up such firms rather than by having it done by centralised bureaucracy.”

Although corporations occupy a significant role in Cameron's idealised 'Big Society', they are expected to complement a wide range of other organisations including partnerships, joint ventures and mergers involving charities, NGOs, NFPs, public servants, social entrepreneurs and enterprises. Cameron's speeches typically depict this emerging diversity as a remedy to an outmoded and stultifying state:

We've got to get rid of the centralised bureaucracy that wastes money and undermines morale. And in its place we've got to give professionals much more freedom, and open up public services to new providers like charities, social enterprises and private companies so we get more innovation, diversity and responsiveness to public need.¹⁹⁵

His government's drive for diverse providers is intended to actively involve new hybrid organisations that blend elements of the private, public and community sectors.

Spin-outs are government agencies that transform into social enterprises or joint ventures. Local government authorities in the UK have been encouraged to form these joint ventures with charities and private sector organisations. By mid-2011, there were reportedly 20 spin-outs delivering nearly £1bn of health services.¹⁹⁶ Circle Health, one example of this form of social enterprise, is jointly owned by its staff, managers and financial backers.¹⁹⁷

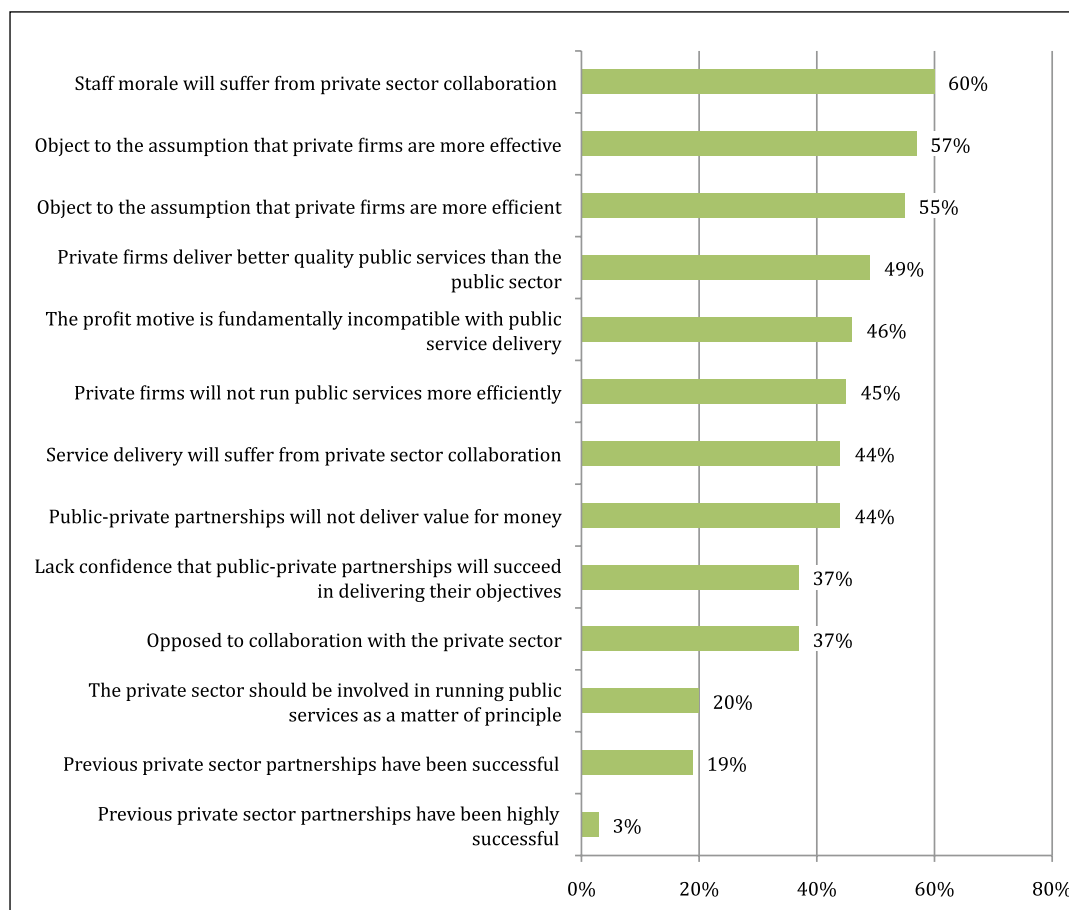
Mutuals, another form of hybrid organisation advocated by 'Big Society', are employee-owned co-operatives formed by staff from existing state providers. Cabinet Office Minister Francis Maude has predicted that by 2015, "up to one million current public sector workers, 15 per cent of the existing workforce, will be employee owners and partners in mutuals delivering public services."¹⁹⁸ Minister for Civil Society Nick Hurd has suggested the UK government can, "unlock the energy and enthusiasm" of public sector staff through mentoring and support to form social enterprises and mutuals.¹⁹⁹

There has been a cautious public response to the government's enthusiasm for mutuals and spin-outs. Commentators have warned that organisations may have difficulty blending the commercial imperative with the public service ethos to establish a shared agenda.²⁰⁰ Public servants themselves have expressed considerable reservation. Surveys of staff in the National Health Service's Primary Care Trusts in some UK counties found that up to 97 per cent are opposed to mutualisation as it is currently proposed. Their opposition has not dissuaded Cameron from his enthusiasm, leading UK Trades Union Congress leader Brendan Barber to observe, "They went ahead anyway. This wasn't about empowering employees, this was about railroading employees into a new structure that they didn't support."²⁰¹

Table 4: Pros and cons associated with ‘mutuals’ ²⁰²

Claimed benefits of mutuals	Concerns about mutuals
Smaller organisations are often considered better at preserving creativity and innovation while larger organisations are considered more likely to adopt processes that control their staff.	Will they have the culture, expertise and resources necessary to make a real difference to public services?
A small team can keep hold of the reins by simply shouting over the desk to one another, making decisions very quickly and then acting rapidly.	Will mutuals be genuinely different to the organisations they are replacing?
Services tend to be more personalised and bespoke which brings with it an increased ability to manage demand.	Profit taking and organisational culture that contradicts the ‘public service ethos’.
Deliver better services and increased savings.	The public service reform framework may not deliver maximum value.

The vision of public service agencies and departments forming partnerships and evolving into these new hybrid organisations is not shared by senior public sector managers. Responding to a 2011 survey, a significant proportion warned of impacts on staff morale, service quality and efficiency, and the actual success of previous partnerships.

Figure 8: Senior public sector managers' views toward privatisation²⁰³

These survey results are especially concerning in the context of a rapid trend toward public-private partnership. In 2011, 17 per cent of public sector organisations were estimated to deliver more than 40 per cent of services through partnerships with private and community sector organisations. Aided by 'Big Society' initiatives, this is expected to more than double to 38 per cent by 2014.²⁰⁴

Commissioning corporations in the UK

“ What will Any Willing Provider in public services actually mean in practice? In three words, it will mean: lots more competition. To some, especially in the public sector, this spells duplication, chaos, a race to the bottom and bullying private companies, squashing the rest. To others, particularly in the private, social enterprise and voluntary sectors, it means diversity of supply, innovation, choice and efficiency, as organisations vie for new business.

Craig Dearden-Phillips, *The Guardian*²⁰⁵

To date, corporations and other for-profit entities have dominated the commissioning process. Thirty-five of the forty main contracts awarded under the government's Work Programme went to large private businesses such as Deloitte, Serco and A4e, despite assurances from Whitehall that the process would create more opportunities for the voluntary sector.^{206,207} Trades Union General Secretary Brendan Barber describes the idea of "opening up all of our services to competition" as "ultimately a route to massive privatisation."²⁰⁸

As Phillip Blond has noted, the trend toward corporate control of service provision was established under the previous Labour government: "Under New Labour most contracts went to just three companies and there was a transfer from public to private monopoly."²⁰⁹ Blond's optimism that the requirement for diversity and payment on outcome would guard against this tendency has so far proved to be unfounded. Monopolies have thrived.

The changes have been associated with a dramatic decline in public sector employment (238,000 jobs lost in 2011) and some corresponding growth in private sector employment (96,000 jobs).²¹⁰ The trend seems set to accelerate as commissioning cascades from the national to local government. Since early 2012, local councils throughout the UK have advertised more than 600 tenders for the provision of their outsourced community services.²¹¹

The outcomes of the first two years of commissioning raise other concerns. As noted in Chapter 3 of this report, the process has disadvantaged not-for-profit organisations and very few have secured direct ('prime') contracts. Instead, some have been engaged as sub-contractors by for-profit companies, at times on terms they consider inequitable.²¹² Community sector organisations' lack of capital, a significant impediment preventing them from tendering, was meant to be addressed through the creation of Big Society Capital. In fact, most applications for the first £600 million made available through this fund came from social enterprises. Charities and other 'traditional' community organisations were not well represented, leading some commentators to express concern that (for-profit) 'social enterprises' are not yet required to adopt any particular legal structure, adhere to rules to ensure accountability, or to be appropriately regulated: "The nascent social investment market must not allow itself to be misappropriated by companies masquerading as social enterprises."²¹³

In the context of austerity measures, service cuts, and downward pressure on public sector wages, there has been considerable scrutiny of the exorbitant salary and incentive packages paid to the heads of some corporations commissioned in place of public and community sector organisations. In 2011, Serco's chief executive enjoyed an 18 per cent rise to £1.86 million, and the company's finance director received an increase of 7 per cent to £948,295.²¹⁴ This seems modest in comparison to the £8.6 million²¹⁵ received by Emma Harrison, head of the A4e corporation which is one of the main beneficiaries of the UK's outsourced Work Programme. Observers have noted that Harrison's package and the £11m received in dividends by A4e's five shareholders occurred during a period when the company failed to meet government targets to find jobs for the unemployed.²¹⁶ This is a part of broader pattern of profit-taking by the company. MP Margaret Hodge has commented on A4e's behaviour in her east London constituency,

It seems like a scam... They win the contract, and all they do is sub-contract to a perfectly adequate organisation in my borough called LifeLine, which has developed out of a church. A4e slice off 12.5 per cent.²¹⁷

Australian corporations that deliver community services are not immune to accusations of profit-taking. 'Fast' Eddy Groves, the director of ABC childcare, the subject of a case study in this report, received considerable scrutiny for his decadent lifestyle and personal profit during the corporation's boom and bust. Interviewed for this study, VCOSS director Cath Smith said of ABC, "It is true that there was sucking up of resources into shareholder profit rather than quality childcare." Her comment underscores the reality that funds channeled into excessive wages and bonuses, into advertising and promotion and even into the process of competing for government tenders are funds that are not available for actually delivering services.

Outsourcing to corporations in Australia

The scale of outsourcing and privatisation conducted by Commonwealth and State governments has led to an impression that "the cupboard is now relatively bare", that there is nothing left to outsource.²¹⁸ If this were the case, then any discussion on the merits of outsourcing public services in Australia would seem to be largely academic. However, such a view is at odds with the reality of a significant workforce of approximately 1.4 million public servants in the Australian and state governments' agencies and departments. Although both outsourcing and privatisation have occurred across a number of sectors and have sometimes been large-scale, the majority of public services remain government operations. The scattered nature of outsourcing and privatisation in Australia would make a detailed description lengthy, so only an overview is given here. The overview is sufficient to make clear that there are many public services that could potentially be outsourced or commissioned, making the question of the wisdom of doing so a continuing concern.

Several inter-related ideas are at play in this analysis and warrant brief explanation. The expression 'outsourcing' tends to describe a contractual relationship initiated by government with non-government entities for the provision of specified services. The required services and the level of funding for their provision are still defined by the state. 'Privatisation' generally signifies the transfer of ownership, operation and control of government assets, institutions and authority. Whereas outsourced functions typically continue to be controlled by government, privatisation is a clearer break from the state's responsibility and, sometimes from its regulation. The corporatisation of government functions, such as creating corporations to run public transport or water services for state or local governments, can be an intermediate step toward privatisation. Alongside the global trend toward privatisation and outsourcing, governments including ours have individualised funding for many public services through a complex system of taxes and transfers. As well as directly delivering services and performing other functions, governments provide family assistance, superannuation, private health insurance, childcare and other concessions, income support payments and cash payments.

One useful framework for describing the public sector and the extent to which it has already been dismantled or outsourced is to categorise it in terms of four core functions or 'types of work' as depicted in the figure below:

Figure 9: Four dimensions of public service work ^{219, 220}

Service delivery	Law making, rule making and policy development
Tax collection and managing government finance	Monitoring and enforcing laws and regulations

This framework is particularly appropriate in this context, because each type of work tends to have its own forms of outsourcing, as will be seen below. Examining each dimension in turn will show the extent to which further privatisation or outsourcing is possible (though not necessarily prudent).

Service Delivery

This is the type of work most commonly associated with outsourcing and privatisation, perhaps because the most dramatic form of privatisation, asset sales, are unique to this category. Other privatisation methods are also used, such as asset leases, contracts for operation/management/maintenance, and BOOT (build own operate transfer). Despite the high-profile nature of these methods, the reality is that there are still significant areas of service delivered by government.

Some areas are largely untouched by outsourcing and privatisation; for example, defence, where various support aspects have been outsourced, such as some elements of human resource management²²¹ and maintenance facilities²²², but the actual armed services remain in government hands. Of course it could be argued that there is universal agreement that such functions should remain a state responsibility,²²³ and thus there is no realistic prospect of outsourcing. However, it should be noted that private security forces were employed in Iraq to replace American military escorts, so the possibility of partial outsourcing cannot be discounted.²²⁴ Another example is postal services; although private competition exists to a degree, Australia Post is still the dominant player and has sole right to deliver letters.²²⁵ The privatisation of Australia’s oldest organisation²²⁶ is a possibility, as shown by recent moves in the UK to privatise the even older Royal Mail.²²⁷ In the Netherlands, where postal services have been privatised, citizens are visited each week by the postmen and post women of four companies: the ‘orange’ postmen of TNT Post; the ‘blue’ postmen of Sandd; the ‘yellow’ postmen of Selekt; and the ‘half-orange’ postmen of Netwerk VS. Apparently, none of these companies are prospering, and casual labour is replacing the unionised workforce.²²⁸

Other services have significant private sector involvement, but are still provided by government in the majority of cases. This can be geographically uneven due to different approaches to privatisation among the states. For example: the energy industry, where Victoria has privatised more aggressively than other states;²²⁹ or water, where South Australia is the only state to contract out its entire urban water system.²³⁰ Alternatively there can be a relatively even distribution of a minority of private sector providers, as occurs in primary and secondary schools.²³¹ In either case the possibility for an increase in private provision is possible, either by further asset sales, or by structuring the market so that private services out-compete public.

Many sectors have been heavily privatised, including finance, where the sales of the Commonwealth Bank and all banks owned by the states during the 1990s left banking entirely in private hands.

Almost all state owned insurance organisations have also been sold off. In this and some other sectors, such as telecommunications, there are often still large public bodies such as government owned Medibank Private with 33 per cent of the private health insurance market and the ABC with over 20 per cent audience share in both television and radio.²³² The privatisation of these bodies is often a serious prospect. Privatisation of Medibank was an election promise of the Howard government before it lost power in 2007.²³³ While the sale of the ABC has not had much serious discussion recently, many of its functions are being outsourced – the current trend is that the ABC has been increasing its external production.²³⁴

Law making, rule making and policy development

In this type of government work, consultancy contracts are a common form of outsourcing. Despite the fact that the making of policy and laws has been argued to be a universally agreed-on government function,²³⁵ the large number of consultants employed each year by the Australian public service suggests that the private sector may be playing a significant role in the process. Some of these contracts specifically state that they are for the provision of policy advice; others have vague descriptions such as “professional services” which could include work that has input into rule and policy formation.²³⁶ Although the current stated opinion of many politicians is in favour of reducing consultancies, in practice it seems that this will be very difficult to achieve due to shortages of specialist staff.²³⁷ During its first four years, the current government has spent almost \$2.2 billion on 17,736 consultancy contracts.²³⁸ And since both major parties are promising cuts to public service staff, the probability is that use of consultants will increase.

Co-regulation is the other way in which government responsibilities in this category are shifted to the private sector. Under some forms of co-regulation, the content of the rules to be enforced is partially or entirely developed by industry, for example, where legislation allows an industry developed code of conduct to be given legal backing and enforced by a government regulatory body.²³⁹ The implementation of co-regulatory approaches is likely to continue, since they are promoted by key international and Australian government organisations.²⁴⁰

Tax collection and managing government finance

This is probably the part of the public service which has so far seen the least outsourcing and privatisation. Consultants are used in the agencies responsible for this work, but not to the same extent as many others. For example, the Department of Treasury is the tenth lowest spender on consultants, and ATO is only the eighth highest spender on consultants despite being the second largest agency in terms of staff.²⁴¹ However, like other government agencies, funding cuts could reduce staff and increase the need for consultants.

It is also arguable that taxes are privatised when the ability to charge rates is transferred along with an asset sale in service delivery. For example, water rates are sometimes regarded as a tax, especially since they are often used to fund the construction or maintenance of infrastructure.²⁴² When water services are privatised these rates continue to be charged by the now privately owned organisations. This can also occur with other essential services such as electricity. There is systematic lobbying by corporations to privatise such services,²⁴³ and this means a pressure to privatise the effective taxes that accompany the services.

Monitoring and enforcing laws and regulations

As with the making of laws, co-regulation is a form of privatisation that occurs in this type of work. Sometimes distinguished as “quasi-regulation”²⁴⁴ these regimes may involve government input into developing codes of conduct or administrative arrangements, but the monitoring and enforcement is left to industry. Examples of this include a number of industry-based ombudsmen, of which the Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON) is a typical case.²⁴⁵ This organisation was created by the Energy industry and its membership later extended to water suppliers.²⁴⁶ EWON’s structure, designed to include representation from both industry and consumers, was approved by the government, but it is not a government entity and its operations are entirely funded by membership fees from participating energy and suppliers. Membership is required by legislation or licences for many members, but some participate on a voluntary basis.²⁴⁷ Where a complaint is made against a supplier EWON does have the ability to make a determination that is binding on the supplier. However, this power is rarely used (the last binding decision was made in 2007²⁴⁸) and the majority of complaints are resolved by facilitating negotiations.²⁴⁹ Currently, most quasi-regulatory regimes relate to the finance, energy and water industries, but similar arrangements could be introduced as alternatives to a wide range of enforcement and monitoring schemes.

Since prisons form part of the enforcement of laws, contracting their operation to corporations is another form of enforcement privatisation. This functions in a similar fashion to contracting of services discussed above, and as with services, further privatisation is possible. Although, at 17 per cent, Australia has one of the highest proportions of prisoners in privatised prisons,²⁵⁰ the potential to increase this certainly exists given that Victoria has had nearly 50 per cent of prisoners in privatised prisons.²⁵¹

Lastly, it should be noted that it is possible to outsource or privatise policing. Australia’s private policing is currently limited in scope and scale,²⁵² but an increase is possible. Indeed, such an initiative is now being considered in the UK.²⁵³ Security company G4S, which already runs British prisons and builds police stations, is bidding for administrative and operational policy services worth £1.5 billion.²⁵⁴

The Australian Government’s position on outsourcing to corporations

The potential for future outsourcing in Australia is sometimes regarded as a non-issue due to the perception that the majority of outsourcing that can occur already has occurred. As can be seen from the above, this perception is badly mistaken. The variety and scale of government activities that can be subject to outsourcing is frequently underestimated. There remain many government operations that are untouched or only lightly touched by outsourcing. Given that the scope for future outsourcing is large, and the controversy these changes create, it is important that extensive and rigorous consideration continues to be given to this issue.

The official stance of the Australian Government toward outsourcing public services can be discerned through its policies, through political speeches and through its justification for specific decisions and actions. Our closest equivalent to Cameron’s ‘Any Willing Provider’ is the National Competition Policy.²⁵⁵ Since the late 1980s, this agreement between Australian state and national governments has required all levels of government to expose their procurement activities to competition. Government agencies are required to implement ‘competitive neutrality’

so as to ensure that the private sector have access to government procurement opportunities. Different Australian governments have interpreted this policy in their own ways. For example the Queensland Government adhered to the policy but set targets for the share of government building and infrastructure projects that its public works department would retain. Other state governments acted on the assumption that where the policy puts public and private providers in competition with each other, public will be displaced by private.²⁵⁶

When the Government led by John Howard announced its intention to outsource the operations of Australia's immigration detention centres in 1996, a government committee reported that the Government of the day had formed the view that detention services "should be contestable."²⁵⁸ Following the 2007 change in government, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd extended this principle to service delivery in general, stating that,

The question of how services are best delivered has not been resolved conclusively in favour of either the market or the state. In some instances, the public sector may provide services that are of better quality, are more accessible, or that come at a lower cost. In other instances, private or community sector provision may reflect a better use of limited public resources.²⁵⁹

Mr Rudd stopped well short of David Cameron's anti-state position, though, and assured public service managers that he did not have an "ideological preference for the public sector, nor for the private sector." More recently, in its 2009 Procurement Statement, the Australian Government stated that it will "only contract out when it is in the public interest, having regard to such considerations as the quality and accessibility of services and the implications for affected public sector employees."²⁶⁰

Public sector observers interviewed for this study tended to consider the Australian Government favourably disposed toward outsourcing of public services.



The way that the frameworks have been established here over the last decade has been that governments have said their role is as funder and they're not concerned about who the instrument of the delivery of a program is. It doesn't matter to them if it's a for-profit or not-for-profit charity or anything else.

[Vern Hughes]

“ If you can find suppliers of a particular service in the Yellow Pages you may ask why is the government providing it. ”

*David Kemp, Minister for Education in the Howard Government, 1997*²⁵⁷

Outsourcing Australia's employment services

A key element of the UK Government 'Big Society' agenda is the Work Programme, where the provision of employment services to job seekers is commissioned to community and private sector organisations. Like some other 'Big Society' reforms, a similar system has already been put into place in Australia. A comparison of the two schemes shows that similar problems have arisen in both. This indicates that these issues are inherent to a privatised employment services regime, and are a sign that the flaws in 'Big Society' schemes rolled out in the UK are likely to be replicated if they are imported to Australia.

Australia was the first OECD nation to completely privatise its employment services.²⁶¹ The privatisation began in a limited form in 1994 under the Keating government's Working Nation program. Up to 30 per cent of the intensive and specialised case management services for the long-term unemployed were contracted out under a stringent regulatory regime.²⁶² However, in 1998 the Howard government's new Job Network program meant that all delivery was provided under contract.²⁶³ Initially around a third of the contracts were held by public providers. This reduced to less than 10 per cent in 2000, then to 3 per cent in 2003.²⁶⁴ In 2008 under a Labor government a new program, Job Services Australia, was implemented but retained the same fundamental architecture.²⁶⁵



Having a diversity of providers is really my interest. It was sparked by my involvement in the Commonwealth creation of the Job Network, with outsourced provision of job services. We were actually ahead of the UK in engaging community-based organisations in service delivery at that stage. There was also involvement from the private sector. Thérèse Rein actually developed her business model for Work Directions here in Australia which has now become so successful in France, Germany and the UK. It was because we had moved in that direction... In the UK there has been an understandable wariness about the real benefits of contracted service delivery, partly driven by the Serco effect.

[Professor Peter Shergold]

In contrast to Australia, the comprehensive outsourcing of employment services in the UK is a much more recent phenomenon. Like Australia, outsourcing had been introduced in a limited form in the 1990s.²⁶⁶ However, it was not until 2011 that the Cameron government moved toward comprehensive outsourcing under their Work Programme. Under the scheme, responsibility for delivering employment services within a region is taken on by prime contractors' who are then able to subcontract the work of delivery to clients to smaller localised organisations – 'first tier contractors' – who in turn can subcontract specific aspects of the work, such as training or drug and alcohol counselling, to 'second tier contractors'.²⁶⁷ Although public sector organisations can tender, in 2011 only one of the 40 prime contractors was a public sector organisation.²⁶⁸

“ Employment services in Australia, as throughout the world, is big business funded straight out of public budgets. Millionaires have emerged from this industry. ”

Noel Pearson ²⁷³

In Australia a number of systemic problems have become apparent with employment services outsourced to corporations. The most serious issue has been the tendency of the employment service providers to pay more attention to maximising their output measures, and less to actual assistance to the unemployed. It has been claimed that the low level of funding provided by the contracts essentially forces provider organisations to “play the system” in order to survive.^{269, 270} The tightness of the margins was demonstrated in 2003 when the government needed to provide what was in effect a \$30 million bail-out for Job Network providers.²⁷¹ In some cases playing to the incentives has led to perverse outcomes such as bribing corporations to create short-term work, and delaying finding work for clients in order to take advantage of long-term unemployed placement bonuses.²⁷²

In other cases there has been fraudulent reporting, and despite the fact that a number of examples of this were identified in 2006,²⁷⁴ new cases that came to light earlier this year²⁷⁵ show that the problem has not gone away. In addition, there are indications that the system is failing some groups that have the most difficulty finding work, such as older jobseekers.²⁷⁶ And the number of providers has decreased, leaving provision increasingly undertaken by the larger organisations. This confirms that smaller local organisations are disadvantaged by the scheme.²⁷⁷

Despite the fact that UK employment services were privatised much more recently, similar problems have already arisen. As in Australia there is a focus on outcome measurements at the expense of substantive support; one Work Programme executive stated, “It’s an outcome contract, not a service contract.”²⁷⁸ There are also indications of very tight margins.^{279, 280} Perverse outcomes are being seen, such as job seekers being forced to give up volunteering in a museum in order to work at a chain discount store for free.²⁸¹ The recent scandal surrounding prime contractor A4e indicates that fraudulent reporting may also be occurring.^{282, 283} In addition, there is evidence that some of the most vulnerable groups of jobseekers are being disadvantaged.²⁸⁴ And the difficulties for small organisations are causing severe problems.²⁸⁵

Serco: A big fish growing bigger

Why Serco?

A brief case study of Serco serves to illustrate the concerns that many in the UK express about commissioning corporations, and the risks associated with fostering a smaller number of ever-larger corporations to perform functions previously fulfilled by governments.

Six years ago Serco was described as “probably the biggest company you’ve never heard of”²⁸⁶ and this is still the case for many people. It’s a multinational corporation that specialises in providing public services under government contract. Serco operates and maintains a surprisingly large and diverse range of services in both the UK and Australia, as well as in several other countries. Its website lists some examples of the scale of its operations including: traffic management systems covering more than 17,500 kilometres of roads worldwide; managing 500,000 square kilometres of airspace in five countries; managing education authorities on behalf of local governments; and providing defence support services worldwide.²⁸⁷ Serco also manages a number of hospitals, prisons and detention centres, and is involved in a host of other services.²⁸⁸

Private sector involvement in the delivery of public services (which may take the form of privatisation, outsourcing or commissioning, or public-private partnerships) is a significant part of ‘Big Society’ thinking. The argument usually made in support of privatisation and outsourcing is that it provides better value for public money, since the competitive environment of the private sector rewards the ability to provide equal or better services at a lower cost. Arguments have also been made that it results in more locally appropriate services by encouraging a diversity of providers,²⁸⁹ and that accountability is greater in the private sector.²⁹⁰ These arguments may well be correct in some cases. However, it is a mistake to think that outsourcing will always deliver these benefits, and therefore that it is always appropriate. In the same vein, it would be simplistic to assert that government operated services are always delivered in locally appropriate ways, that they never fall short in some respects or that they are never withdrawn without consultation.

Focusing on the company Serco, there have been numerous reports of instances where its service provision has been sub-standard, high-cost, has eliminated diversity, or has lacked accountability. Putting this focus on Serco's faults is not to say that it is any more prone to failures than other corporations in this area, or that it is always unsuccessful in its service provision. Rather, the point is to show clearly the dangers of outsourcing and privatisation, and why this path must not be accepted as a universal good.

Social justice and human rights

In the delivery of essential public services, sub-standard performance can result in serious injustices and even the violation of human rights. Serco has come under particularly strong criticism in its management of prisons and detention centres. In Australian immigration detention centres there have been cases of children having their crayons banned,²⁹¹ detainees referred to only by their identity number,²⁹² and a suicide after a detainee was denied social contact and refused permission to attend an important religious event.²⁹³ There has also been evidence of security personnel with inadequate (or even no) qualifications,²⁹⁴ and a lack of mental health training for staff associated high rates of detainee self-harm and suicide attempts.²⁹⁵

In the UK, Serco-run prisons have been found by a government inspection to have a culture of "institutional meanness"²⁹⁶ which included converting two-prisoner cells to hold three by putting a bed in the shared toilet.²⁹⁷ And Serco-run youth detention centres have been found by the courts to have perpetrated a decade of unlawful abuse.²⁹⁸ The worst case was that of a fourteen-year-old boy in a juvenile detention centre, who hanged himself after being unlawfully assaulted by Serco-trained guards.²⁹⁹

Although most of the reports of sub-standard service provision have come out of prisons and detention centres, Serco has also come under criticism in other areas; such as the removal of an out-of-hours GP service from a UK community without any consultation, which raised concerns that lives could be put at risk.³⁰⁰

Value for money

The argument that outsourcing will provide better value for taxpayer money is problematic in two ways: Firstly, in seeking the lowest cost model, service quality might suffer significantly. This may be the cause of some or all of the instances of sub-standard service mentioned above. As one union representative put it, "Serco's track record in Australia in the detention centres is that they run their services very lean as far as staffing goes and that's how they make their money."³⁰¹ Secondly, the private sector is not somehow immune to inefficiency. For example, Serco and another company (G4S) have been accused of incurring excessive costs in running secure units for youth offenders,³⁰² and of paying excessive salaries to their CEOs.³⁰³

Given the complexity of many public services it is often difficult to tell whether private providers are really providing better value, and sometimes this assessment is itself outsourced, leading to further problems. Last year Serco won a tender to run a youth prison in Western Australia, as part of the tender process an estimate was made of the costs if the public sector were to run it. This estimate was made by the firm KPMG, which has previously worked with Serco on a number of projects and may have been advising Serco and the State Government at the same time.³⁰⁴

Even where assessments of value are not outsourced, private providers have the independence and financial ability to influence the process. In Bradford (UK) where Serco took over the management of all state schools, it failed to achieve the education targets set out in its original contract, but convinced the council to lower the targets and award the company a performance bonus.³⁰⁵ In Australia, the New South Wales State Premier has received advice from the former head of the Serco Institute (its research think-tank) on “ideas to save money”.³⁰⁶

Diversity

Despite claims that ‘opening up’ the public sector will result in a diversity of organisations competing to provide public services,³⁰⁷ this hasn’t occurred in practice. In fact, there are a number of service areas in which Serco has managed to become the sole provider. In Western Australia they were recently the only bidder to run a new youth prison, and currently hold all major justice contracts in the state.³⁰⁸ They also run all of Australia’s immigration detention centres, immigration residential housing and immigration transit accommodation.³⁰⁹ In the UK Serco has various monopolies including running Dublin’s traffic lights and looking after Britain’s entire nuclear arsenal from creation to decommission.³¹⁰ One English newspaper has commented: “In some parts of Britain it has taken over so many local services it is virtually indistinguishable from the council.”³¹¹

The corporation’s think tank, the Serco Institute, has stated that competition amongst private providers is a necessary precondition for the public service market to function effectively.³¹² And yet Serco’s actions have sometimes undermined competition, for example, by promising in a bid for service provision to cooperate and pass money on to charities and voluntary organisations, and then failing to do so.³¹³ Serco also undermines competition by buying up smaller outsourcing corporations.³¹⁴

Accountability and transparency

Compounding the above concerns is a lack of transparency and accountability in many outsourcing arrangements. It is possible that numerous other cases have not been revealed that involved violations of social justice, poor value for money, and/or a lack of diversity.

The problems in Australian detention centres have come to light largely due to a sustained effort by the persistent investigative journalism of one media outlet, New Matilda. During their investigation New Matilda’s team found a number of serious flaws in the accountability processes. Under the contract to run detention centres, clinical depression, childbirth, and voluntary starvation for under 24 hours, were considered “minor” incidents, which mean only 10 per cent of the responses needed to be audited, and then only internally by Serco.³¹⁵ However, unauthorised media access was considered a “critical incident.”³¹⁶ There was no obligation to comply with an independent audit, and the system relied on self-report of incidents.³¹⁷ This means that reports could simply not be filed, and there were allegations by staff of underreporting of incidents,³¹⁸ including self-harm and suicide attempts.³¹⁹

The lack of transparency prompted one senator to ask in a hearing:

So the contract whereby the list of requirements that Serco has to fulfil is not for public disclosure, the possible items that would qualify as a breach are not publicly disclosed, the performance of whether they are actually upholding or breaching that service delivery performance is not publicly disclosed — where in this process is there the public interest and transparency of this contract?³²⁰

No efforts similar to *New Matilda's* have been focused on Serco's other operations, but indications of transparency issues have been reported, such as a memorandum of understanding with the UK government being kept secret,³²¹ and a high-profile charity of which Serco was a major donor deleted part of a report that criticised privatisation due to concerns over the company's reaction.³²²

ABC Learning Centres: The perils of small government

The 'small government' zeal of the UK's 'Big Society' can have impacts that extend well beyond service delivery. As Gallop's 'four roles of government' framework (Figure 9) illustrates, the public sector also plays an active role in making laws and rules, developing, monitoring and enforcing policies and programs, and managing government finance. When these functions are neglected, there is considerable risk. This brief case study of a corporation that briefly dominated Australia's childcare industry illustrates the risks of 'small government' neglecting to regulate or monitor corporations that deliver essential community services.

Australia's approach to pre-school childcare is not an example of outsourcing or privatisation. The care has never been provided by government and so has not been outsourced; rather the childcare welfare payments to parents effectively provide a significant level of government subsidy to the industry. However, this is an area where the private sector has been expected to provide a significant proportion of the service, and this has had consequences for the quality and reliability of the care. The case of ABC Learning Centres Limited shows the risks of having large profit-driven entities responsible for the care of pre-school children.

Late 2008 saw the financial collapse of Australia's largest provider of childcare services. ABC Learning had a market share of approximately 25 per cent; it owned over 900 centres, employed more than 16,000 people, and cared for the children of more than 95,000 families.³²³ Its insolvency led to the longest period of receivership in Australia's history, required negotiations with the federal government and resulted in special subsidies to 262 unviable centres and a \$15 million loan to the eventual purchaser of the other centres.³²⁴ A critical reason for the unique approach to this insolvency was that, unlike most businesses, operations could not simply be shut down. The loss of a childcare place will, for many families, mean that one parent will not be able to go to work. Placing 95,000 families in this situation (on top of the 16,000 jobs directly threatened) simply could not be allowed to happen.

In this case, due to the scale of the problem, government action was taken. But for individuals the problem is just as severe if even one childcare centre is forced to close unexpectedly. Private sector competition means the possibility of failure, and such failure saddles young families with a difficult problem and the resulting financial and emotional stress.³²⁵ The failure of ABC Learning required government subsidies and loans, showing the need for government backing of pre-school childcare. It is interesting to note that, despite the severity of the issue, government made it clear

that it would not be taking over the operations of the centres.³²⁶ This is unsurprising since it had no capacity to do so. With the exception of local council run childcare centres, the government has no involvement with the operation of pre-school care and thus lacks the experience and institutional structures to take it on.

Even before the consequences of ABC Learning's financial failure became apparent, another issue was being raised: the quality of the care provided. It has been observed that childcare has a number of features that make it problematic for private provision.³²⁷ As well as the consequences of centre failure, the difficulty for parents of measuring the quality of care means that there is little control on the profit maximisation motive of the private sector leading to compromise on care standards. Also, the high demand and geographically uneven distribution of centres can substantially limit real choice. Empirically, a survey of staff in childcare centres indicated a significantly lower standard of care in ABC Learning centres as opposed to community-based centres (some results are given in the table below).³²⁸ Reports that some ABC Learning centres instructed their staff not to complete the surveys may mean that the worst centres are not included, so these results may be an underestimation of the problem. As well as the results listed below, other cost-cutting practices, such as not hiring professional cleaners, which reduced carer time with children, were also reported to impact on care standard in ABC Learning centres.

Table 5: Percentage of staff holding the following opinions of centre care³²⁹

	Community-based centres	ABC Learning Centres
Staff always have time to develop relationships with individual children.	54%	29%
Centre provides a good variety of equipment for children.	66%	37%
Centre always provides nutritious food.	74%	49%
Children are always provided with enough food.	80%	55%
Standard staff-to-child ratios are above legal minimum.	40%	15%
Staff ratios never drop below legal minimum.	77%	52%
I would not enroll my child at the centre due to quality concerns.	4%	18%

The problems associated with ABC Learning show clearly the risks involved with allowing childcare centres to be run by corporate chains. This is of particular concern since the proportion of childcare centres run by chains is increasing.³³⁰ This means that if childcare is left to the private sector, it could result in a reduction of the standard of care given to children, and increase the burden of uncertainty placed on young families. And the rapidity of ABC Learning's growth – from 43 centres in 2001³³¹ to 940 in 2008³³² – shows how quickly this process can accelerate.

5. ‘Big Society’ and social justice: ‘Capitalism with a conscience’?

“ It’s a novel solution to extreme inequality... inviting the rich to make money out of the poor.

Polly Toynbee, Columnist, *The Guardian* ³³³

Big Society’s social justice promise

Not least of the promises made by ‘Big Society’ champions is their intention that these changes will achieve social justice objectives. In *Red Tory*, Phillip Blond proclaimed that ‘Big Society’ would deliver, “a real political economy for the poor.”³³⁴ The “fundamental task of public service reform”, Blond asserted, is to,

change the nature of our society to ensure not just equality of opportunity but a profoundly better life for all, economically and socially... by turning organisations inside out, to make them focused on the frontline, on the people who are the arbiters and judges of what we want to achieve.³³⁵

Following Blond, David Cameron has argued that, “shifting power, control and responsibility from the central state to families and communities”³³⁶ is the best way to address the symptoms of ‘broken society’ including poverty, unemployment and inequality. While critics describe the ‘withdrawal of the state’, the Prime Minister frames self-help and volunteerism as “community self-provisioning”.³³⁷

Addressing the World Economic Forum, Cameron promised his reforms would deliver “capitalism with a conscience” and a “recapitalisation plan for the poor.”³³⁸ This ‘recapitalisation’ objective is expressed in a program to help social housing tenants buy the houses they rent. Under the program, tenants receive discounts of up to £75,000 after five years’ residency. The stated ambition of the program is to facilitate “strong families and stable communities”.³³⁹ Owning assets, according to ‘Big Society’ sympathisers, “helps develop self-reliance and responsibility, while opening up opportunity and rewards.”³⁴⁰

Previously, this report described Nat Wei’s depiction of ‘Big Society’ as a coral reef: a metaphor intended to invoke associations with diversity, mutuality and resilience. In this metaphor, Wei portrayed government as the seabed, “protecting the vulnerable and ensuring essential services.”³⁴¹

On the face of it, these expressions of Blond and Cameron’s social justice concerns and assurances are appealing. While society may not be ‘broken’ (as this report explores in Chapter 6), both the UK and Australia have significant and growing inequality.



Measuring social justice in the UK and Australia

One method to measure equality is to compare how much richer the top 1, 10 or 20 per cent of people are in comparison to the same proportion at the bottom. In the UK, the average income of the richest 10 per cent of earners in 2008 was almost twelve times that of the bottom 10 per cent of the population, up from eight times in 1985.³⁴² A similar pattern is evident in Australia. Between 1980 and 2010, the richest 1 per cent of Australians saw their share of total national income almost double, from 4.8 per cent in 1980 to 8.8 per cent in 2008. Moreover, the share held by the richest 0.1 per cent rose from 1 per cent to 3 per cent. This reflects, in part, the changing marginal income tax rates paid by high income earners, which dropped from 60 per cent in 1981 to 45 per cent in 2010.³⁴³



There has to be a state that has decent revenue and good objectives... The argument ought to be about having the tax base, the revenue and the commitment.

[Professor Geoff Gallop]

An alternative measure of inequality, the Gini coefficient (or index), is expressed as a numerical indicator between zero, representing perfect equality, and a number closer to one to indicate rising inequality.³⁴⁴ Since the mid 1980s, both Australia and the UK have experienced increasing inequality. In fact, according to this index, both are among the OECD's most unequal ten countries (the UK is fourth and Australia sixth).³⁴⁵ A growing proportion of citizens experience material deprivation, routinely missing out on goods or services that they consider essential. A recent survey discovered that 15 per cent of Australians are unable to afford at least 3 of 24 essential goods and services, and that welfare recipients are up to four times more likely to experience this 'multiple deprivation'.³⁴⁶

The trend toward greater inequality is confirmed by examining household income and net worth. Since the 1950s, Australia's top earners have received a growing proportion of the nation's income. At the end of the 1970s, the top 1 per cent took home 4.8 per cent of total income. Since then, this has climbed to 8.8 per cent.³⁴⁷ Income inequality is at its highest since the First World War in the majority of OECD countries.³⁴⁸ In 2009-10, the wealthiest 20 per cent of households accounted for 62 per cent of total household net worth, with average net worth of \$2.2 million per household. The poorest 20 per cent of households accounted for just 1 per cent of total household net worth and had an average net worth of \$32,000 per household.³⁴⁹

In Australia, as in the UK, disadvantage is unevenly distributed. There is a strong geographic pattern to socioeconomic status, influenced by proximity to employment, informal job networks, the demographic characteristics of a neighbourhood and other factors.³⁵⁰ Some towns and cities are experiencing much higher levels of disadvantage and dysfunction than others. These indicators depict worrying social trends. Public policy changes to redress them are urgently required.

Doubts and concerns

From the outset, many observers warned that 'Big Society' would fail to achieve its stated social justice objectives. Instead, it was expected to contribute to adverse impacts and actually create or exacerbate a range of social problems.

Neglecting government's redistributive role

One of the major reservations about 'Big Society' is that it, "pays no attention to forces within modern capitalism that lead to accumulations of wealth and power in the hands of a few at the expense of others."³⁵¹ Unlike measures such as progressive taxation, it has an unclear redistributive logic:

Doesn't all of this require an absolutely vital redistributive role for the state to make all of this happen?³⁵²

The potential for corporations, wealthy individuals and the largest not-for-profit organisations to amass further wealth, while those with fewer assets or less capacity are further disadvantaged, has been illustrated in chapters 3 and 4 of this report.

Under-investment in communities

The ‘Big Society’ vision assumes that social investors are eager to fill the space vacated by government. It is likely, however, that some communities will be considered more attractive locations for investment and that less viable neighbourhoods may “face effective abandonment by the public, profit and non-profit sectors alike.”³⁵³ Without investment, the long-term work of community building, even in areas where volunteers are readily mobilised, will be impossible.

Individuals who are already disadvantaged will be hardest hit

The New Economics Foundation warned in 2010 that, “individuals who are already marginalised by poverty and powerlessness will be left behind by the Big Society.”³⁵⁴ Others cautioned that the cumulative impacts of Cameron’s budget and public service cuts would be “difficult to anticipate but could have the potential to ‘tip’ particular groups or places over vulnerability thresholds, leading to the generation of additional more intense problems or needs.”³⁵⁵

Philanthropy and volunteerism are limited and unevenly distributed

Just as private schools in Australia attract the vast majority of donations³⁵⁷, philanthropy is not necessarily most available where it is most needed – or could make the biggest difference. ‘Big Society’ critics have cautioned that the changes may result in, “a return to the days when the weakest in society were reliant on the philanthropy of the strongest.”³⁵⁸ This concern extends to volunteerism and its potential to fill the gap following the withdrawal of the state. Research in the UK found that the majority of local volunteers are of European descent, middle and upper class, middle aged or older, and well educated.³⁵⁹ This underscores the risk that a shift from government-delivered services to reliance on volunteers will compound inequality:

The Big Society may be biggest where it could be smaller (the most affluent areas) and smallest where it needs to be biggest (the most deprived).³⁶⁰

Researchers compared cities in the UK (Bristol) and United States (Baltimore) to understand the limits to relying on volunteers in the context of government withdrawal. In both cities, they described the consequences as ‘abandonment’ and ‘ghettoisation’.³⁶¹

Not everyone can equally ‘help themselves’

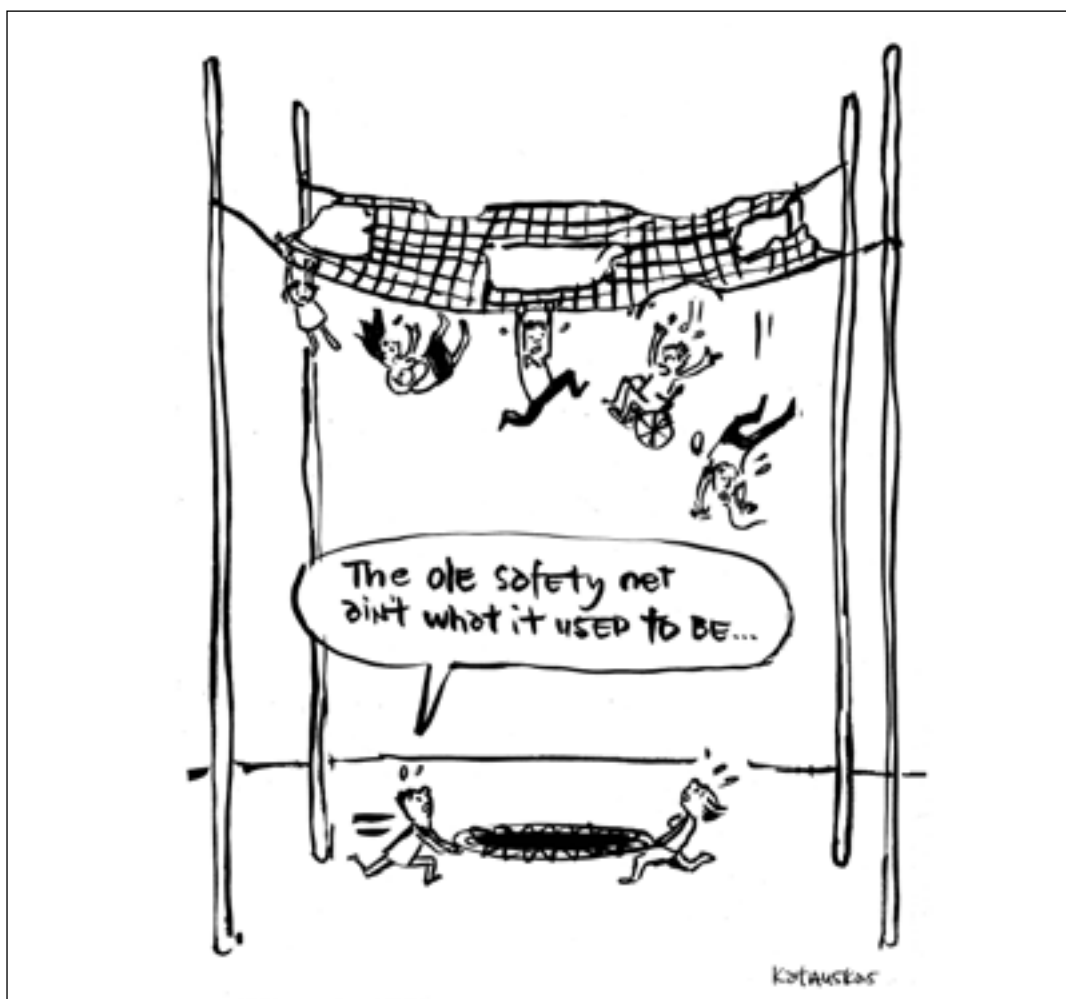
However appealing the references to ‘self-help’ may be, not all community members have the skills and capabilities to assert their own interests. The loss of public service agencies that provide professionals to act on their behalf can compound the disadvantage and marginalisation of members of minority and vulnerable groups.³⁶²

Australia’s commitment to a ‘safety net’

Australian public sector commentators share their UK counterparts’ concern that the withdrawal of the state could worsen inequality and disadvantage, not strengthen communities. There is a strong tradition in Australia, reinforced by enduring community expectations, that the state will play an active role in society. Our public policies have often been framed around the notion of a ‘safety net’ or social guarantee that the government will ensure provision of all citizens’ basic needs. Australian Governments have committed to ensuring all citizens receive this ‘social wage’, not only citizens who are especially disadvantaged or vulnerable.

“ This is Wikipedia
government, collectively
created by the impassioned,
the invested, or the bored.”

Lauren Collins, *The New Yorker* ³⁵⁶



This idea of the state's inalienable obligation to provide a 'safety net' was a strong theme emerging during the interviews conducted for this study.



The government has an overarching role to set the minimum standards of citizenship and resume responsibility for income support and services to each and every Australian citizen. That can't be shared or given away to anybody or it won't happen, as we saw in the 19th Century.

[Professor Paul Smyth]



A reasonable person will want a society where they get a fair go. And that means they'll want equal rights, they'll want voting, accountable government and they'll want access to health, education at the highest standard and that their children can go to the top since there'll be a hierarchy in any economy I suspect and that means state action to make all that happen.

[Professor Geoff Gallop]



I think that there is an acceptance in the community that even though something might not be run by the state, the state still has a hand in some quality control mechanism and accountability. There needs to be very strong regulation, accountability and transparency. Part of what makes our lives more secure is knowing you can go to a hospital when you are sick, you don't have to pay for that. You pay for it in your taxes. Your children will get a good education regardless of where you live. There is an argument to say that this, what you're talking about as Big Government, is very much part of security in people's lives.

[Ged Kearney]



We can't have government stepping away from its responsibility for social policy and for the infrastructure of social security and support in order to make way for social enterprise as the way to deal with people with low incomes. We (Australians) still value those principles. It would be one thing to maximise the capacity of corporates, philanthropics and individuals to engage in community service. It's another thing to draw back state support and the integral responsibility of state for those directions assuming that corporates, philanthropists and individuals can pop up.

[Tessa Boyd-Caine]

Reality bites

Almost two years into the implementation of 'Big Society', there is growing evidence that these concerns were well founded. Three studies released since January have confirmed the adverse social justice consequences of Cameron's changes.

In January this year, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation reported on the impact of Cameron's local government funding cuts.³⁶³ As noted elsewhere in this report, many local government authorities had either scaled back or entirely abandoned services. This report contradicted the idea that 'Big Society' would only affect people who were already disadvantaged, presenting evidence of significant cuts "across an extensive range of services from across the spectrum of pro-rich to pro-poor in terms of usage and benefit."³⁶⁴ The effects were not being equally experienced, though. There has been a "pronounced tendency for cuts to affect adversely services aimed at or heavily used by young people", with many Councils cutting youth services entirely and cutting back subsidised transport services. The Rowntree report also revealed that local government authorities in the most deprived areas were cutting services more significantly in both proportionate and absolute terms than those in more affluent areas.³⁶⁵ The authors concluded that,

The evidence this far is mixed then as to whether English local government can continue to serve deprived communities.³⁶⁶

In March, a report prepared for the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations was leaked to the media. Cameron created the £100 million ‘Transition Fund’ for community groups worst hit by his cuts. The Association’s report examined the 1,725 organisations that applied for assistance, having collectively experienced funding cuts of £524 million. Parts of Britain described as ‘deprived’ dominated the applications: 450 groups in the 20 most deprived areas faced cuts of £142 million. By contrast, only 22 groups located in the UK’s richest areas applied, having experienced £3.6 million cuts.³⁶⁷

In April, the New Economics Foundation (NEF) released another damning report on the social impacts of ‘Big Society’.³⁶⁸ Their research concludes that the effects are being felt most by traditionally vulnerable groups: women, young people, the disabled and the elderly. As predicted, “the most vulnerable groups in society – those with the most complex needs, who are more reliant than most on public services – are bearing the brunt of the public sector cuts.” NEF also observed that public spending cuts are “erasing years of investment in local communities” and creating changes that are potentially “profound and long lasting”, especially in deprived areas. Community services and facilities are disappearing and “will be hard to replace.”

6. Unpacking spin from substance

Just as ‘Big Society’ refers to a suite of changes in the size and role of the public sector, it should be observed as its own brand with an active public relations campaign sounding its policy message. David Cameron is considered a ‘PR guru’³⁶⁹ having worked in public relations for several years, in roles including director of corporate affairs for television company Carlton prior to being elected as Prime Minister. When he first began to use the phrase ‘big society’ some commentators considered this a “re-branding exercise designed to distance the party from Thatcherism and, in particular, the ‘no such thing as society’ libertarian rhetoric of Thatcher herself.”³⁷⁰ The idea that unpalatable public policies and programs can be simply ‘rebranded’ is equally appealing in Australia. *Sydney Morning Herald* columnist Nigel Farndale recently suggested that capitalism, “needs rebranding” and referred to ‘Big Society’ as a “more responsible capitalism.”³⁷¹ The marketing campaign for ‘Big Society’ in the UK has been well funded and aggressive: daily media releases from the Prime Minister’s office, slogans, logos, billboards and competitions.

However, ‘Big Society’ is more than a rebrand. It represents an exercise in framing, a communication technique to emphasise the elements of proposed changes (such as new public policies or budget decisions) that appeal to the broadest constituency and de-emphasise elements that are less appealing or that are likely to engender resistance.

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation.³⁷²

Effective frames are contagious, often developing a life of their own. Designed and planned well, they have a subversive power and once established, are difficult to negate. This aspect of framing is captured neatly in the title of George Lakoff’s bestselling *Don’t Think of an Elephant*.³⁷³ The mental picture of an elephant conjures up compelling associations that are hard to dismiss. The instruction not to think of an elephant is intentionally ironic as it’s almost impossible not to when one hears the word. Similarly, ‘Big Society’ instantly communicates positive associations: ‘big’ (more, ample, generous, resilient, universal, assuring) and ‘society’ (people, trust, cooperation, connectedness, safety, comfort) both of which are powerful trigger words.

Cameron and the UK Government pepper their ‘Big Society’ communication with other trigger words to evoke positive associations including ‘community’, ‘partnerships’, ‘freedom’ and ‘diversity’. Through repetition and association, this lexicon anticipates and neutralises criticisms of the ‘Big Society’ program: “After all, who could argue with being nicer to your neighbours? Or devoting more time to the community?”³⁷⁴

Like other forms of persuasive communication, framing has considerable utility in propaganda.



It’s something they dreamt up in the UK when they realised the bottom had fallen out of the national economy and there was no money to spend. So they had to put a gloss on cuts really. What better way to do that than to wheel out the Big Society idea, that society would take up the slack?

[Professor Paul Smyth]

A recent Australian example of powerfully persuasive framing is the political contest around industrial relations legislation between 2005 and 2007. The Howard government referred to their legislative changes as ‘WorkChoices’, combining two words that each carry powerfully positive associations. ‘Choices’ invokes a rhetoric of individual freedom and the notion that individual bargaining and agreement making under WorkChoices would empower individual employees, giving them more options for how they organised their working lives.

Howard’s industrial relations changes triggered a major campaign, led by the Australian Council of Trade Unions. The ‘Your Rights at Work’ campaign was framed in an equally sophisticated and persuasive manner. Built around a ‘rights’ frame, the campaign appealed to employees’ fears that they would be disempowered and vulnerable under the proposed regime, and that individual agreement making (Australian Workplace Agreements) would reduce protections for low paid and other employees.

Australians were told... that the safety net had been gutted, that those responsible for administering the remaining tatters of the impoverished safety net had no obligation to be fair in any way; that workers had lost their defences against imperious employers who wanted to dismiss them capriciously, that hapless workers would be forced to accept exploitation by the employers’ ability to coerce them into the individualistic and unequalled bargained-for AWAs, a clear indication—if ever there was one—that the Work Choices scheme really was a No Choices regime.³⁷⁵

The campaign amplified the benefits of collective action by coordinating rallies in hundreds of Australian cities and towns and sustaining local community action in the lead-up to the 2007 federal election.

Both the Howard-led Coalition and the post-2007 Australian Labor Party government adopt persuasive language to communicate their unemployment policies. Research by the Whitlam Institute suggests that the Coalition’s framing has dominated this debate,³⁷⁶ entrenching the frame that people are unemployed due to their own (preventable) behaviour and values. The 2002 Jobseeker Attitudinal Survey, for instance, categorised job seekers into categories that included ‘cruisers’, ‘determined’ and ‘selectives’. The ‘frame’ that many individuals choose to become or remain unemployed was reinforced by Labor’s description of the newly unemployed during the global financial crisis as people who were “unemployed through no fault of their own”.

Another illustration of the Howard Government’s effective use of framing was their 1995-2006 push to diminish student unionism in Australia under the slogan of ‘voluntary student unionism’. ‘Voluntary’ is a powerful frame that evokes notions of individual freedom and choice. Student union activists were at a loss to respond, not least because they realised the persuasive disadvantage of campaigning for ‘compulsory’ unionism. Their alternative ‘universal student unionism’ was a much less powerful frame.

A current example of how framing can influence public policy is the Gillard government’s ‘price on carbon’. By framing this as a ‘tax’, opponents have created the perception that households and small businesses will be directly affected. In reality, households will receive tax breaks that compensate for the indirect effects when 500 Australian companies pay to pollute. This framing, reinforced by opponents including climate skeptics, polluters, state governments and media commentators, has contributed to community concerns and opposition.

Elements of the ‘Big Society’ frame

At the heart of the ‘Big Society’ framing is the idea that the public sector is over-grown, dysfunctional and inefficient. Two interviewees in this study commented on this notion.



The narrative where the Big Society draws some of its sustenance is that the traditional hierarchical, bureaucratic and monolithic state is broken. The sense that you’re up against the great big beast that we built over the last 50 to 60 years... that we’ve reached the end of the road there.

[Martin Stewart-Weeks]

Professor Helen Sullivan who researched issues associated with ‘Big Society’ in the UK before taking up a professorship with the University of Melbourne commented that,



Big Society language and documentation rarely engages clearly with notions of the state in anything other than the state as the thing that wastes money, prevents you from doing things or isn’t innovative. In the UK, notions of an attachment to the state are shared by far fewer people than would have been the case twenty to thirty years ago. The (Cameron) Coalition is just taking that one step further and saying we should only resort to the state when we’ve exhausted every other option. I don’t think most people are there but there’s certainly a conversation going on in the UK which is much less sympathetic to the state than there would have been twenty years ago.

[Professor Helen Sullivan]

This criticism of the public sector is also heard in Australia. Notwithstanding Australians’ strongly positive attitudes toward public services (summarised in CPD’s recent ‘State of the Australian Public Service’ report³⁷⁷), attitudes toward the administrative or bureaucratic function of government are far less positive. Concluding the 1977 Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration, H.C. (Nugget) Coombs observed that, “the most frequent criticism... is based on outright hostility to the size and cost of the public bureaucracy.”³⁷⁸

The ‘Big Society’ frame frequently invokes five other elements:

- » The private sector is inherently more efficient and productive than the public sector;
- » Making the public sector smaller is necessary to make the community sector (‘society’) bigger;
- » Self-reliant communities are stronger than those that rely on the state;
- » Responsibility versus entitlement; and
- » ‘Broken society’.

The first four of these elements are discussed in chapters 2, 3 and 4. The fifth element, ‘broken society’, is worth particular attention. It is the ‘problem’ that ‘Big Society’ is meant to solve, and is likely to be less familiar to public sector observers in Australia.

‘Broken’ Society

‘Big Society’ is posed as a remedy to ‘Big Government’ and to a ‘broken society’ – the notion that British society is experiencing a crisis in self-reliance and autonomy brought about through an interventionist and over-reaching state. This notion was popularised in Tory leader Iain Duncan Smith’s 2006 report *Breakdown Britain* which focused on broken families and welfare reliance. Phillip Blond extended the metaphor to encompass a “wholesale collapse of British culture, virtue and belief.”³⁷⁹ The ‘Big Society’ frame is built on assertions about declining levels of trust, connectedness, partnerships and mutual reliance. These problems are stated as truisms without evidence, a pattern repeated by Australian conservatives such as the Institute of Public Affairs’ Chris Berg who restated uncritically Blond’s assertion that the British government “crowded out civil society organisations and undermined social capital.”³⁸⁰

It is worth quoting Blond at length on the social problems that ‘Big Society’ is intended to remedy. Signs of a ‘broken society’ include,

increasing fear, lack of trust and abundance of suspicion, long-term increase in violent crime, loneliness, recession, depression, private and public debt, family break-up, divorce, infidelity, bureaucratic and unresponsive public services, dirty hospitals, powerlessness and the rise of racism, excessive paperwork, longer and longer working hours, children who have no parents, concentrated and seemingly irremovable poverty, the permanence of inequality, teenagers with knives, teenagers being knifed, the decline of politeness, aggressive youths, the erosion of our civil liberties and the increase of obsessive surveillance, public authoritarianism, general pointlessness, political cynicism and a pervading lack of daily joy.³⁸¹

Evidence to justify these indicators of a ‘broken society’ is weak, at best, and often entirely absent from ‘Big Society’ advocacy. This is, after all, a rhetorical device rather than robust or independent research. One interviewee noted that it serves to steer attention to the symptoms of inequality rather than the causes.



If you want to use the language of British society as ‘broken’ then the causes and the things that need to be addressed are increasing inequality, tax avoidance by the rich, etcetera rather than the lifestyles of the poor.

[Professor Helen Sullivan]

Another interviewee commented that Blond’s interest in community self-reliance is an important part of the Australian debate about the role of the state. Martin Stewart-Weeks commented that although Australian society is not ‘broken’ it has, “lost some of its reflexes and collective muscle and ability to do stuff it once did do for itself... Perhaps our sense of collective responsibility... each to the other... has been eroded somewhat by a combination of a creeping public sector, corporatism and consumerism.”

“ What is big about a society which takes £1 billion pounds out of social care budgets, especially those of older adults, at a time when the population is getting older and the social care needs are getting greater? What is big about a society where every two minutes someone is made homeless and where the health impacts of temporary accommodation are increasingly recognised as traumatic and long lasting? What is big about a society which imprisons more people per head of population than virtually any other western country – oh, apart from the United States? What is big about a society where cases of adult harm number about 30,000 a year and where instances of domestic violence and abuse are rocketing – at the same time as legal aid support for such victims is being withdrawn? What is big about a society where the UK Children’s Commissioners have today warned of the dangers of thousands of families being pushed into poverty by benefit cuts? What is big about a society where according to last week’s *Lancet* 1 in 12 children and young people self-harm?

Dr David Macaskill, ‘Equal and Diverse’³⁸²

Neutralising opposition; Staking out the middle ground

Framing establishes associations that can be more powerful than evidence. It is not necessary that these persuasive expressions correspond directly or causally to the specific institutional and economic changes that ‘Big Society’ proposes for the relationship between the public, private and community sectors. If Cameron’s political opponents question or challenge ‘Big Society’, they can be depicted as being opposed to the positive values with which it is associated. The UK Labour opposition has found this especially difficult because these are values that have long been espoused by the Left, including the Labour Party.



The Big Society is this wonderful cricket bat to whack the Left.

[Professor Geoff Gallop]

Addressing a 2011 conference, Opposition leader Ed Miliband committed Labour to reclaiming the ‘Big Society’ as an idea consistent with its values rather than those of conservative parties. Invoking his political opponents’ frame, Miliband promised to “rebuild a grassroots movement that would go beyond the bureaucratic state”³⁸³ and criticised members of his own Party whose belief that “the state knew best” left Labour “remote from the people it existed to serve... ‘We became too technocratic and managerial... we sometimes lost sight of people as individuals and of the importance of communities.’” Philip Blond interpreted Miliband’s mea culpa as confirmation that David Cameron had “rightly recognised the ‘Big Society’ as the new centre ground of British Politics.”³⁸⁴ Maurice Glasman, academic and ‘social thinker’ summarised this contrast between Labour and the Tories by describing ‘Big Society’ as “the most successful neologism of the 2010 general election... a political discussion that the left needs to join.”³⁸⁵

The appropriation by conservative (right wing) politicians of values that are conventionally associated with the left is neatly encapsulated in the title of Blond’s book ‘Red Tory’. Glasman retaliated to Blond “nicking” Labour traditions by coining the similarly oxymoronic expression ‘Blue Labour’. This proposed revitalisation within the British Labour Party, Glasman argues, will entail articulating traditional Labour values such as family, faith, patriotism and a commitment to place while embracing an active yet finite role for the state.³⁸⁶ To date, ‘Blue Labour’ has failed to capture the public imagination or build political momentum.

Oxymorons and lies

“If you repeat a lie often enough, it becomes the truth.”

Joseph Goebbels

Persuasive frames can have a compelling power even when they are built on falsehoods and contradictions. For decades, the tobacco industry drew on concocted evidence from the medical profession that ‘smoking is good for you’, including doctors’ endorsements in their advertising. The rhetoric of ‘Big Society’ is regularly analysed in the British media and in social media such as the #bigsociety discussion on Twitter which drew attention to these contradictions.



The six elements of the ‘Big Society’ frame identified above are frequently invoked in public sector commentary in Australia. Assertions that the public sector is overgrown and the ‘surplus fetish’ of both major political parties in Australia that is expressed in proposed cuts to public service budgets have been examined in recent CPD publications.^{387, 388} In our interviews with public sector analysts and commentators, we asked how ‘Big Society’ arguments were relevant to Australian realities.

Geoff Gallop commented on the assertion that the Australian economy cannot sustain a 'big' government and the associated conviction that it is necessary to cut public sector spending in order to achieve a budget surplus. He argued that, on the contrary, a strong state is crucial in order to, for example, redistribute wealth, respond to crises such as the GFC or terrorism and care for the environment.



We have to increase tax. If you want a balanced economy that delivers reasonable outcomes for all people, you've got to redistribute. If it's just about cutting expenditure under the guise of Big Society, it's a con job. Because you're not trying to create Big Society.

[Professor Geoff Gallop]

On the question of public sector funding cuts, Cath Smith, CEO of the Victorian Council of Social Services commented on the duplicity of exhortations for the community to "take responsibility for itself" coinciding with significant funding cuts in government programs.

Professor Paul Smyth commented on the asserted community benefits of commissioning public services to 'Any Willing Provider': "You claim to be animating community, civil society and people's civic virtues but you're just contracting a multi-national provider who doesn't even belong in the country."

Eric Sidoti commented on the values associated with 'Big Society'.



If you look at the broad principles that Cameron outlines, a lot of us have sympathy with those. Of course we want more control in the hands of communities as appropriate. Of course we want people to be able to feel as if they have a stronger stake in their democracy and of course we want people to watch out for each other. All of those things are noble and worthy. But 'Big Society' doesn't necessarily deliver them, that's the problem.

[Eric Sidoti]

Similar criticisms are made in the UK, where public sector researchers and advocates express deep reservations about the relationship between Cameron's rhetoric and the likely (or actual) impacts of 'Big Society' changes.

Perhaps the 'big society' is not simply a marketing tool and Cameron really believes this to be true. Either way, it is pure fantasy.³⁸⁹

The gap between 'Big Society' rhetoric and the reality of its impacts is well illustrated by examining its application to the UK Government's environmental responsibilities and programs. The logic of 'Big Society' is that community – rather than government – leadership is effective in changing attitudes and behaviours and contributing to sustainability: "Whether through dealing with the snow and ice or, in less chilly times, keeping the streets free of litter, the locality-specific approach to creating environmentally responsible communities and creating greener neighbourhoods is the essence of any Big Green Society."³⁹⁰ There is an extensive body of research that highlights the benefits of actively involving communities in 'wicked' problems.

There is growing evidence that the changes implemented by the Cameron government have, in fact, had the opposite impact. Following the 2010 funding cuts, half of the UK’s local government authorities cut environmental regulation and between one third and one quarter scaled back their environmental programs and services.³⁹¹ In Scotland, the long-term protection of seals in the Moray Firth is jeopardised by the devolution of government responsibilities and inadequate financial and institutional support.³⁹² Rather than actively engaging communities in a long-term collaborative relationship, government agencies have been forced to withdraw from them. The perverse environmental consequences of Cameron’s public sector changes diminish its persuasive potential and instead have been used to argue for a stronger state:

Big society has become a toxic brand... What we face now is the ‘big reality’. It’s bigger than just society because in addition to our societal and economic ills, we have to factor in rocketing energy costs and a growing awareness that plundering our planet is not sustainable.³⁹³

Depictions of an inefficient public sector and efficient, motivated community and private sectors are integral to ‘Big Society’ rhetoric. Ross Gittins, economic editor for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, recently commented on the misconception that, “the private sector is productive – it generates the wealth and creates the jobs – whereas the public sector is essentially parasitic.” Gittins responded that, “Everyone who works is productive and everyone who earns and spends income pays taxes, regardless of their sector.”³⁹⁴

Equally, champions of a smaller public sector³⁹⁵ rely on the twin assertions that Australia over-invests in public services and that – accordingly – Australian citizens and companies pay high taxes. Figures 10, 11 and 12 (below) dispel these misconceptions. In reality, Australia’s rates of individual and company taxation are very low by OECD standards, and Australia invests considerably less than the OECD average in its public sector.

Figure 10: Comparison of 2008 public spending as a proportion of GDP³⁹⁶

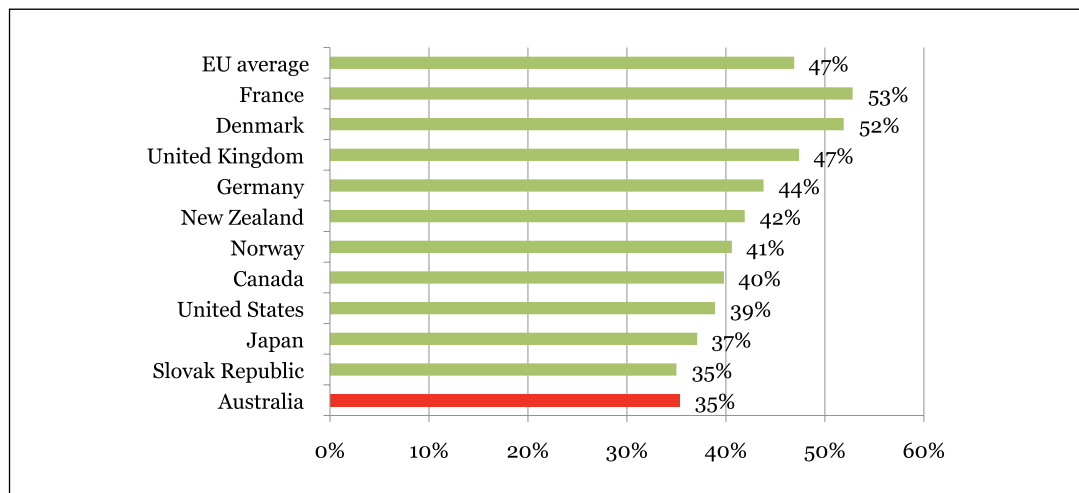


Figure 11: Taxation levels for a worker with an average wage (single, no children)³⁹⁷

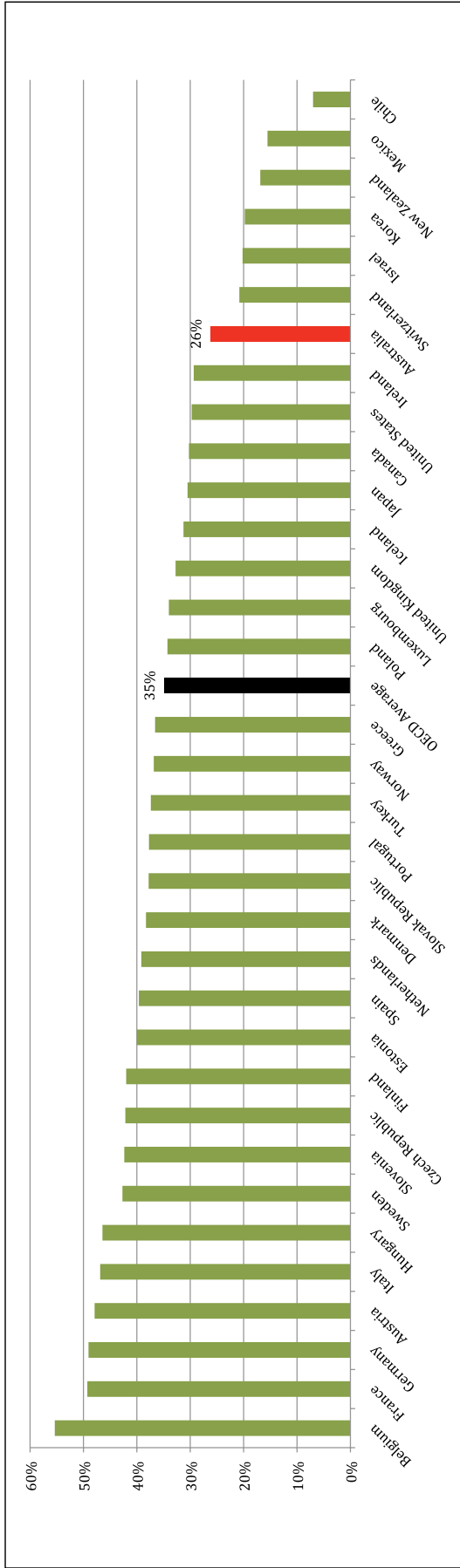
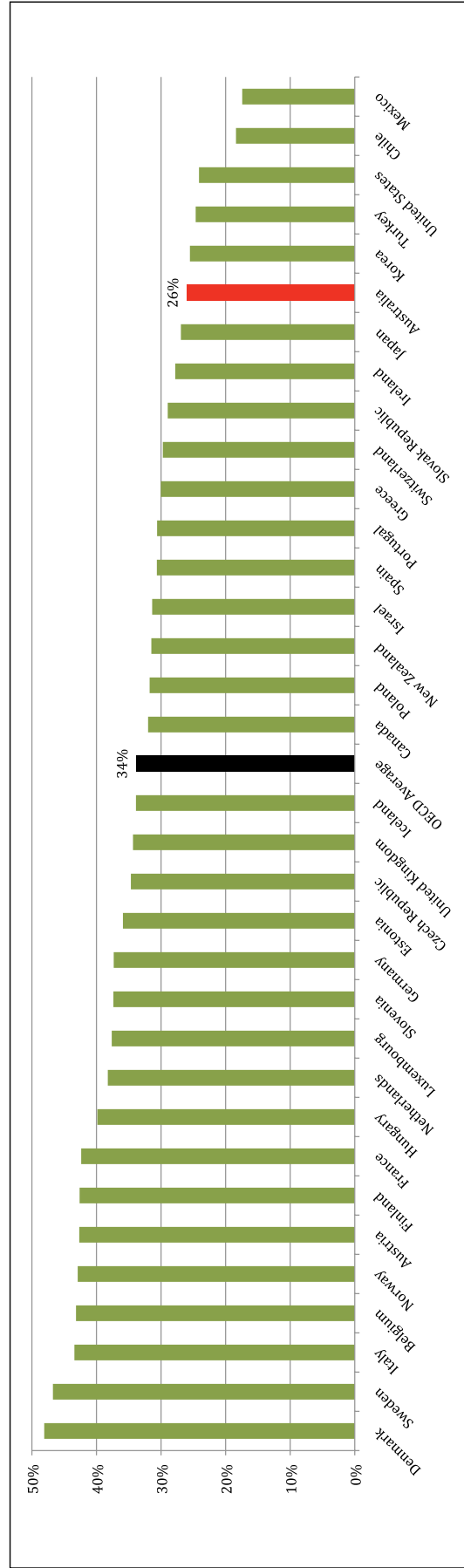


Figure 12: Total tax burden as a percentage of GDP³⁹⁸



7. 'Big Society' or 'Good Society'?



A #goodsociety not a #bigsociety is what we as a society should strive for. Our #NHS is an example of this. Protect it.

@Rosiecosy

This report focuses on the concerns expressed in the United Kingdom and Australia about 'Big Society' changes. The depth and breadth of these concerns support the conclusion that 'Big Society', as concocted by Blond, Hilton and others and implemented by David Cameron's Tory Government, has been an unmitigated disaster. Its impacts have been the inverse of its stated intention and have already caused long-term damage. It is not sufficient, though, to simply conclude that this misadventure in public policy has been disastrous and should be reversed. If 'Big Society' is the problem, what is the solution?

As an alternative to 'Big Society', the Centre for Policy Development advocates a 'Good Society'. This approach has been developed by theorists including Roberto Unger and J.K.Galbraith. Obviously, there are differing views about what constitutes the good society:

There can be no grand design... Every vision is – rightly – different and particular. Democracy is the conversation amongst equals to determine what constitutes the good life and the good society.³⁹⁹

There are, however, points of convergence. Visions of a Good Society usually recognise that widely shared social values like freedom and fairness should underpin public policy to the greatest possible extent. Where such values come into conflict, and trade-off choices between them need to be embodied in principles for policy-making, then as many citizens as possible should have access to the information and influence they need to affect how such decisions are made.

The late NGO sector expert Mark Lyons advocated a definition of the 'Good Society' characterised by tolerance, social justice and equality, and media and public spaces in which these ideals are "advocated and resisted."⁴⁰⁰ In one of the Centre for Policy Development's first reports, 'Reclaiming our Common Wealth: Policies for a fair and sustainable future', we argued that some widely shared social values were being neglected due to a failure to maintain the capacity to face society-wide problems as a society, rather than as isolated individuals acting on our own. We argued that a Good Society can only be sustained if we invest in our common wealth, as well as our private wealth. Many of our arguments are in line with long-term trends in public opinion summarised in CPD's 2011 *State of the Australian Public Service* report. The core tenets of our vision are articulated in Table 6 (below).

Table 6: CPD's vision of the 'Good Society'⁴⁰¹

Elements of a Good Society	What it means
Measuring what matters	Going beyond GDP and other narrow economic measures as indicators of progress – for example incorporating measures of social wellbeing, trust, inequality, sustainability, income security and resilience. Citizens' own views on what progress means should be incorporated into long-term, transparent indicators.
Government providing public goods, while carefully assessing any interventions that have no clear economic justification.	The classic 'market failure' principles for government intervention should be followed, for example the need to provide 'public goods' (a lighthouse is a classic example) which non-payers can't be excluded from, and which do not diminish as usage increases. There is also a strong economic case for government provision of some natural monopolies, infrastructure which is cheaper and easier to build using public rather than private finance, and goods and services with strong positive externalities (benefits that would accrue to others even if only paying users were able to access them directly).
Unpredictable risks are shared as a society, universal public services provide equality of opportunity and build social cohesion.	<p>Societies may also choose to share some services and pool some risks on social rather than economic grounds – for example deciding that universal public education is good for social cohesion, or that universal public health insurance ensures that the quality of a citizen's health care does not depend on their income. (In fact there are also strong economic arguments for both of these examples, but the social arguments are even more compelling).</p> <p>Some risks, such as being robbed or attacked, becoming unemployed for an extended period of time, becoming disabled, or homeless, may seem to apply only to a minority of the population. Nevertheless, everyone benefits from sharing these risks – not only in tangible ways such as the reduction in crime, in poverty (especially childhood poverty), but also in ways that are harder to measure – such as the peace of mind that comes with living in a more civilised, caring society.</p>
A wealth of capital	Capital takes many forms including human (skills and knowledge), family (network of relationships), social (connection with and stake in society), natural (the environment) and physical (public infrastructure such as surface transport and municipal infrastructure).

Stock of shared assets	Shared assets may be defined as 'hard' or 'soft'. Hard assets include roads and railroads and natural assets, such as soils and water. Soft assets include public institutions, our standards of behaviour in public life, our levels of trust in one another, and the quality of our family and community life.
Robust and resilient economy	In a Good Society, the economy provides good jobs (minimising the need to supplement employment income with welfare income) and gives incentives for the creation of real wealth rather than speculative 'casino capitalism'. Governments are truly fiscally responsible, which means that recurrent budgetary revenues and expenditures are balanced over the business cycle, but governments are also willing to borrow to invest. Public and private sectors are used appropriately to provide goods and services, and a wide range of employment opportunities are available to a well-educated and creative workforce, able to be integrated into the global economy.
Genuine equality of opportunity, and limits to the growth of inequality.	<p>When economic disparities widen, self-reinforcing systems develop which widen those disparities even further. For example, the poor tend to live in neighbourhoods with poorer quality schools, and less opportunity for physical mobility to find work. Between generations, the well-off extend privilege to their children by paying for exclusive schools and through generous inheritances.</p> <p>Even if everyone's living standards are rising, if inequality is widening people feel worse off; the notion that 'a rising tide lifts all boats' does not translate into improved human wellbeing if it results in widening social divisions. Wide income and wealth disparities also lead to poor economic performance. When the rewards from economic activity are seen to be unfair, motivation is suppressed and creativity does not flourish, because the links between contribution and reward are severed.</p>
Strong public institutions	Public institutions essential to a Good Society include a sovereign parliament; independent, professional and responsible public service as the primary source of disinterested policy analysis; police and other security agencies free from political interference by executive government; honest ministries; diverse and dissenting non-public sector civic institutions (such as welfare, environmental and consumer organisations); and diverse and dissenting media.

Principles and policies for a good society

These eight elements have informed our analysis of ‘Big Society’. They also serve as a starting point for our articulation of principles for public policies that set out to define and redefine the relationship between the state, the community sector and the corporate sector. The following principles have direct implications for public policy and how advocates for the ‘Good Society’ – who are likely to embrace many of the stated objectives of ‘Big Society’ – can steer public policy toward these visions.

Principle: Recognise and harness the inherent strengths of all three sectors

Advocates of a ‘Big Society’ seem to view the relationship between the public sector and business sector, and between the public sector and the community sector, as a kind of see-saw – push government down and businesses or community groups will automatically rise up. Advocates of a ‘good society’ propose, instead, that the relationship between the sectors should be conceived as a three-legged stool: each is necessary, and pulling any one leg out is likely to topple social progress, or at least make it very unstable.

‘Good Society’ rejects the private sector primacy espoused by Gary Sturgess, the Institute of Public Affairs and other anti-‘big government’ activists who are most likely to champion ‘Big Society’ ideas here. A rule of thumb such as ‘if in doubt, leave it to the market’ is an appealingly simple framework for decision-making. A habit of thought that has been reinforced over decades until it is seen as common sense is unlikely to change unless we are able to supply an alternative framework – one based on an understanding of the inherent strengths and weaknesses of governments, markets and the community sector.

Of course, that’s easier said than done. Arguments about the strengths and weaknesses of different sectors are hotly contested, often without much recourse to supporting evidence. Discussions about the work cultures and decision-making practices of each sector are particularly subject to ‘argument by anecdote’.

There is a well-established body of economic theory and evidence supporting government intervention in various cases of market failure, which can be of great use to policy makers who wish to contest the ‘private sector primacy’ worldview. But the assessment of what kind of activity belongs in what sector needs to go beyond a technical assessment of the specific failings of one sector, however useful. It also needs to reflect a broader view of what we need each sector for, and how that relates to our vision of a good society.

The public sector thinkers interviewed for this study advocated that the strengths of all three sectors should be recognised, and observed that Australian society reflects each sector’s contribution. Professor Paul Smyth referred to a “healthy blend” while others described a “dynamic mosaic” or “jigsaw”.



In Australia if you look around the health and education system, we have all these mixes. We seem to like a mix.

[Professor Paul Smyth]

The starting point for ‘Big Society’ is that society is ‘broken’ and must be ‘fixed’ through policies and programs that shrink the public sector while forcing a corresponding growth in the size and role of the other sectors. This was illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 and has been alluded to throughout this report. ‘Big Society’ assumes that the community and private sectors are better in every way, rather than acknowledging and valuing the strengths of each sector. Our interviewees contradicted this assumption and argued that the community sector, including its voluntary element, is alive and well and complements the public and private sectors.



If you look at the history of the public services in the UK, there’s always been a civil society, a voluntary sector and people doing things for themselves.

[Professor Helen Sullivan]

Martin Stewart-Weeks elaborated on the potential for the three sectors to learn from each other. Stewart-Weeks advocated “fermenting and nurturing” the interface between public servants and the nongovernment sector. He argued that the ‘edge’ between each sector was where “more and more of the real brains and clever thinking, innovative and smart ideas are happening”.

Principle: Some work is best done by government

The ‘Big Society’ offers a logic that is as simple and appealing as it is just plain wrong. Government is not the institution of last resort. There are functions for which public sector organisations are likely to remain the preferred – or only – provider. There are many arguments for public sector involvement on the basis of market failure. In some cases these arguments are so strong that, even where the private sector may be more technically efficient than government (and it should not be assumed that this is the case without evidence), the overall allocative efficiency of public sector provision (or funding and regulating) will still be higher. Public policy should not be determined by private sector organisations with a vested interest. Government has a unique role to play the continuity of a ‘safety net’. There is also a clear role for government in areas such as policy development, science, environmental protection, monitoring and regulation. Rather than ‘throwing out the baby with the bathwater’, it is important to recognise the distinct attributes of public sector organisations and the government functions which are appropriate to retain, rather than outsourcing to ‘any willing provider’. One of these defining attributes, Geoff Gallop remarked, is its permanence.



The one thing about government is it’s permanent. It’s a permanent institution. Even if it’s not perfect, at least it’s always there.

[Professor Geoff Gallop]

Principle: Some work is best done by the community and private sectors

The rush toward a smaller state and outsourcing to ‘any willing provider’ is ideologically motivated, not evidence-based. In the UK, commissioning has already created huge social changes that would be very difficult to reverse, even if evidence shows the impacts have been the opposite of what was intended. In a ‘Good Society’, large-scale interventions such as outsourcing to the corporate sector are carefully assessed:

We need a balance among the different sectors of society... Today the prevailing mood supports the privatisation of public services. Some of that thinking is probably useful. But a good deal of it is also just plain silly. If we are so prone to scrutinizing what doesn’t belong in government, shouldn’t we be equally diligent about what doesn’t belong in business?⁴⁰²

It is important to carefully assess, anticipate and prepare for the consequences of interventions such as increasingly engaging the private and community sectors.



I don’t think that there’s a set of criteria that says if you can tick these boxes, you’re safe to outsource and if you can tick those boxes, they’re safe to be kept in house. Invariably it becomes more complicated than that.

[Professor Helen Sullivan]

Rather than an ideological or ‘tick a box’ approach, these policy settings should be based on a robust evidence base that monitors and assesses relevant indicators and dimensions in each sector. This, in turn, relies on adequate and stable resourcing for the collection and analysis of this data, and has implications for improved reporting and evaluation by organisations involved in the delivery of government funded services.⁴⁰³

When available evidence supports outsourcing, it is important that governments ensure accountability and transparency. The Serco case study in this report highlights the risks associated with under-regulation of community services delivered by corporations. Equally, it is important to ensure that accountability requirements are not unwieldy and that they do not discourage innovation or prevent smaller local community sector organisations from playing their part.



You’d expect the Salvation Army to do things differently to Work Directions who’d do it differently to Drake International. But what the public service did effectively – and with each year that passed it seemed to get worse – was set up a bureaucratic structure and administrative guidelines to constrain the outsourced providers. That actually undermined the social innovation which I would have liked to see come out of a competitive market.

[Professor Peter Shergold]

Principle: A strong state does not preclude strong private and community sectors

As suggested by the ‘see-saw’ metaphor, there is a tendency for arguments about the role and size of the state to assume a basic conflict between the state and the market. This is often described as a zero-sum equation: more state means less market and vice versa.⁴⁰⁴ Karl Polyani instead describes the growth of the public and private sectors as “complementary and mutually enforcing institutions.”⁴⁰⁵

Observers in the UK have rejected the simple logic of a ‘zero sum game’, arguing that the local initiatives Cameron seeks to encourage and facilitate will require a regulatory framework.⁴⁰⁶ Governments and not-for-profit organisations operate as complements to each rather than as substitutes: “A strong civil society requires vigorous, effective governments as well as prospering economies.”⁴⁰⁷

Strong states have other benefits that are glossed over by Cameron and other ‘shrink the state’ advocates. Robert Putnam compared the U.S. states of Minnesota and Louisiana, at opposite ends of the Mississippi River. The former, with its stronger state, has a more equal society and far higher rates of social capital than the latter. Interpreting Putnam’s research, the Chief Secretary to the U.S. Treasury Liam Byrne observed, “The strongest societies are the fairest societies... and the fairest societies have strong states.”⁴⁰⁸

Several interviewees described the interdependence of the three sectors:



When a boom is on, what do you need? Planners, development application, people for environmental matters... you need public servants. Due process and good policy means you need these people. It’s fundamental to capitalism to have an effective public service doing a job.

[Professor Geoff Gallop]



Often it’s in countries like Germany and others where you have big government, you also have flourishing third sectors. It’s not right to trade off one against the other. They ought to be complementary.

[Professor Paul Smyth]



You can have an active and powerful state without necessarily having a small and emaciated society.

[Professor Helen Sullivan]

Principle: Democracy requires a strong state

In nations like the UK and Australia, the state plays a vital role in upholding the values and aspirations of voters by creating and safeguarding democratic institutions and processes: “acting to inform citizens of their rights and entitlements, ensuring the provision of essential services, enabling citizens to participate in decisions that affect them and acting on behalf of citizens when things go wrong.”⁴⁰⁹ As governments shrink, so too does their capacity to fulfil these objectives.

Principle: A strong state equips societies for tough and changing times

The benefits of a strong state are especially visible during times of unpredictable risk, crisis and change. Notwithstanding the extraordinary efforts of volunteers and civil society groups during Australian floods and fires, public servants play a vital role in the coordination of emergency relief efforts and government assistance is invariably requested and given. Natural disasters serve as a “much-needed reminder of just how important a functional big government turns out to be to our survival.”⁴¹⁰



There’s no escaping the fact that the only one who’s going to be there when things hit rock bottom is government. If we’re talking about essential social services... government will be there one way or another, either directly in the provision of services or in holding up non-government providers of services.

[Eric Sidoti]

This is equally true in an environment characterised by risk and uncertainty. Climate change, for instance, presents challenges on a scale that only the public sector is capable of managing. Professor Helen Sullivan considers that,

A route to a perpetually diminished state... underplays the important contribution made by an active and well-resourced state to the promotion of well-being and fairness, particularly in relation to complex current and future challenges such as climate change, social cohesion and economic regeneration, which require the state to mobilise private, voluntary and community actors and resources.⁴¹¹

Principle: Value volunteerism and philanthropy but don’t expect them to ‘fill the gap’

A ‘Good Society’ is characterised by equality of opportunity, sharing our common wealth, cooperation and reciprocity. Volunteerism and philanthropy make a significant contribution to such a society but should not be forced to breaking point. The UK Government has – through negligence or intent – gutted the very parts of the community sector that support volunteerism and discouraged philanthropy through its new laws. Contrary to their stated aims, they have weakened these traditions and diminished communities’ resilience and capacity for self-reliance.

To preserve the strengths of local community-based organisations, where much volunteering occurs, governments need to ensure the community sector is not disadvantaged or ‘crowded out’ through outsourcing procedures that favour large NFPs and corporations.

Restating the principle (above) that policy interventions require a robust evidence base, the Cameron government has under-valued the collection and analysis of data that could guide ‘Big Society’ changes and allow them to be evaluated. On the contrary, they have defunded and discontinued the very survey that would allow the government to measure volunteerism. The current public sector funding pressures in Australia may have similar consequences for the capacity of the Australian Bureau of Statistics: the government body charged with measuring community sector capacity.

8. Responding to ‘Big Society’

Resistance and protest in the UK

Opposition to Cameron’s ‘Big Society’ changes is energetic and sustained, drawing in leaders of the churches, not-for-profit sector and union movement, Labour parliamentarians, civil society networks and community activists. It is consistently identified as a major issue, sparking protest and dissent including the March 2011 rally when more than 400,000 people protested budget cuts. When activists occupied the London Stock Exchange in October 2011, the Prime Minister was asked by the British media whether the UK version of the Occupy movement was an expression of ‘Big Society’ or a reaction to it. Journalists in Australia made the same connection, interviewing the Australian Council of Social Service about whether the Occupy movement in Australia indicated a civil society rejection of ‘Big Society’-type public sector changes here.

Some of the most outspoken critics have been local government representatives hit by massive funding cuts. Approximately one-tenth of the UK’s 353 local government authorities expect their savings plans will collapse this year, forcing them to shed staff and services. Manchester City Council, for instance, is expected to shed 2,000 jobs (17 per cent of the workforce), resulting in the closure of centres for pre-school children, youth clubs, libraries, public toilets and swimming pools.⁴¹²

The multi-billion pound budget cuts are impacting on cultural services, education, transport, environment, adult social care, children’s social care, planning and housing. Councils are being forced to reduce the volume or frequency of services; reduce quality or minimum service standards; restrict eligibility; or increase or introduce new fees and charges. In many instances, all of these options are necessary.⁴¹³ In response, community members are mobilising to exert pressure on their councils. When councillors in Lewisham proposed to close five of the county’s twelve libraries, they generated an outcry from 20,000 petitioners.⁴¹⁴ Community members have also resorted to legal action to retain local services. Councils in Gloucestershire and Somerset have been compelled to keep libraries open, following a judicial review which clarified that their public sector equality duties over-rode the pressures to cut costs.⁴¹⁵

Initially, many councils were active proponents of ‘Big Society’, or at least quiescent. That is no longer the case, though, and councils including Liverpool have publicly withdrawn their support for Big Society: “We continued to support the principal of a strong voluntary sector but we were confronted with the biggest cut in the country, despite the government assessing us as having the greatest need.”⁴¹⁶ Cameron has also lost the confidence and support of some Church leaders, including some who had initially been supportive.

“*The Archbishop of Canterbury labelled Cameron’s ‘Big Society’ as “painfully stale” and something that is viewed with “widespread suspicion.” An angry PM hit back swiftly at Williams claiming that Jesus would back his ‘Big Society’ plans.*

The Telegraph, June 9th, 2011⁴¹⁷

Non-government organisations including think tanks and peak bodies representing volunteer-based groups have commissioned reviews and reports. Their concerns are described elsewhere in this report, and have generated constant media attention since Cameron's election. Some sectors of the community sector are less strident in their criticism (or entirely silent), leading commentators to suggest that they are reluctant to bite the hand they hope will feed them:

It is a pity that those who know the world of voluntary and community action are not putting up more resistance... If anyone should be highlighting the ideologically noxious thinking behind the 'big society', it is the sector which could be at the centre of such a plan but which the government is in fact in the process of dismantling.⁴¹⁸

Social entrepreneurs have been divided in their opinions. Some have referred to the changes as utopian fantasy and the 'Big Spliff society'.⁴¹⁹ Opposition to 'Big Society' has also been expressed through the arts including a popular West End musical 'Big Society!'

In Edwardian times Britain was run by ex-public schoolboys while the jobless and poor suffered at the hands of political warmongers and corruption. A century later very little has changed.⁴²⁰

Grindcore band Napalm Death who sang protest songs during the Thatcher years now write lyrics about 'Big Society': "We're a contrary bunch of f*ckers. We believe in equality and social justice in the truest form and not this 'Big Society' bullshit."⁴²¹

Social media has provided another stage for 'Big Society' activism. Satirical Facebook pages⁴²² have been established and the #bigsociety hashtag receives dozens of tweets each day sharing commentary and humour.



*Tell you what. With all this virtual activism, you do have to admit – in some way – the Coalition's actions are leading to *a* #BigSociety*

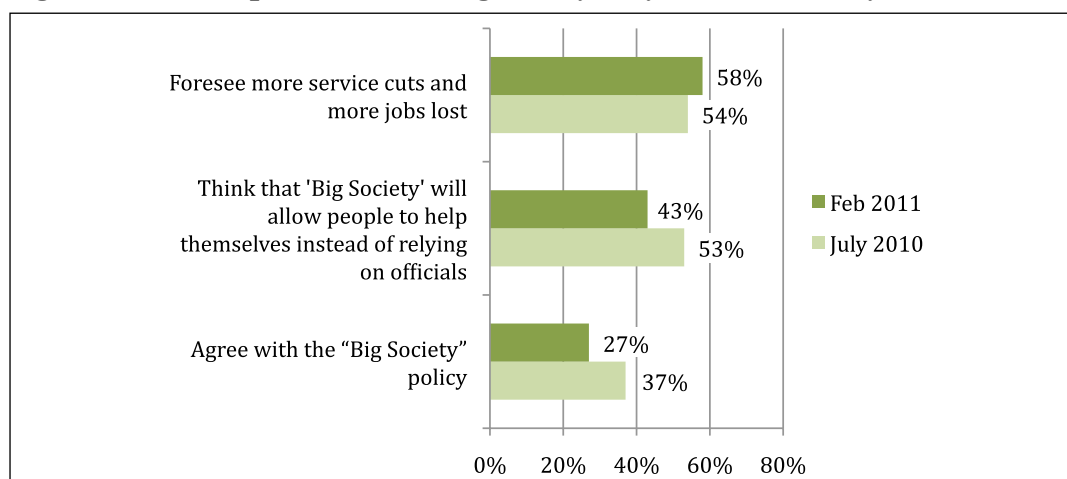
@elohel 31/01/12

As part of the Tory Big Society I will make my butler available between 3-4pm on Tuesdays for volunteer work. #bigsociety

@SirPercyTatler 21/02/12

This widespread criticism has shifted public opinion, reducing the support base for Cameron's changes. One opinion poll reported that between May 2010 and February 2011, the proportion of respondents who endorsed 'Big Society' or expected it to benefit the voluntary sector, charity workers and people in the UK fell drastically.

From the start, the main hindrance of the 'Big Society' was its size. The policy came to embody practically everything, positive and negative. Volunteerism and servitude. A creative way to deal with labour shortages and a justification for cuts in services. A blueprint for a less intrusive government and a way for the State to shun its responsibility towards citizens. Britons were not amused.⁴²³

Figure 13: Public opinion toward 'Big Society' July 2010 – February 2011⁴²⁴

Other politicians reading these survey results, especially after almost two years of sustained negative media might be tempted to abandon a policy agenda, even one in which they had invested heavily. While writing this report, rumours circulated that Cameron had withdrawn his support from 'Big Society', but this is not the case. It continues to receive the Prime Minister's endorsement on a regular basis: "No matter how many times his pet phrase gets mocked, he refuses to abandon his faith in it."⁴²⁵ As recently as this April, Nick Hurd, the minister responsible for carriage of the Big Society vision, maintained that the Government is "completely committed" to the project despite criticism from "knockers" and "rock chucksers."⁴²⁶

Energising a public sector debate in Australia

Unlike the UK, Australia does not have an energised debate about the role or size of the public sector. Despite the polarising nature of discussions about the role of the state and the evidence that some Australian politicians are inclined to make similar changes to those associated with Cameron's 'Big Society', there is strikingly little public debate.

Think tanks such as the Centre for Policy Development can play a useful role in informing and energising this discussion with reports like this one. Blond's think tank ResPublica clearly played a very influential role in shaping David Cameron's policies and priorities and maximising the public attention and scrutiny it received. A range of other British think tanks have contributed to 'Big Society' analysis including Demos, Civil Exchange, the New Economic Foundation, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Keystone, the Young Foundation, Insight Public Affairs and others cited in this report. Some of the UK think tanks shaping this UK debate are funded by the companies that dominate public sector contracting. Reform, which is funded by Capita⁴²⁷, GE and G4S, argues vehemently for outsourcing and upfront fees for public services. Outsourcing behemoth Serco funds its own research institute which describes its resource centre as "the world's largest online library dedicated to competition and contracting in public services." Obviously, the Serco Institute is a rusted-on advocate for outsourcing. Its former director, Gary Sturgess, returned from London to Australia where he has been appointed as the New South Wales Premier's chair in public service delivery at the Australia and New Zealand School of Government. His influence is being felt in that state's current round of public sector cuts. Sturgess's regular opinion pieces in the Australian media and published through the Institute of Public Affairs rehearse some of the central 'Big Society' memes.

Think tanks play a part in these debates, but their influence is constrained or enabled by their social and political context. There are significant social and political differences between Australia and the United Kingdom that constrain the level of debate about these ideas here. To understand the implications of 'Big Society', this report draws on interviews with leading Australian public sector researchers and commentators. These interviews included questions about the apparent lack of debate about the potential for Australian governments to fundamentally change the roles of the public, private and community sectors, as Cameron is in the process of doing. Their responses suggested four possible reasons:

1. The perceived similarity between the policies of the major political parties in Australia;
2. Complacency and the lack of a perceived 'threat';
3. The issue-specific nature of public sector campaigns and debates; and
4. The lack of interest and attention to broader public sector debates in Australia's mainstream media.

Convergence of public sector policies of both major political parties

Several interviewees expressed the view that the public sector policies of the major political parties in Australia are so similar that there is "no space" for debate; no well-defined alternative to their political convergence. This view is contested by senior figures in Labor and the Coalition, who tend to point to differences between their approaches rather than similarities. In response to public service job cuts associated with the 2012 budget Shadow Treasurer Joe Hockey said that the cuts were too small and that "...you have to go harder." In his budget reply speech Opposition Leader Tony Abbott's said that "At the heart of Labor's failure is the assumption that bigger government and higher taxes are the answer to every problem".⁴²⁸ While defending the budget cuts and associated job losses, Finance Minister Penny Wong said that, "Unlike... Joe Hockey, who does like to put the boot into the public service... I respect the work that the public service does."⁴²⁹ Prime Minister Gillard also described recent public service job losses as a short-term consequence of the Government's push to return to surplus, rather than as an ideological preference for shrinking the public service:

The Australian public service does wonderful things and should be valued. I am a big supporter of the public service but as a government we have had to make tough decisions to generate a budget surplus for 2012-13... and how we are dealing with some matters in regards to public service employment is a result of those tough choices.⁴³⁰

The credibility of Labor's stated support for the public service was undermined by its decision to temporarily increase the 'efficiency dividend' from 1.5 per cent to 4 per cent in the November 2011 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook, placing significant additional pressure on the public service to deliver more for less. Canberra Times journalist Markus Mannheim sought to illustrate a convergence of the major parties' public service staffing approaches by estimating the impacts of Labor's recent budget cuts on the Australian Public Service (APS). Mannheim estimated that a \$667 million budget cut for public service wages and salaries revealed in the forward estimates would lead to the loss of 14,000 jobs in APS agencies and departments over three years. He compared this with Shadow Treasurer Joe Hockey's declaration that a Coalition government would sack 12,000 public servants upon election, though this comparison and his projection

was contested by some Labor politicians.^{431, 432} Liberal Senator Gary Humphries claimed that the major parties' positions had converged, commenting that, "Both sides of politics are united in their view that the size of the public service must be reduced. We've said that for some time; the Labor Party pretended otherwise, but its rhetoric now aligns with ours."⁴³³

As noted below, more recent comments from the Coalition also suggest that they wish to take even stronger action to reduce public programs and their staffing, with appeals to a reduction in 'entitlement' thinking that echoes both 'Big Society' and analogous 'Asian values' themes.

Nonetheless, it is undeniable that the clear pattern of the Labor government's budget policy is to place a great deal of pressure on the public service over coming years. As long as Labor remains reluctant to either raise overall tax levels⁴³⁴ or defer the return to a surplus (even in changing economic circumstances), this pattern seems likely to continue.

The concern of interviewees that there may be a convergence of major parties' public sector policies and values extends beyond their relative support or otherwise for public service staffing and budgets. Professor Richard Mulgan went so far as to describe a "political consensus on major government policy" he has observed "since the Hawke-Keating years."

CPD's 'State of the Australian Public Service' report highlighted many instances of negative comments made by members of both major political parties about the Australian Public Service. At times, the common ground is implied rather than explicit when the government and opposition fail to actively distinguish their positions.



If the Labor Party were to distinguish itself much more clearly from the Coalition then you'd get a different dynamic happening straight away. If they distinguished themselves clearly by saying, "This is the sort of society we're working for and these are the policies that are going to deliver it." The public service is a case in point. Labor could say, "We are not ideologically committed to small government. We believe government has an enduring role. We won't pretend that gutting the public service is a good thing and there is a point at which the efficiency dividend basically becomes public sector cuts." Clarity around that would be helpful.

[Eric Sidoti]

Peter Shergold observed that there is rarely much debate about even the most significant public sector changes in Australia, such as the creation of the Job Network. He observed that such changes are proposed and implemented in a "pragmatic" way here, whereas in, "the UK or Canada they would be surrounded with a whole lot of political philosophy and debate."



In Australia you don't get senior political leaders talking about public sector issues with a belief that they're important. A Blair, a Brown, a Cameron will give speeches – not because some public servant has written a speech but because they think it's important in terms of governance... With all the reservations I have with the Third Way or 'Big Society', the usefulness is that the frameworks help to inform the public debate by bringing together a range of different initiatives and arguing that they have a cohesive thrust.

[Professor Peter Shergold]

A similar pattern of apparent party convergence has been noted in the UK. Opposition leader Ed Miliband and his brother (and leadership contender) David have been at odds over whether to oppose 'Big Society' or develop their own version of it. Ed Miliband endorsed the National Citizen Service program.

Although the expression 'Big Society' is not yet in widespread use in Australia, its defining ideas and elements are present in political pronouncements such as Tony Abbott's 'Stronger economy and stronger Australia' speech to the Press Club in January 2012.⁴³⁵ Mr Abbott invoked four core 'Big Society' tenets: (1) engaging community and for-profit organisations to deliver public services; (2) an increased reliance on and advocacy for community volunteerism; (3) reviewing welfare provision arrangements; and (4) community boards to manage the budgets and staffing of public schools and hospitals.⁴³⁶

In the weeks preceding this year's Budget, Shadow Treasurer Joe Hockey expressed his sympathy for 'Big Society' frames by condemning "systems of universal entitlement" in countries including Australia, and arguing that "the highly constrained public safety net" in parts of Asia might seem brutal, "but it works and it is financially sustainable".⁴³⁷ Echoing the 'Big Society' frames of volunteerism, autonomy and entrepreneurship, Mr Hockey claimed that countries with a lower level of entitlement allowed business and individuals to be successful: "It reduces taxation, meaning individuals spend less of their time working for the state, and more of their time working for themselves and their family."

Although our interviewees considered it unlikely that the current ALP government would introduce changes such as indicated by 'Big Society', several speculated that a Coalition government led by Tony Abbott could be expected to have a keen interest in Cameron's platform. Speculation is reflected in our interview transcripts.



A number of the State conservative leaders are probably more amenable to Big Society ideas than Tony Abbott is likely to be. I could be wrong... but unless one of his ministers is given free space to develop these ideas, I'm not sure how bold or innovative an Abbott government will be with respect to a wide-ranging, citizen empowerment agenda.

[Professor Peter Shergold]



If Abbott gets in and starts looking for his \$70 billion, that's when it will come on.

[Cath Smith]



I think you'll find that quite a few people in government around Australia have been interested in, and are keeping a bit an eye on, what the Brits are up to... it's one of the biggest games in town, and certainly one of the most interesting.

[Martin Stewart-Weeks]

Complacency and the lack of a perceived threat

The scale and pace of the 'Big Society' changes have been breathtaking. This report will coincide with the two-year anniversary of Cameron's election and already he has radically changed British society. Public sector changes in Australia have sometimes been abrupt, such as the thousands of retrenchments following John Howard's election and the major privatisations during the 1990s, but these are arguably less dramatic than the 'Big Society' transformation. Our interviewees agreed that changes of a comparable nature would trigger a more energised debate here.



If Wayne Swan, in this year's federal budget, forces public sector managers to cut their budgets by 25 per cent over the subsequent two years, we'll have that level of coverage here. The reason we're not having that debate is because our governments have sustained public spending.

[Cath Smith]



There has, to date, been no major Coalition push to roll back government, as distinct from sacking some public servants. On the Labor side, major commitment to a welfare state has not been such a defining feature as in the UK, I think.

[Professor Richard Mulgan]



We're the lucky country... Things have been too easy.

[Professor Geoff Gallop]



What energised the debate in the UK was a threat to something that people held dear.

[Professor Helen Sullivan]



There are clearly big choices being made in many areas, about a wholesale switching from public sector to not-public sector. Whole swathes of life we expect the public sector to take up... The kind of stuff you see in Britain where whole councils have shut down every operation they've had – rubbish, waste dumping, libraries and what not. You have arguments about whether the local community can run the library. Once it gets to that level, people really do kind of take notice.

[Martin Stewart-Weeks]

Public sector campaigns and debates tend to be issue-specific

There is a tendency for the public discussion about the role of the state to focus on very specific issues and flashpoints. Media interest follows conflict ('if it bleeds it leads'), resulting in superficial coverage of what has happened rather than what events and announcements might mean in a longer-term context. Accordingly, individuals and organisations tend to frame their pro- and anti-public sector campaigns around specific issues.



Where people do get involved, they get involved primarily around issues... becoming a disaggregated political force and not necessarily one that is considering social reform within a broader umbrella of what they want. We want a better environment, we want more renewable energy but we don't necessarily have a collective view on what sort of society that means and how we get to it.

[Eric Sidoti]

Many of these issue-specific debates relate to public service funding cuts, job losses, working conditions and public service efficiency. They are dominated by government ministers, public sector unions and anti-'big government' activists such as the Institute of Public Affairs. When these debates take place within a narrow and short-term political and media cycle it prevents in-depth discussion of 'good society' values, international policy adventures such as 'Big Society' or alternative trajectories for the public sector in Australia.

Australia's mainstream media ignores broader public sector debates

Since Cameron's election, UK citizens have been bombarded with in-depth media coverage including sustained investigative journalism about the promises and impacts of 'Big Society' changes. This has not been restricted to left-leaning publications or those intended for an already highly educated audience. On the contrary, the public sector's changing size and role has received daily coverage in local and regional newspapers, commercial tabloids and television. This report drew on more than 400 articles published in *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph*, *The Mirror*, *New Statesman*, *The Independent*, *Leicestershire Mercury* and *The Morning Star* – and this is a representative rather than comprehensive sample of this coverage.

By contrast, much of the Australian media pays minimal attention to public sector changes and policy debates other than isolated issues such as the privatisation of specific government-owned services or infrastructure. Only the Australian Broadcasting Commission has covered 'Big Society', in somewhat obscure late night programs.



*This is a dry question for the Daily Telegraph isn't it? But it's everything isn't it?
It's every aspect of our lives.*

[Ged Kearney]

It is a mistake, though, to blame the media when issues we're interested in receive minimal attention. One explanation is that there are too few voices. Vern Hughes commented that, "There haven't been enough voices and the political debate tends to be confined to the service delivery peak bodies and governments." CPD hopes that this report will go some way to informing and motivating a discussion about the implications of 'Big Society' for Australia and to diversifying the 'voices' that are active in this debate.

Appendix: 'Big Society' glossary

Expression	Meaning
Civil Society Organisations	Small charities, social enterprises and voluntary and community organisations. ⁴³⁸
Commissioning	Outsourcing or engaging a non-government (corporate or community sector) organisation to deliver public services.
Co-production	The provision of public services by paid and unpaid labour. ⁴³⁹
Corporatisation	“The introduction of private sector management practices and processes (new managerialism) into public sector organisations and the operation of these bodies according to market-based criteria through a change in the formal legal and institutional structure.” ⁴⁴⁰
Mutualism	“The resolution of problems and the creation of outcomes from self-directed co-operative activity.” ⁴⁴¹
Mutuals (and/or ‘public service mutuals’)	Employee-owned social enterprises; controlled by their members; have external stakeholders; “either owned by and run in the interests of existing members, as is the case in building societies, cooperatives and friendly societies, or – as in many public services – owned on behalf of the wider community”
Not-for-profit organisation (NFP) (or non-profit organisation)	‘An organisation that is not operating for the profit or gain of its individual members whether these gains are direct or indirect. Profit made by the organisation goes back into the operation of the organisation to carry out its purposes and is not distributed to any of its members.’ ⁴⁴² The not-for-profit sector is sometimes referred to as the ‘third sector’.
Outsourcing	A government agency entering into a contract with an external supplier for the provision of goods/services previously provided within, or by, the agency.
Social Impact Bond (or Social Benefit Bond)	“A bond-issuing organisation raises capital from investors based on a contract with government to deliver improved social outcomes through programs delivered by a not-for-profit organisation.” ⁴⁴³
Spin-out	An employee-owned organisation formed when an employee or group of employees leaves another organisation. ⁴⁴⁴ Large public service agencies or service delivery institutions (including the National Health System) may be replaced by many smaller spin-outs comprising former government employees.

References

1. Carter, H., 23/06/11, 'Police pay review: 'Cameron has declared war on the public sector'', *The Guardian* [retrieved 23 June 2011] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/mar/08/police-pay-review-david-cameron>
2. Hope, C., 8/5/11, 'Reforms will end state control of public services', *The Telegraph* [retrieved 10 October 2011] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/8627009/Reforms-will-end-state-control-of-public-services.html>
3. Lehal, J., 2011, 'Big Society - A briefing: An overview of the themes, policies, structures and people driving the Coalition's big idea', *Insight Public Affairs* [No longer available on IPA's website, but available at other sites: http://www.younglancashire.org.uk/webfm_send/222]
4. An influential WA government report concluded that the "public sector will increasingly act as a facilitator of services, rather than a direct provider, with all areas of service delivery opened to competition." Economic Audit Committee, Government of Western Australia, 2008, 'Putting the Public First: Partnering with Community and Business to Deliver Outcomes' [retrieved 15 May 2012] <http://www.dpc.wa.gov.au/Publications/EconomicAuditReport/Pages/Default.aspx>
5. Gordon, J., 2012, 'Reveal secret job review, state told' *The Age* [retrieved 15 May 2012] <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/reveal-secret-job-review-state-told-20120503-1y1ug.html>
6. New Economic Foundation, 2012, 'The challenge of coproduction' [retrieved 10 March 2012] <http://neweconomics.org/publications/challenge-co-production>
7. Blond, P., 2010, *Red Tory: How the left and right have broken Britain and how we can fix it*, Faber and Faber, London.
8. Hennessy, P., 10/9/11, 'No place for Big Society at Conservative conference', *The Telegraph* [retrieved 2 April 2012] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/conservative/8754793/No-place-for-Big-Society-at-Conservative-conference.html>
9. It's worth noting that, years before either Blond or Hilton spoke of 'Big Society', it was the slogan for the 2004 National Congress of the Communist Party of China. In the Chinese context, it had remarkably similar meaning: shorthand for an "overextended government... tapping into vast reserves of latent social and economic capital" by more actively involving not-for-profit and commercial organisations. Boychuk, T., 2007, 'Big Society, Small Government', *Macalester International*, Vol.18, pp.201-213, p.211.
10. For an interesting analysis of 'strict parent' rhetoric, see: Lakoff, G., 2004, *Don't Think of an Elephant! Know Your Values and Frame the Debate*, Chelsea Green Publishing, Vermont.
11. Kisby, B., 2010, 'The Big Society: Power to the People?', *The Political Quarterly*, Vol. 81, No. 4, pp.484-491, p.486
12. Thatcher, M., 23/9/1987, Douglas Keay interview, *Women's Own*.
13. Kisby, 2010, p. 490.

14. McAuley, I., 2005, 'The shrinking public sphere', *Public Administration Today*, October-December edition, pp.75-78. Book review of David Marquand 2004, *Decline of the Public: The Hollowing out of Citizenship*, Polity Press, Cambridge, UK.
15. Sturgess, G., 2003, 'To join interest with duty', *Review*, September 2003, Institute of Public Affairs, p.13.
16. Whelan, J., 2011, 'The State of the Service: An alternative report', Centre for Policy Development, Sydney [retrieved 10 May 2012] http://cpd.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/CPD_OP12_2011_State_of_APS_Whelan.pdf
17. Hasan, M. & Macintyre, J., 15/4/11, 'There's no such thing as a "big society"', *New Statesman Online* [retrieved 16 October 2011] <http://www.newstatesman.com/uk-politics/2010/04/society-cameron-state-labour>
18. Dickson, N., 27/9/99, 'UK Politics: What is the Third Way?', BBC News [retrieved 10 December 2011] <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/458626.stm>
19. Hughes, V., 13/12/04, 'The tragedy of Mark Latham, former thinker', *The Age* [retrieved 10 January 2012] <http://www.theage.com.au/news/Opinion/The-tragedy-of-Mark-Latham-former-thinker/2004/12/12/1102786949647.html>
20. Allen, P., Hall, A. & Butler, B., 7/5/2012, 'Whatever happened to the big society?', *The Guardian* [retrieved 10 May 2012] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/interactive/2012/may/07/big-society-whatever-happened>
21. Curtis, P., 11/7/2011, 'Public Services Reform to Slow Down, White Paper suggests', *The Guardian* [retrieved 10 October 2011] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/jul/11/public-services-reform-slow-down>
22. BBC News, 20/10/10, 'Spending review 2010: George Osborne wields the axe' [retrieved 10 November 2012] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-11579979>
23. Office of Budget Responsibility, November 2011, 'Economic and Fiscal Outlook', Her Majesty's Stationery Office, p.95 [retrieved 10 May 2012] <http://budgetresponsibility.independent.gov.uk/category/publications/page/4/>
24. BBC News, 16/03/12, 'Oxford Protestors Occupy NHS building' [retrieved 11 May 2012] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-17403869>
25. National Council of Voluntary Organisations, 2011, 'The Work Programme: Initial concerns from civil society organisations', London, p.4. [retrieved 10 December 2011] http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/sites/default/files/work_programme_concerns.pdf
26. Cameron D., 6/12/2011, 'Big Society Awards address', Prime Minister's Office [retrieved 6 December 2011] <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/big-society-awards-address/>
27. Boxell, J., 24/10/10, 'Cameron attacked as charities face cuts', *Financial Times* [retrieved 16 September 2011] <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/101d6bf6-dfaa-11df-bed9-00144feabdc0.html#axzz17zw9uydh>
28. False Economy, 2/8/11, 'Exclusive: More than 2000 charities and community groups face cuts' [retrieved 10 December 2011] <http://falseeconomy.org.uk/blog/exclusive-more-than-2000-charities-and-community-groups-face-cuts>

29. Kisby, 2010, p. 486.
30. Morrison, S. & Merrick, J., 26/02/2012, 'Exclusive: A4e and a £200m back-to-work scandal', *The Independent* [retrieved 11 May 2012] <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/exclusive-a4e-and-a-200m-backtowork-scandal-7440966.html>
31. Anderson, B., 7/4/12, 'We still don't understand David Cameron, our serene but radical Prime Minister', *The Telegraph* [retrieved 10 April 2012] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/david-cameron/9191498/We-still-dont-understand-David-Cameron-our-serene-but-radical-Prime-Minister.html>
32. Freedland, J., 6/10/10, 'The problem with David Cameron's 'big society' is that the Tories don't buy it', *The Guardian* [retrieved 16 September 2011] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/oct/06/problem-david-cameron-bigsociety>
33. HM Government, 2012, 'Open Public Services 2012', p.62 [retrieved 10 May 2012] http://files.openpublicservices.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/HMG_OpenPublicServices_web.pdf
34. Funding Central, 25/6/10, 'Communities First Fund Confirmed As Replacement For Grassroots Grants', [retrieved 10 November 2011] <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/newsview.aspx?WCU=DSCODE=OTSSCMLIVE,NEWSITEMID=248-N8204>
35. Triggles, N., 12/7/10, 'NHS to undergo radical overhaul', BBC [retrieved 10 November 2011] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10557996>
36. Ainsworth, D., 09/11/11, 'Cameron plans to continue National Citizen Service to 2015', *Third Sector* [retrieved 11 November 2011] <http://thirdsector.co.uk/Channels/Policy/Article/1103213/Cameron-plans-continue-National-Citizen-Service-expansion-2015/>
37. King, V. 09/11/11, 'The Localism Bill: Power to the people?', *BBC News* [retrieved 1 November 2011] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-15636272>
38. Watt, N., 6/9/11, 'Gift Aid system costs charities £750m a year, says report', *The Guardian* [retrieved 10 November 2011] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2010/sep/06/gift-aid-digital-reform>
39. Watt, N., 23/5/11, 'David Cameron to relaunch troubled 'big society' project', *The Guardian*, [retrieved 10/7/11] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/may/23/david-cameron-big-society-project>
40. Hope, C., 8/5/11, 'Reforms will end state control of public services', *The Telegraph* [retrieved 10 October 2011] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/8627009/Reforms-will-end-state-control-of-public-services.html>
41. McVeigh, T., 26/11/11, 'Public sector strike: we have to live too', *The Guardian* [retrieved 28 November 2011] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/nov/26/public-sector-strike-unions-pensions?newsfeed=true>
42. Civil Exchange, 2012, 'The Big Society Audit' [retrieved 8 May 2012] <http://www.civilexchange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/BigSocietyAudit2012Final.pdf>

43. This corresponds closely to competition policy, as adopted by Australia. See: Kain, J., Kuruppu, I. & Billing, R., 2003, *Australia's National Competition Policy: Its evolution and operation*, Parliamentary Library [retrieved 10 January 2012] http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/Publications_Archive/archive/ncpebrief
44. Hope, C., 8/5/11, 'Reforms will end state control of public services', *The Telegraph* [retrieved 10 October 2011] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/8627009/Reforms-will-end-state-control-of-public-services.html>
45. Dean, C., 17/10/11, 'Take your partners for public services' *The Guardian* [retrieved 19 October 2011] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/public-leaders-network/blog/2011/oct/17/partners-public-sector-service?newsfeed=true>
46. Perkins, T., 2011, 'Sir Ronald Cohen: harnessing private capital for the public's benefit', *The Globe and Mail* [retrieved 2 February 2012] <http://www.ctv.ca/generic/generated/static/business/article2218071.html>
47. Elton, D., 9/1/12, 'It's the Big Society that's being hit by the government's economics', *Left Foot Forward* [retrieved 13 January 2012] <http://www.leftfootforward.org/2012/01/its-the-big-society-thats-being-hit-by-the-governments-economics/>
48. Wei, N., 16/6/10, 'Maiden speech to Parliament', House of Lords Parliament, UK Hansard [retrieved 10 December 2012] <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/100616-0006.htm>
49. North, A., 30/1/12, 'Charities 'squeezed out' of clothes bank market', *letsrecycle.com* [retrieved 6 February 2012] <http://www.letsrecycle.com/news/latest-news/textiles/charities-2018squeezed-out2019-of-clothes-bank-market>
50. Stewart, H., 11/9/11, 'Work Programme leaves charities fearful for their future', *The Guardian* [retrieved 10 October 2012] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2011/sep/11/unemployment-and-employment-statistics-unemployment>
51. Boffey, D., 21/1/12, 'Charity slams David Cameron's Work Programme for unemployed', *The Guardian* [retrieved 6 February 2012] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2012/jan/21/david-cameron-work-programme-unemployed>
52. Parallels could be made with the operation of the private health insurance rebate in Australia, which has enabled private hospitals to select the most profitable elective operations, while leaving more expensive cases to the public hospitals, like emergency care, and the care of longer-term and more complex medical conditions. See: McAuley, I., 2004, 'Stress on public hospitals: Why private insurance has made it worse', Discussion Paper for the Australian Consumers' Association and the Australian Healthcare Association [retrieved 9 May 2012] <http://www.home.netspeed.com.au/mcau/academic/confs/phpi.pdf>
53. Harris, J., 12/2/12, 'Emma Harrison: nice work if you can get it', *The Guardian* [retrieved 12 April 2012] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2012/feb/21/emma-harrison-a4e-nice-work>
54. Public Administration Committee, 2011, 'The Big Society: Funding the voluntary sector' [retrieved 20 January 2011] <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmpubadm/902/90202.htm>

-
55. The partially devolved national arrangements for Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales are outside the scope of this report.
56. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2011, OECD.StatExtracts [retrieved 20 May 2011] <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx>
57. Economy Watch, 2012, 'Total government net debt (% of GDP) data for all countries' [retrieved 10 April 2012] http://www.economywatch.com/economic-statistics/economic-indicators/General_Government_Net_Debt_Percentage_GDP/
58. Commonwealth of Australia, 2012, 'Budget strategy and outlook: Budget Paper 1', p.1-14.
59. McAuley, I. & Frank, P., 2009, 'Medicare Select: Entrenching Inequality in Health Care?' [retrieved 10 December 2011] <http://cpd.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/Medicare-Select-paper-layout-final1.pdf>
60. Some private prisons were already in operation in the UK before the 'Big Society' push to outsource the rest.
61. Roth, L. 2004, 'Privatisation of Prisons', NSW Parliamentary Library Research Service, Background Paper No.3/04.
62. Abbott, T., 3/6/11, Address to the Menzies Research Centre Employment Participation Roundtable, Sydney [retrieved 8 June 2011] <http://www.tonyabbott.com.au/LatestNews/Speeches/tabid/88/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/8114/Address-to-the-Menzies-Research-Centre-Employment-Participation-Roundtable-Sydney.aspx>
63. Blond, P., 10/6/11, 'The absent foundation: Conservatism in Australia', *ABC Religion and Ethics* [retrieved 10 October 2011] <http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2011/06/10/3241191.htm?topic1=&topic2=>
64. Colvin, M., 2/6/11, 'Red Tory/Blue Labour Changing Politics in the UK', ABC Radio National 'Late Night Live', [retrieved 8 October 2011] <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/latenightlive/red-toryblue-labour-changing-politics-in-the-uk/2953966>
65. ABC Radio National, 20/3/11, 'The Big Society', Encounter [retrieved 8 December 2011] <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/encounter/the-big-society/2997794>
66. Williams, R., 1/4/2011, 'Big Society, Small World', ABC Radio National 'Religion and Ethics' [retrieved 8 October 2011] <http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2011/04/01/3179715.htm>
67. Milbank, J., 8/12/11, Christian vision of society puts economics and politics in their place', ABC Radio National 'Religion and Ethics' [retrieved 9 December 2011] <http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2011/12/08/3386474.htm?WT.svl=featuredSitesScroller>
68. Roskam, J., 17/9/10, 'Abbott needs a to-do list', Institute of Public Affairs [retrieved 10 October 2011] <http://ipa.org.au/sectors/governance-service-provision/news/2206/abbott-needs-a-to-do-list/pg/8>
69. Berg, C., 7/6/11, 'Red Toryism holds little but giggles for local Liberals', ABC 'The Drum Unleashed' [retrieved 10 June 2011] <http://www.abc.net.au/unleashed/2750128.html>
-

70. Centre for Social Impact, 31/10/11, 'The UK's Big Society experiment: "The move away from Big Government"' [retrieved 11 December 2011] [http://knowledgeconnect.com.au/2011/10/the-uk's-big-society-experiment-"the-move-away-from-big-government-"/](http://knowledgeconnect.com.au/2011/10/the-uk's-big-society-experiment-)
71. Hughes, V., 13/09/11, 'Social Impact Bonds in NSW', *Centre for Civil Society National Update* [retrieved 19 October 2011] http://www.civilsociety.org.au/National_Update1011.htm#Vern_Hughes
72. In December 2011, the UK Public Administration Committee inquiry into Big Society concluded that, "Until further evidence of their success, both in achieving social aims and attracting capital, is available, we urge caution in reliance on their growth."
73. Kernot, C., 7/12/11, 'Social Impact/Social Benefit Bonds grow... an update', *Online Opinion* [retrieved 7 December 2011] <http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=12980>
74. Hughes, V., 17/6/11, Response to Radio National Interview with Phillip Blond 'Red Tory / Blue Labour: Changing Politics in the UK' <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/latenightlive/red-toryblue-labour-changing-politics-in-the-uk/2953966>
75. Aged Care Insight, December 2011/January 2012, 'Industry calls for special bank' [retrieved 10 January 2012] <http://www.agedcareinsite.com.au/pages/section/article.php?s=Mangement+&+Finance&idArticle=22833>
76. UK Cabinet Office, 2010, 'Building a Big Society', Conservative Party Policy Platform.
77. Kisby, 2010, p.486.
78. This report uses the expression 'volunteerism' rather than 'voluntarism'. The distinction is explained by Susan Ellis in 'Volunt/ar/err/ism: What's the difference?' [retrieved 10 January 2012] <http://www.energizeinc.com/art/1vol.html>
79. Stott (ed), 2011, *The Big Society Challenge*, Keystone Development Trust, London, 10.
80. HM Government, 2011, *Community Action in England, A report on the 2009-10 , Citizenship Survey*, Communities and Local Government Publications, Communities and Local Government, London [retrieved 16 May 2012] <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/statistics/pdf/2056233.pdf>
81. VolResource, 2010, *Information for voluntary and community organisations* [retrieved 7 February 2011] <http://www.volresource.org.uk/briefing/sectstats.htm>
82. Kisby, 2010, p.488.
83. Bretherton, J., 31/1/12, 'Realities of the Big Society', *Politics First* [retrieved 1 February 2012] <http://www.politicsfirst.org.uk/2012/realities-of-the-big-society/>
84. Department of Families and Community Services 2005, *Giving Australia: Research on philanthropy in Australia, summary of findings*, Department of Families and Community Services, Canberra [retrieved 16 May 2012] <http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/files/GivingAustraliaSummary.pdf>
85. Productivity Commission, 2010, *Contribution of the Not-for-Profit Sector*, Productivity Commission Research Report, Melbourne, p.3 [retrieved 16 May 2012] http://www.pc.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/94548/not-for-profit-report.pdf

-
86. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1995, 2000, 2006, 2010, *Voluntary Work*, Australia, Australian Government.
87. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1995, 2000, 2006, 2010.
88. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1995, 2000, 2006, 2010. [Note: This indicator was not measured by the ABS in 2010.]
89. Lyons, M., 2009, 'Measuring and comparing civil Societies', *Cosmopolitan Civil Societies*, Vol.1, No.1 pp.71-84.
90. Lyons, M., 2009.
91. Cox, E., 1995, 'A Truly Civil Society', Boyer Lectures, ABC.
92. Communities and Local Government, 25/1/11, 'Future of the citizenship survey' [retrieved 10 October 2011] <http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/research/citizenshipsurvey/>
93. Hastings, A., Bramley, G., Bailey, N. & Watkins, D., 2012, 'Serving deprived communities in a recession', Joseph Rowntree, Foundation, London, p.63 [retrieved 16 Mat 2012] <http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/serving-deprived-communities-recession>
94. Walker, D. 2011, 'How we can help build the case', *Campaign for Social Science* [retrieved 7 March 2012] <http://www.campaignforsocialscience.org.uk/node/81>
95. Community and Public Sector Union, 14/2/12, 'Union slams ABS job losses', CPSU Media Release [retrieved 15 February 2012] <http://www.cpsu.org.au/campaigns/news/27535.html>
96. CPSU, 3/5/12, 'Services will suffer if budget cuts continue' [retrieved 3 May 2012] <http://www.cpsu.org.au/campaigns/news/28312.html>
97. UK Cabinet Office, May 2011, 'Unshackling Good Neighbours: Report of the Task Force established to consider how to cut red tape for small charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises' [retrieved 10 February 2012] <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/unshackling-good-neighbours.pdf> pp.10-14.
98. Little, M., 21/2/12, 'Easing the insurance burden on volunteers', *Third Sector* [retrieved 12 March 2012] <http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/news/1118268/>
99. Emery, P., "Big Society" and civil society', *The Guardian* [retrieved 10 January 2012] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/voluntary-sector-network-zurich-partner-zone/big-society-and-civil-society>
100. Lehal, J., 2010.
101. Plummer, J., 18/3/10, 'Tory government would bring in longer-term contracts', *Third Sector Online* [retrieved 10 November 2011] <http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/news/991277/>
102. Wiggins, K., 14/3/12, 'Government is encouraging commissioning from local voluntary groups, MPs hear', *Third Sector Online* [retrieved 15 March 2012] <http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/news/1121970/government-encouraging-commissioning-local-voluntary-groups-mps-hear/>
103. ProBono News, 19/1/12, ABC devotes Australia Day to volunteers' [retrieved 10 February 2012] <http://www.probonoaustralia.com.au/news/2012/01/abc-devotes-australia-day-volunteers>
-

104. ABC, 2012, 'Help Australia Day: How can you help?' [retrieved 10 February 2012] <http://www.abc.net.au/australiaday/volunteer.htm>
105. Collins, L., 2010, 'All Together Now! What's David Cameron's Big Society about', *The New Yorker* [retrieved 5 October 2010] http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/10/25/101025fa_fact_collins
106. Collins, 2010.
107. Hasan, M. & Macintyre, J., 15/4/11, 'There's no such thing as a "big society"', *New Statesman Online* [retrieved 16 October 2011] <http://www.newstatesman.com/uk-politics/2010/04/society-cameron-state-labour>
108. University of Birmingham, 2011, 'When tomorrow comes: The future of local public services', Policy Commission Summary Report, University of Birmingham in collaboration with Demos, Birmingham.
109. Collins, 2010.
110. IPPR & PwC, 2010, 'Capable Communities: Towards Citizen-Powered Public Services', Institute for Public Policy Research & PricewaterHouseCoopers, p.10-18 [retrieved 10 January 2012] http://download.pwc.com/ie/pubs/2010_capable_communities_towards_citizen_powered_public_services.pdf
111. Stott (ed), 2011, p.18.
112. BBC, 2/2/1, 'Big Society tsar Lord Wei reduces hours' [retrieved 10 January 2012] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-12343830>
113. Beattie, J., 15/2/11, 'Big Society branded "big con" as it emerges most of Cabinet refuse to give up time to help other', *The Mirror* [retrieved 2 February 2011] <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/2011/02/15/cabinet-refuses-to-join-big-society-115875-22924253/#ixzz1lMTBIvgM>
114. Political Scrapbook, 28/2/12, 'Cameron's Big Society Ambassador shut down his own charity' [retrieved 28 February 2012] <http://politicalscrapbook.net/2012/02/my-generation-shuts-down-shaun-bailey/>
115. Pullman. P., 25/1/12, 'This is the Big Society, you see. It must be big, to contain so many volunteers,' Open Democracy [retrieved 10 February 2012] <http://www.opendemocracy.net/ourkingdom/philip-pullman/this-is-big-society-you-see-it-must-be-big-to-contain-so-many-volunteers>
116. Pullman. P., 25/1/12.
117. Brant, P., 6/2/12, 'Big Society? Legal wrangles turn voluntarism into big headache', *The Guardian* [retrieved 8 February 2012] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/local-government-network/2012/feb/06/big-society-legal-wrangles-voluntarism>
118. Kilcommons, D., 12/3/12, 'David Cameron's Big Society asks a lot of communities', *Huddersfield Daily Examiner* [retrieved 14 March 2012] <http://www.examiner.co.uk/news/examiner-plus/2012/03/12/denis-kilcommons-david-cameron-s-big-society-asks-a-lot-of-communities-86081-30510673/2/>

-
119. Wheeler, B., 14/02/11, 'Big Society: More than a soundbite', *BBC News* [retrieved 15 February 2011] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-12163624>
120. Pathak, P., 13/12/11, 'Down with Margaret Mead: evaluating the Big Society' [retrieved 14 December 2011] <http://pathikpathak.wordpress.com/2011/12/13/down-with-margaret-mead-evaluating-the-big-society/>
121. Mycock, A., 24/7/10, 'National citizen service is an unproven vanity project', *The Guardian* [retrieved 10 March 2012] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/jul/24/national-citizen-service-unproven-vanity-project>
122. Stevenson, A., 3/8/11, 'Ministers told to prepare for "big society" spending cuts', *Politics.co.uk* [retrieved 17 April 2012] <http://www.politics.co.uk/news/2011/08/03/ministers-told-to-prepare-for-big-society-spe>
123. Shipman, T. & Walker K., 16/8/11, 'Cameron's war on feckless families: PM attacks the human rights laws and backs national service', *Daily Mail* [retrieved 22 February 2012] <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2026163/David-Cameron-UK-riots-speech-PM-attacks-human-rights-laws-backs-national-service.html>
124. Smith, J., 15/1/12, 'The Big Society can be about more than cheap labour', *The Independent* [retrieved 10 February 2012] <http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/joan-smith/joan-smith-the-big-society-can-be-about-more-than-cheap-labour-6289819.html>
125. Stothart, C., 21/2/12, 'Charities withdraw from the government's work experience scheme over docked benefits', *Third Sector* [retrieved 22 February 2012] http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/go/volunteering/article/1118095/charities-withdraw-governments-work-experience-scheme-docked-benefits/?utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter
126. Thornton, S., 30/06/10, 'The Big Society can help us bring policing closer to the people', *The Telegraph* [retrieved 2 November 2011] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/7918064/The-Big-Society-can-help-us-bring-policing-closer-to-the-people.html>
127. The use of volunteers in UK policing predates 'Big Society'. See: *Police Life*, 10/9/2009, 'Police Support Volunteers Mean Business' [retrieved 10 December 2012] <http://www.police-life.co.uk/2009/09/10/police-support-volunteers-mean-business>
128. *Buckingham Today*, 19/11/11, 'Putting Big Society into action: Be a snow angel' [retrieved 19 November 2011] http://www.buckinghamtoday.co.uk/community/putting_big_society_into_action_be_a_snow_angel_1_3254404
129. Davies, J.S. & Pill, M., 2011, 'Empowerment or Abandonment? Prospects for Neighbourhood Revitalization Under the Big Society', *Public Money and Management*, 32(3), pp.193-200 [retrieved 15 December 2011] <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09540962.2012.676276#preview> p.13
130. The Conservative Party, 2010, *Building a Big Society*, p.1.
131. *BBC News*, 16/11/11, 'Under-threat rural Essex post office saved by villagers', [retrieved 10 January 2012] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-essex-15752650>
-

132. Smith, H., 4/12/11, 'Big Society has been around for a long time', *Grantham Journal* [retrieved 5 December 2011] http://www.granthamjournal.co.uk/community/community-news/big_society_has_been_around_for_a_long_time_1_3305388
133. Studzinski, J., 30/3/12, 'Hitting charitable giving is a poor way to get tough on the rich', *The Independent* [retrieved 30 March 2012] <http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/john-studzinski-hitting-charitable-giving-is-a-poor-way-to-get-tough-on-the-rich-7601127.html>
134. *The Daily Mail*, 12/4/12, 'Making a nonsense of the Big Society' [retrieved 12 April 2012] <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-2128476/Making-nonsense-Big-Society.html?ito=feeds-newsxml>
135. Goldsmith, Z., 14/4/12, 'I am ashamed of my own Chancellor's tax on giving', *Daily Mail* [retrieved 16 April 2012] <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-2129838/Zac-Goldsmith-I-ashamed-George-Osbornes-tax-giving.html>
136. Montgomerie, T., 8/4/12, 'There's nothing big society about capping big donations to charities' *Tory Diary* [retrieved 10 April 2012] <http://conservativehome.blogs.com/thetorydiary/2012/04/theres-nothing-big-society-about-capping-big-donations-to-charities.html>
137. Department of Family and Community Services, 2005, *Giving Australia: Research on philanthropy in Australia*, Australian Government and ACOSS, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.
138. Department of Families and Community Services, 2005.
139. Department of Family and Community Services, 2005.
140. Philanthropy Australia, 2012, Philanthropy Wiki [retrieved 5 March 2012] <http://philanthropywiki.org.au/index.php/Category:Statistics>
141. Philanthropy Australia, 2012, 'Fast facts and statistics on philanthropy' [retrieved 10 March 2012] <http://www.philanthropy.org.au/research/fast.html>
142. Charities Aid Foundation, 2011, World Giving Index [retrieved 10 November 2011] <https://www.cafonline.org/publications/2011-publications/world-giving-index-2011.aspx>
143. GenerationOne, 2012 [retrieved 10 November 2011] <http://generationone.org.au>
144. Sullivan, H., 2012, 'Debate: A Big Society needs an active state', *Policy and Politics*, Vol 40, No.1, pp.145-148.
145. Kirk, A., 5/3/12, 'Swan launches second assault on mining billionaires', ABC 'PM' [retrieved 4 May 2012] <http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2012/s3446124.htm>
146. Perry, S., 3/2/12, "'Buffett rule" tax bill will preserve charitable deduction', *Philanthropy* [retrieved 8 February 2012] <http://philanthropy.com/blogs/government-and-politics/buffett-rule-tax-bill-would-preserve-charitable-deduction/30170>
147. Whelan, 2011, p.40.
148. Aged Care Insight, December 2011/January 2012, 'Industry calls for special bank' [retrieved 10 February 2012] <http://www.agedcareinsite.com.au/pages/section/article.php?s=Management+&+Finance&idArticle=22833>

-
149. Productivity Commission, 2010, *Contribution of the Not-for-Profit Sector*, Productivity Commission Research Report, Productivity Commission, Melbourne.
150. Productivity Commission, 2010.
151. NCVO, 2010, *The UK Civil Society Almanac*, National Council for Voluntary Organisations, London.
152. Productivity Commission, 2010, pp.280-281.
153. Collins, 2010.
154. Walker, C., 4/3/12, 'Charities could face cuts of up to £5.5bn', *BBC News* [retrieved 4 March 2012] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/mobile/uk-17249026>
155. Boxell, J., 24/10/10 'Cameron attacked as charities face cuts', *Financial Times* [retrieved 16 September 2011] <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/101d6bf6-dfaa-11df-bed9-00144feabdco.html#axzz17zw9uydh>
156. Hudson, S., 9/2/12, 'Number of voluntary sector workers falls by 9 per cent', *Third Sector Online* [retrieved 10 March 2012] http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/bulletin/third_sector_daily_bulletin/article/1110991/number-voluntary-sector-workers-falls-almost-9-per-cent/?DCMP=EMC-CONThirdSectorDaily
157. Bartels, K., Cozzi, G. & Mantovan, N., 2011, 'Public Spending and Volunteering: "The Big Society", Crowding Out, and Volunteering Capital', MPRA Paper No. 29730 [retrieved 15 December 2011] http://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/29730/1/MPRA_paper_29730.pdf
158. Boxell, J., 24/10/10.
159. ABC Radio National, 'Encounter', 20/3/11.
160. Churcher & Williams, 2010.
161. Fletcher, 2011.
162. Collins, 2010.
163. Blond, P., 26/1/11, 'The Big Society will only get bigger: Phillip Blond defends the Big Society', ResPublica [retrieved 10 October 2011] <http://www.respublica.org.uk/item/The-Big-Society-will-only-get-bigger-qtin>
164. 'Public sector cuts: Where they will hit', 25/3/11, *The Guardian* [retrieved 3 February 2012] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/mar/25/public-sector-cuts-where-will-they-hit>
165. Hastings, Bramley, Bailey & Watkins, 2012.
166. Salmon, S., 13/09/11, 'Is Paddington the "big society in action"?'', *The Guardian* [retrieved 1 November 2011] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/sep/13/neil-johnston-paddington-big-society>
167. Wright, O., 2/8/11, 'Threat to Cameron's Big Society as cuts take toll on charities', *The Independent* [retrieved 8 December 2011] <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/threat-to-camerons-big-society-as-cuts-take-toll-on-charities-2330253.html>
-

168. Treloar, P., 07/03/11, 'Big society' cannot be build on the ruins of services' *The Guardian* [retrieved 9 November 2011] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/voluntary-sector-network/2011/mar/07/voluntary-sector-network-blog>
169. Bowcott, O., 20/11/11, 'Legal aid cuts: hitting the vulnerable', *The Guardian* [retrieved 22 November 2011] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/law/2011/nov/21/legal-aid-cuts-social-welfare?newsfeed=true>
170. PricewaterhouseCoopers, the Fundraising Institute Australia and the Centre for Social Impact, 2010, 'Managing for Recovery: The state of the not-for-profit sector 2009' [retrieved 10 February 2012] <http://www.pwc.com.au/about-us/corporate-responsibility/assets/Managing-Recovery-Feb10.pdf>
171. Fowkes, L., 2011, 'Rethinking Australia's employment services', Whitlam Institute, Sydney, p.7.
172. *Huffington Post*, 5/12/11, 'John Healey Brands Union Reps "The Workplace Wing of the Big Society"' [retrieved 13 January 2012] http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2011/12/05/healey-union-reps-big-society_n_1129548.html
173. Colvin, M., 1/2/12, 'Community sector workers win historic pay increases' ABC 'PM' [retrieved 10 March 2012] <http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2012/s3420787.htm>
174. Hannan, E., 1/2/12, 'Big rises awarded to social and community sector workers in equal pay ruling, *The Australian* [retrieved 2 February 2012] <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/industrial-relations/big-rises-awarded-to-social-and-community-sector-workers-in-equal-pay-ruling/story-fn59n003-1226259398301>
175. Hannan, 1/2/12.
176. Fowkes, L., 2011, 'Rethinking Australia's employment services', Whitlam Institute, Sydney, p.7.
177. ACTU, 13/2/12, 'National insecure work inquiry hearings kick off in Brisbane today; workers tell their stories' Media Release, Australian Council of Trade Unions [retrieved 21 February 2012] <http://www.actu.org.au/Media/Mediareleases/NationalinsecureworkinquiryhearingskickoffinBrisbanetodayworkerstelltheirstories.aspx>
178. Standing, G. 2011, *The Precariat: The new dangerous class*, Bloomsbury Academic, London.
179. Standing, G., 9/2/12, 'The precariat is you and me', *The Drum Opinion* [retrieved 14 February 2012] <http://www.abc.net.au/unleashed/3820486.html>
180. Kisby, 2010, p.488.
181. Hamilton, C. & Maddison, S., 2011, *Silencing dissent: How the Australian Government is controlling public opinion and stifling debate*, Allen & Unwin, Melbourne.
182. Casey, J., 2008, *Advocacy in the Age of Compacts: Regulating Government-Community Sector Relations in Australia*, Centre for Australian Community Organisations and Management, University of Technology Sydney.
183. Australian Government, 2012, National Compact [retrieved 10 March 2012] <http://www.nationalcompact.gov.au/compact>

-
184. EGov Monitor, 19/10/11, 'Big Society: Government Unveils £100 Million Funding For Community Based Social Action Projects', *EGov Monitor* [retrieved 19 October 2011] <http://www.egovmonitor.com/node/44128>
185. *EGov Monitor*, 19/10/11, 'Big Society: Government Unveils £100 Million Funding For Community Based Social Action Projects' [retrieved 19 October 2011] <http://www.egovmonitor.com/node/44128>
186. Edwards, G., 7/3/12, 'Building the Big Society' (interviews with three community organisers), BBC [retrieved 13 March 2012] http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b01cw7kl/Building_the_Big_Society_Organising/
187. Housing New South Wales, 2007, 'Planning for the Future: New Directions for Community Housing in New South Wales 2007/08 to 2012/13', NSW Government, Sydney, p.14.
188. ABC 'Background Briefing, 17/5/09, 'Inventing the third sector' [retrieved 10 February 2012] <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/backgroundbriefing/inventing-the-third-sector/3151078>
189. British Prime Minister's Office, 23/2/12, 'PM: "Business is the most powerful force for social progress"' [retrieved 30 March 2012] <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/business-in-community/>
190. HM Government, 2012, p.29.
191. Conservative Party, 2009, *Control Shift: Returning Power to Local Communities*, p.13
192. Public.Service.Co.Uk, 17/11/11, 'Lean toward the logic of the Big Society' *Public.Service.Co.Uk*, [retrieved 17 November 2011] http://www.publicservice.co.uk/feature_story.asp?id=18169
193. New Economics Foundation, 2002, *Building the Mutual State*, p.30.
194. *Financial News*, 29/7/11, '£10 million to kick-start public services' [retrieved 6 March 2012] <http://www.financial-news.co.uk/2974/2011/07/10million-to-kick-start-public-services/>
195. Cameron, D., 19/7/10, 'Big Society Speech', Transcript of a speech by the Prime Minister, Liverpool [retrieved 10 October 2011] <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/speeches-and-transcripts/2010/07/big-society-speech-53572>
196. Johnson, M., 6/7/11, 'Is fear of failure holding back public service mutuals and spin-outs?', *The Guardian* [retrieved 10 November 2011] <https://socialenterprise.guardian.co.uk/social-enterprise-network/2011/jul/06/fear-failure-public-service-mutuals>
197. Dearden-Phillips, C., 17/10/11, 'Take your partners for public services', *The Guardian* [retrieved 10 February 2012] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/public-leaders-network/blog/2011/oct/17/partners-public-sector-service>
198. PublicService.net, 24/3/11, 'Public service mutuals to promote the Big Society' [retrieved 20 February 2012] <http://www.publicnet.co.uk/news/2011/03/24/public-service-mutuals-to-promote-the-big-society/>
199. PublicService.co.uk, 12/12/11, 'Revealing the bigger picture' [retrieved 16 December 2011] http://www.publicservice.co.uk/feature_story.asp?id=18330
-

200. Dearden-Philips, C., 17/10/11, 'Take your partners for public services', *The Guardian* [retrieved 10 November 2011] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/public-leaders-network/blog/2011/oct/17/partners-public-sector-service>
201. Laughland, O., 2011, 'Open public services: Privatisation or innovation?', *The Guardian* [retrieved 10 November 2011] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/jul/15/the-conversation-open-public-services>
202. Adapted from PublicService.net, 24/3/11, <http://www.publicnet.co.uk/>
203. Hay Group, 2011, *Relationship counselling: Positive partnerships across public and private organizations*, London.
204. Hay Group, 2011.
205. Dearden-Phillips, C., 07/03/11, 'How will the Any Willing Provider model affect public services?' *The Guardian* [retrieved 19 October 2011] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/public-leaders-network/2011/mar/07/any-willing-provider-public-services>
206. Johnstone, R., 26/10/10, 'Public services white paper favours private sector, says TUC', *Public Finance* [retrieved 1 November 2011] <http://www.publicfinance.co.uk/news/2011/10/public-services-white-paper-favours-private-sector-says-tuc/>
207. Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion, 2011, 'Work Programme Contractor Summary'
208. Laughland, 2011.
209. Laughland, 2011.
210. Office of National Statistics, 2011, 2012, 'Public Sector Employment (Q1; Q2; Q3 2011; Q4 2012)' [retrieved 21 March 2012] <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/pse/public-sector-employment/q1-2011/stb-q1-2011.pdf>
211. Ball, J., 8/2/12, 'Government outsourced more than 1,100 jobs to private sector in 2011', *The Guardian* [retrieved 10 February 2012] http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2012/feb/08/government-outsourcing-private-sector?CMP=tw_t_gu
212. Damm, C., 2012, 'The third sector delivering employment services: An evidence review', Third Sector Research Centre, London, Working Paper 70.
213. Hind, A., 14/10/11, 'Would a social enterprise by any other name smell as sweet?', *Civil Society Media* [retrieved 19 October 2011] http://www.civilsociety.co.uk/finance/opinion/content/10700/would_a_social_enterprise_by_any_other_name_smell_as_sweet
214. Helm, T. & Boffey, D., 3/4/11, '£1.4m-a-year welfare entrepreneur picked by Cameron to get Britons off benefits and into work', *The Guardian* [retrieved 10 March 2012] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/apr/03/emma-harrison-action-for-employment>
215. Harris, J., 12/2/12.
216. Wintour, P. & Rajeev, S., 23/2/12, 'A4e head Emma Harrison steps down from family champion role', *The Guardian* [retrieved 3 March 2012] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2012/feb/23/a4e-emma-harrison-steps-down-family-champion>
217. Harris, 12/2/12.

-
218. United Nations Public Administration Network, 2002, 'Privatisation in Australia' [retrieved 8 April 2012] <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/apcity/unpan005244.pdf>, p. 2.
219. Gallop, G., 2007, *Agile Government Roundtable*, Victorian State Services Authority, Melbourne.
220. Gallop, G., 2008, *What is the point of public service?*, 'Leader to Leader' seminar presentation, Australian Public Service Commission.
221. Consultant-News.com, 15/02/12, 'Australian defence department selects Accenture for HR project' [retrieved 8 April 2012] http://www.consultant-news.com/Article_Display.aspx?p=adp&ID=8486
222. Wettenhall, R., 1998, 'Privatization in Australia: How Much and What Impacts?', *Asian Review of Public Administration*, 10(1-2), pp. 144-158 http://www.my-world-guide.com/upload/File/Reports/Australia/Privatization_Australia.pdf
223. See, e.g.: Aston, H., 6/3/11, 'Privatisation fears fuelled by what-ifs', *The Sydney Morning Herald* [retrieved 9 April 2012] <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/politics/privatisation-fears-fuelled-by-whatifs-20110305-1bip6.html>
224. AFP, 20/8/10, 'US to rely on 7000 private contractors in Iraq once troops withdraw', *The Australian* [retrieved 9 April 2012] <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/breaking-news/us-to-rely-on-7000-private-contractors-in-iraq-once-troops-withdraw/story-fn3dxity-1225907608677>. Also, historically countries such as the UK had national defence forces that were greater than 80% privatised, and mercenaries still play a significant role in many African militaries. See: Wettenhall, R., 2005, 'The public-private interface: Surveying the history' in Hodge, Graeme A. (ed) *The challenge of public-private partnerships: Learning from international experience*, Edward Elgar Publishing.
225. Australia Post, 2009, *The Australia Post Story: 2001-2008* [retrieved 9 April 2012] <http://200years.auspost.com.au/#/story/2001-2008>
226. Australia Post, 2010, *Our History* [retrieved 9 April 2012] <http://auspost.com.au/about-us/our-history.html>
227. Mackie, L., 16/2/11, 'The postal services bill affects us all, your lordships' *The Guardian* [retrieved 9 April 2012] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/feb/16/postal-services-bill-royal-mail-lords?INTCMP=ILCNETTXT3487>
228. Meek, J., 28/4/11, 'In the sorting office', *London Review of Books* [retrieved 10 March 2012] <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v33/n09/james-meek/in-the-sorting-office>
229. Riedy, C. & Daly, J., 2007, *Electricity Supply in NSW: Alternatives to Privatisation*, Research Report, Institute for Sustainable Futures, UTS, Sydney.
230. Ranald, P., 2010, *Dead in the Water*, ACTU Organising Education and Campaign Centre, Canberra, p.6.
231. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011, *Australian Social Trends 2011: Are all Schools Uniform?* 4102.0 [retrieved 9 April 2012] [http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/7159771B16224E7DCA2579120016E12B/\\$File/41020_schools_sep2011.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/7159771B16224E7DCA2579120016E12B/$File/41020_schools_sep2011.pdf)
-

232. Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2011, *Annual Report 2011* [retrieved 9 April 2012] http://www.abc.net.au/corp/annual_reports/ar11/pdf/ar2010_11_complete_report.pdf
233. Medibank Private, 2011, *History* [retrieved 9 April 2012] <http://www.medibank.com.au/About-Us/Corporate-Information/History.aspx>
234. Dempster, Q., 4/8/11, 'Deliberate dismantling of our diminished ABC continues', *The Sydney Morning Herald* [retrieved 9 April 2012] <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/society-and-culture/deliberate-dismantling-of-our-diminished-abc-continues-20110803-1ibk9.html>
235. See for example: Aston, H., 2011.
236. Tradros, E., & Mannheim, M., 20/3/12, 'Yes please minister: Labor spends billions on advice', *The Canberra Times* [retrieved 9 April 2012] <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/national/yes-please-minister--labor-spends-billions-on-advice-20120319-1vg4v.html>
237. Tradros, E., & Mannheim, M., 20/3/12, 'Bureaucracy can't drop advisers', *The Canberra Times* [retrieved 9 April 2012] <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/national/bureaucracy-cant-drop-advisers-20120319-1vg4t.html>
238. Tadros, E. & Mannheim, M., 20/3/12, 'Yes please minister, Labor spends billions on advice', *The Canberra Times* [retrieved 22 March 2012] <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/national/yes-please-minister--labor-spends-billions-on-advice-20120319-1vg4v.html>
239. Two examples of this are the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 and Section 51AE of the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010*
240. See for example: Australian Government, 2010, *Best Practice Regulation Handbook*, Canberra [retrieved 9 April 2012] <http://www.finance.gov.au/obpr/proposal/handbook/docs/Best-Practice-Regulation-Handbook.pdf>; and OECD, 2002, *Regulatory Policies in OECD Countries: From Interventionism to Regulatory Governance*, OECD Publishing, Paris [retrieved 9 April 2012] http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org.simsrad.net.ocs.mq.edu.au/governance/regulatory-policies-in-oecd-countries_9789264177437-en
241. Tadros, E., 2012, 'The Big Spend' *The Canberra Times* [retrieved 9 April 2012] <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/national/government-spending>
242. See for example: McArthur, G., & Collier, K., 20/1/11, 'Melbourne water users slapped with 'desal tax' despite recent floods' *Herald Sun* [retrieved 9 April 2012] <http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/more-news/melbourne-water-users-slapped-with-desal-tax-despite-recent-floods/story-e6frf7kx-1225991325551>
243. Ranald, 2010.
244. Government of Victoria, 2011, *Victorian Guide to Regulation*, edition 2.1, Department of Treasury and Finance, Melbourne [retrieved 9 April 2012] [http://www.vcec.vic.gov.au/CA256EAF001C7B21/WebObj/VGR-incl/\\$File/VGR%20-%20incl.%20SLA%20guidelines%20from%201%20July%202011.pdf](http://www.vcec.vic.gov.au/CA256EAF001C7B21/WebObj/VGR-incl/$File/VGR%20-%20incl.%20SLA%20guidelines%20from%201%20July%202011.pdf)
245. Australian and New Zealand Ombudsman Association, 2012, *Ombudsman services in Australia & New Zealand: Independent, impartial, free* [retrieved 9 April 2012] http://www.anzoa.com.au/ANZOA_Ombudsman_services_Australia_NewZealand.htm

-
246. Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW, *Our History*, [retrieved 9 April 2012] <http://www.ewon.com.au/index.cfm/about-us/our-history/>
247. Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW, *Our Members*, [retrieved 9 April 2012] <http://www.ewon.com.au/index.cfm/about-us/our-members/>
248. Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW, *Binding Decisions*, [retrieved 9 April 2012] <http://www.ewon.com.au/index.cfm/about-us/binding-decisions/>
249. Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW, 2011, *Our Annual Report 2010/11*, Sydney [retrieved 9 April 2012] http://www.ewon.com.au/ewon/assets/File/EWON_AR_10-11.pdf
250. Roth, L., 2004, *Privatisation of Prisons*, Background Paper No 3/04, NSW Parliamentary Library Research Service, Sydney [retrieved 9 April 2012] [http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/publications.nsf/o/ED4BA0B9D18C2546CA256EF9001B3ADA/\\$File/bg03-04.pdf](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/publications.nsf/o/ED4BA0B9D18C2546CA256EF9001B3ADA/$File/bg03-04.pdf)
251. Sozzani, J., 2001, 'Privatisation in the United States and Australia: A Comparative Analysis of the Modern Privatisation Movement in Corrections', *Bond Law Review*, 13(1) pp. 136-165, 156.
252. Sarre, R., 2002, 'Private police: The future of policing and the broader regulatory framework', presented to the Current Issues In Regulation: Enforcement and Compliance Conference, 2-3 September 2002, Melbourne [retrieved 9 April 2012] http://www.aic.gov.au/events/aic%20upcoming%20events/2002/~/_media/conferences/regulation/sarre.pdf
253. Travis, A., & Williams, Z., 2/3/12, 'Revealed: government plans for police privatisation' *The Guardian* [retrieved 9 April 2012] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2012/mar/02/police-privatisation-security-firms-crime>
254. Warrell, H. & Plimmer, G., 7/3/12, 'We already do police crime work, says G4S', *The Financial Times* [retrieved 12 April 2012] <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/6c207754-6884-11e1-a6cc-00144feabdco.html#axzz1sGILujQo>
255. Roxburgh, T., 2011, 'Public Works Capacity and Informed Buyer Capability', Report for the Building the Education Revolution Implementation Taskforce, Centre for Policy Development. Sydney.
256. Building the Education Revolution Implementation Taskforce, 2011, 'Building the Educational Revolution Implementation Taskforce: Final Report', p.55 [retrieved 10 March 2012] http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/BuildingTheEducationRevolution/Pages/berit_news.aspx
257. Kemp, D., 21/11/97, 'Public administration in the new democratic state', Address to the 1997 National Conference of the Institute of Public Administration Australia [retrieved 10 May 2012] <http://www.apsc.gov.au/minister/kemp211197.htm>
258. Joint Standing Committee on Migration, August 2009, *Immigration detention in Australia: facilities, services and transparency*, JSCM, Canberra, p.61 [retrieved 20 February 2012] http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=mig/detention/report3.htm
-

259. Rudd, K., 30/8/08, 'Address to Heads of Agencies and Members of Senior Executive Service', pp.7–8 [retrieved 13 February 2012] <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FJ4BQ6%22>
260. Australian Government, July 2009, 'Australian Government Procurement Statement', Australian Government, Canberra, p.9 [retrieved 13 February 2012] <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22media%2Fpressrel%2FCFSU6%22>
261. Fowkes, L., 2011, *Rethinking Australia's employment services*, The Whitlam Institute, University of Western Sydney, p.5 [retrieved 20 March 2012] http://www.whitlam.org/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/181183/Rethinking_Australias_Employment_Services.pdf
262. Ranald, P., 2002, 'Where are the Jobs in the Job Network? Competitive Tendering of Employment Services.' In *Privatisation, globalisation and labour: Studies from Australia*, edited by Peter Fairbrother, Michael Paddon, and Julian Teicher, Federation Press, Sydney, 2002, pp.158-182.
263. Fowkes, 2011, p.5.
264. Thomas, M., 2007, *A review of developments in the Job Network*, Research paper, No. 15, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 2007, p.2 [retrieved 17 February 2012] <http://www.aph.gov.au/binaries/library/pubs/rp/2007-08/08rp15.pdf>
265. Fowkes, 2011, p.7.
266. Sunley, P., Martin, R. & Nativel, C., 2001, 'Mapping the New Deal: local disparities in the performance of Welfare-to-Work,' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol.26, no.4, pp.484-512.
267. Stewart, H., 11/9/11, 'Work Programme leaves charities fearful for their future', *The Guardian* [retrieved 10 October 2012] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2011/sep/11/unemployment-and-employment-statistics-unemployment>; <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/patrick-butler-cuts-blog/2011/oct/12/big-society-work-programme-a-myth-say-charities?INTCMP=ILCNETTXT3487>
268. Department for Work and Pensions, 1/4/11, 'Massive boost for the Big Society as almost 300 voluntary sector organisations named as part of the Work Programme' [retrieved 25 March 2012] <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/newsroom/press-releases/2011/apr-2011/dwp037-11.shtml>
269. Murray, P., 2006, *A Job Network for Job Seekers*, Discussion Paper, Catholic Social Services [retrieved 25 March 2012] http://www.catholicsocialservices.org.au/system/files/CSSA_Job_Network_Discussions_Paper_o_o.pdf
270. Besser, L., 19/12/11, 'False claims boost chance of survival in jobs game', *The Sydney Morning Herald* [retrieved 25 March 2012] <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/false-claims-boost-chance-of-survival-in-jobs-game-20111218-1povb.html>
271. Crabb, A. & Robinson, P., 11/7/03, '\$30m boost to prop up Job Network', *The Age* [retrieved 25 March 2012] <http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2003/07/10/1057783283586.html>
272. Stafford, A., 23/11/06, 'Unemployed the victims of job agency rorting', *The Age* [retrieved 25 March 2012] <http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/unemployed-the-victims-of-job-agency-rorting/2006/11/22/1163871486319.html>

-
273. Pearson, N., 30/10/11, 'Job services agencies – living off the unemployed', *Centre for Civil Society* [retrieved 10 December 2011] http://www.civilsociety.org.au/National_Update1011.htm
274. Besser, L., 12/12/11, 'Service exploited job seeker's success', *Coastal Times* [retrieved 25 March 2012] <http://www.coastaltimes.com.au/news/national/national/general/service-exploited-job-seekers-success/2388860.aspx?storypage=0>; Maiden, S., 13/2/06, 'Millions owed on jobless', *The Australian* [retrieved 25 March 2012] http://sarinarusso.com.au/site/docs/News_13Feb06.pdf
275. Besser, L., 6/2/12, 'Employment agency rorts investigated', *The Sydney Morning Herald* [retrieved 25 March 2012] <http://www.smh.com.au/national/employment-agency-rorts-investigated-20120205-1qzue.html>
276. Wade, M., 8/7/04, 'Older job seekers let down by system', *The Sydney Morning Herald* [retrieved 25 March 2012] <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2004/07/07/1089000230143.html>
277. Thomas, 2007, *A review of developments in the Job Network*, pp.2–3.
278. Butler, P., 28/2/12, 'Why the work programme is a bad business', *The Guardian* [retrieved 25 March 2012] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2012/feb/28/why-work-programme-bad-business?newsfeed=true>
279. Butler, P., 22/2/12, 'What happens if the work programme doesn't work?', *The Guardian* [retrieved 25 March 2012] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2012/feb/22/what-happens-work-programme-doesnt-work?newsfeed=true>
280. Butler, P., 21/2/12, 'Rise in unemployment puts strain on back-to-work programme', *The Guardian* [retrieved 25 March 2012] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2012/feb/21/rise-unemployment-strain-work-programme?newsfeed=true>
281. Smith, J., 15/1/12, 'The big society can be about more than cheap labour', *The Independent* [retrieved 25 March 2012] <http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/joan-smith/joan-smith-the-big-society-can-be-about-more-than-cheap-labour-6289819.html>
282. Morrison, S., & Merrick, J., 26/2/12, 'Exclusive: A4e and a £200m back-to-work scandal', *The Independent* [retrieved 25 March 2012] <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/exclusive-a4e-and-a-200m-backtowork-scandal-7440966.html>
283. Harris, J., 21/2/12, 'Emma Harrison: nice work if you can get it', *The Guardian* [retrieved 25 March 2012] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2012/feb/21/emma-harrison-a4e-nice-work?newsfeed=true>
284. Butler, P., 11/10/11, 'There's little charity in the Work Programme', *The Guardian* [retrieved 25 March 2012] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/joepublic/2011/oct/11/work-programme-charities-losing-out?newsfeed=true>
285. Stewart, H., 11/9/11, 'Work Programme leaves charities fearful for their future', *The Observer* [retrieved 25 March 2012] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2011/sep/11/unemployment-and-employment-statistics-unemployment>
286. Martinson, J., 24/2/06, 'Happy, touchy-feely and driven by God', *The Guardian* [retrieved 6 March 2011] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2006/feb/24/columnists.guardiancolumnists>
-

287. Serco, 25/11/11, 'At A Glance', *Serco Website* [retrieved 6 March 2011] <http://www.serco.com/about/ata glance/index.asp>
288. Storrar, K., 25/2/06, 'So you thought it was Tony and Gordon in charge? Well, think again, and meet the men from Serco who really... Run Britain', *The Mirror* [retrieved 6 March 2011] <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/so-you-thought-it-was-tony-and-gordon-in-charge-580043>
289. Dearden-Phillips, C., 7/3/11, 'How will the Any Willing Provider model affect public services?', *The Guardian* [retrieved 6 March 2011] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/public-leaders-network/2011/mar/07/any-willing-provider-public-services>
290. Nelson, F., 23/2/12, 'The private sector exposes fraud where the state only lets it fester', *The Telegraph* (UK) [retrieved 6 March 2011] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/9100817/The-private-sector-exposes-fraud-where-the-state-only-lets-it-fester.html>
291. Needham, K., 7/1/12, 'Serco drops ban on coloured pencils and crayons for asylum-seeker children', *The Sydney Morning Herald* [retrieved 6 March 2011] <http://www.smh.com.au/national/serco-drops-ban-on-coloured-pencils-and-crayons-for-asylumseeker-children-20120106-1pogh.html>
292. Martin-Iverson, V., 28/4/11, "Stripping people of their humanity", *New Matilda* [retrieved 6 March 2011] <http://newmatilda.com/2011/04/28/stripping-people-their-humanity>
293. Chan, R., 28/10/11, 'Shooty was one of the strong ones', *New Matilda* [retrieved 6 March 2011] <http://newmatilda.com/2011/10/28/shooty-was-one-strong-ones>
294. Loewenstein, A. & Farrell, P., 9/11/11, 'Serco hires untrained guards' *New Matilda* [retrieved 6 March 2011] <http://newmatilda.com/2011/11/09/serco-hires-untrained-guards>
295. Cordell, M. & Hooke, P., 8/12/11, 'Serco warns of "self-harm culture"', *New Matilda* [retrieved 6 March 2011] <http://newmatilda.com/2011/12/08/serco-warns-selfharm-culture>
296. Travis, A., 12/4/06, "Squalid" private jail was too mean to buy toilet seats', *The Guardian* [retrieved 6 March 2011] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2006/apr/12/ukcrime.prisonsandprobation>
297. Gaines, S., 22/7/08, 'Inmates sleep in toilets at overcrowded prison', *The Guardian* [retrieved 6 March 2011] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/jul/22/doncaster.prison>
298. Macdonald, K. & Buckley-Carr, A., 15/1/12, 'Judge raps Serco for abuse of juveniles', *The West Australian* [retrieved 6 March 2011] <http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/news/12604836/judge-raps-serco-for-abuse-of-juveniles/>
299. *Daily Mail*, 11/1/11, 'Youngest person to die in custody, 14, was unlawfully hit by guard hours before suicide' [retrieved 6 March 2011] <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1346030/Adam-Rickwood-14-unlawfully-hit-guard-hours-suicide.html>; Papas, C., 16/12/11, 'Serco to run youth prison' *New Matilda* [retrieved 6 March 2011] <http://newmatilda.com/2011/12/16/serco-run-youth-prison>
300. *Cornish Guardian*, 21/12/11, "GP service move will put lives at risk" [retrieved 6 March 2011] <http://www.thisiscornwall.co.uk/GP-service-lives-risk/story-14199004-detail/story.html>

-
301. O'Brien, A., 1/12/11, "Overwhelmed" Serco uses admin staff as security guards' *The Australian* [retrieved 6 March 2011] <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/immigration/overwhelmed-serco-used-admin-staff-as-security-guards/story-fn9hm1gu-1226210624676>
302. MacKenzie, C., 17/12/11, 'Scandalous cost of justice: £861 a night to lock up young crime suspects... £650 to stay at the Ritz', *Daily Mail* [retrieved 6 March 2011] <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2075449/Scandalous-cost-justice--861-night-lock-young-crime-suspects---650-stay-Ritz.html?ito=feeds-newsxml>
303. Laurance, B., 13/3/11, 'Revealed: The new public service Fat Cats and why they're immune from the cuts' *Daily Mail* [retrieved 6 March 2011] <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1365695/Revealed-The-new-public-service-Fat-Cats-theyre-immune-cuts.html?ITO=1490#>
304. Papas, 16/12/11.
305. Laurance, 13/3/11.
306. Aston, H., 27/2/11, 'Axemen advise O'Farrell', *The Sydney Morning Herald* [retrieved 7 March 2011] <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/state-election-2011/axemen-advise-ofarrell-20110226-1b98d.html>
307. Cabinet Office (UK), 2012, 'Big Society Overview' [retrieved 7 March 2011] <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/big-society-overview>
308. Papas, 16/12/11.
309. Australian Government Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2012, 'Detention services provider contracts' [retrieved 7 March 2011] <http://www.immi.gov.au/managing-australias-borders/detention/services/provider-contract.htm>
310. Clair, P., 2/12/09, 'Serco: Running nukes and prisons for profit', *Hungry Beast* [retrieved 7 March 2011] <http://hungrybeast.abc.net.au/node/1036>
311. Laurance, 13/3/11.
312. Dempster, Q., 7/4/06, 'From "PPP's" to "PFP's"', *Stateline* [retrieved 7 March 2011] <http://www.abc.net.au/stateline/nsw/content/2006/s1611612.htm>
313. Boffey, D., 21/1/12, 'Charity slams David Cameron's Work Programme for unemployed', *The Guardian* [retrieved 7 March 2011] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2012/jan/21/david-cameron-work-programme-unemployed?newsfeed=true>
314. Maidment, N., 31/10/11, 'Serco buying Excelior for up to A\$13.2 million', *Reuters* [retrieved 7 March 2011] <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/10/31/serco-idUSL5E7LV2HS20111031>
315. Loewenstein, A., Cordell, M., & Farrell, P., 9/11/11a, 'Exclusive: Our contract with Serco' *New Matilda* [retrieved 7 March 2011] <http://newmatilda.com/2011/11/09/exclusive-our-contract-serco>
316. Loewenstein, Cordell, & Farrell, 9/11/11a.
-

317. Loewenstein, A., & Farrell, P., 9/11/11b, 'No audit requirement for Serco', *New Matilda* [retrieved 7 March 2011] <http://newmatilda.com/2011/11/09/no-audit-requirement-serco>
318. Loewenstein, & Farrell, 9/11/11b.
319. Cordell, & Hooke, 8/12/11.
320. Brereton, A., 24/5/11, 'Department admits "no one watching Serco"' *New Matilda* [retrieved 7 March 2011] <http://newmatilda.com/2011/05/24/departement-admits-no-one-watching-serco>
321. Laurance, 13/3/11.
322. Maguire, K., 28/11/03, 'How British charity was silenced on Iraq', *The Guardian* [retrieved 7 March 2011] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2003/nov/28/charities.usnews>
323. Cowling, D. & McCoy, O., 20/5/11, 'The ABC of a successful corporate rescue: Lessons from the Court receivership of ABC2 Group Pty Ltd', Clayton Utz [retrieved 8 March 2012] http://www.claytonutz.com/publications/news/201105/20/the_abc_of_a_successful_corporate_rescue_lessons_from_the_court_receivership_of_abc2_group_pty_ltd.page#.T2BuXXnwWSp
324. Bitá, N., 31/5/10, 'Hiccups in takeover of ABC childcare centres', *The Australian* [retrieved 8 March 2012] <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/politics/hiccups-in-takeover-of-abc-childcare-centres/story-e6frgczf-1225873224304>
325. Hill, E., & Pocock, B., 2010, 'Work and Care' in Davis, M., & Lyons, M. (eds), *More Than Luck*, Centre for Policy Development, Sydney, pp 91-102 [retrieved 10 March 2012] <http://morethanluck.cpd.org.au/sharing-the-luck/work-and-care/>
326. Carson, V., 6/11/08, 'ABC child care goes under', *The Sydney Morning Herald* [retrieved 8 March 2012] <http://www.smh.com.au/business/abc-child-care-goes-under-20081106-5iys.html>
327. Pocock, B., & Hill, E., 2007, 'The childcare policy challenge in Australia' in Hill, E., Pocock, B., & Elliott, A. (eds), *Kids Count: Better early childhood education and care in Australia*, Sydney University Press, Sydney, pp 15-37 [retrieved 14 March 2012] <http://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/2123/2120/3/KidsPocockCh1.pdf>
328. Rush, E. & Downie, C., 2006, *ABC Learning Centres: A case study of Australia's largest child care corporation*, Discussion Paper Number 87, The Australia Institute, Canberra [retrieved 14 March 2012] <http://www.tai.org.au/documents/downloads/DP87.pdf>
329. Adapted from Rush, E. & Downie, C., 2006, *ABC Learning Centres: A case study of Australia's largest child care corporation*, Discussion Paper Number 87, The Australia Institute, Canberra [retrieved 14 March 2012] <http://www.tai.org.au/documents/downloads/DP87.pdf>
330. Rush & Downie, 2006.
331. Burrow, V., 30/5/07, 'ABC handed a \$1bn lolly', *The Age* [retrieved 14 March 2012] <http://www.theage.com.au/news/business/abc-handed-a-1bn-lolly/2007/05/29/1180205249974.html>
332. 262 "unviable" centres (Cowling & McCoy, 20/5/11), plus 678 centres sold to the not-for-profit GoodStart consortium. See: Kruger, C., 11/1/10, 'ABC change gets off to a good start', *The Age* [retrieved 14 March 2012] <http://www.theage.com.au/business/abc-change-gets-off-to-a-good-start-20100110-momz.html>

-
333. Toynbee, P., 26/08/11, 'Where is Britain's Warren Buffett or Lilliane Bettencourt?', *The Guardian* [retrieved 9 November 2011] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/aug/26/buffett-bettencourt-tax-rich>
334. Blond, P., 2010, *Red Tory: How the left and right have broken Britain and how we can fix it*, Faber and Faber, London, p.35.
335. Public.Service.Co.Uk, 2011, 'Lean toward the logic of the Big Society' *Public.Service.Co.Uk* [retrieved 14 December 2011] http://www.publicservice.co.uk/feature_story.asp?id=18169
336. Coote, A., 2011, *Ten big questions about the Big Society and ten ways to make the best of it*, New Economics Foundation, London, pp.2-3 [retrieved 1 February 2012] <http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/ten-big-questions-about-the-big-society>
337. Hastings, Bramley, Bailey & Watkins, 2012.
338. Elliott, L., 31/1/09, 'Recapitalise the poor, not just the banks says Cameron', *The Guardian* [retrieved 10 April 2012] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2009/jan/31/david-cameron-capitalism>
339. Wintour, P., 12/3/12, 'Council tenants offered £75,000 discount in right-to-buy scheme', *The Guardian* [retrieved 12 March 2012] http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2012/mar/12/council-tenants-discount-right-buy?CMP=twf_fd
340. Blunkett, D., 2003, *Towards a Civil Society*, Institute for Public Policy Research, London, p.12.
341. Lehal, 2011.
342. Rogers, S., 5/12/11, 'OECD inequality report: how do different countries compare?', *The Guardian* [retrieved 10 March 2012] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/2011/dec/05/oecd-inequality-report-uk-us>
343. OECD, 2011a, 'Divided We Stand: Why Inequality Keeps Rising' [retrieved 20 March 2012] http://www.oecd.org/document/51/0,3746,en_2649_33933_49147827_1_1_1_1,00.html
344. The Equality Trust, 2012, 'How income inequality is measured' [retrieved 10 February 2012] <http://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/why/evidence/methods>
345. OECD, 2011a.
346. Australian Council of Social Services, 2012, 'Who is missing out: Material deprivation and income support payments', ACOSS Paper 187, Strawberry Hills [retrieved 12 April 2012] http://acoss.org.au/images/uploads/Missing_Out_2012_ACOSS.pdf
347. Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, 2011b, *Your Better Life Index: Country Notes*, OECD Better Life Initiative, p.2.
348. Martin, P., 2011, 'Australia's rich getting wealthier', *The Sydney Morning Herald* [retrieved 7 December 2011] <http://www.smh.com.au/national/australias-rich-getting-wealthier-20111205-10fiq.html>
349. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011, 'Household income and income distribution', p.5.[retrieved 20 March 2012] [http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/o/DBE855896D8CA36DCA2578FB0018533C/\\$File/65230_2009-10.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/subscriber.nsf/o/DBE855896D8CA36DCA2578FB0018533C/$File/65230_2009-10.pdf)
-

350. Vinson, T., 2009, *Markedly Socially Disadvantaged Localities in Australia: Their Nature and Possible Remediation*, A report commissioned by the Australian Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, University of Sydney.
351. Coote, 2011.
352. Kisby, 2010, p.488.
353. Davies & Pill, 2011, p.1.
354. Coote, A., 07/19/10, 'Cameron's Big Society will leave the poor and powerless behind', New Economics Foundation [retrieved 16 September 2011] <http://www.neweconomics.org/blog/2010/07/19/camerons-big-society-will-leave-the-poor-and-powerless-behind>
355. Hastings, Bramley, Bailey & Watkins, 2012.
356. Collins, 2010.
357. Firth, V., 2/3/12, 'Let public as well as private schools benefit from donations', *The Sydney Morning Herald* [retrieved 13 April 2012] <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/politics/let-public-as-well-as-private-schools-benefit-from-donations-20120301-1u5xf.html>
358. Wilson, J., 16/11/ 11, 'Recruiters and the Big Society', *Recruiter* [retrieved 20 November 2011] <http://www.recruiter.co.uk/opinion/soap-box/recruiters-and-the-big-society/1011737.article>
359. Brodie, E., Cowling, E. & Nissen, N., 2009, 'Understanding participation: A literature review', *National Council for Voluntary Organisations* [retrieved 10 December 2011] <http://pathwaysthroughparticipation.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2009/09/Pathways-literature-review-final-version.pdf>
360. Pathik, 2011.
361. Davies & Pill, 2011.
362. Kisby, 2010, p.488.
363. Hastings, Bramley, Bailey & Watkins, 2012.
364. Hastings, Bramley, Bailey & Watkins, 2012, p.65.
365. Hastings, Bramley, Bailey & Watkins, 2012, p.65.
366. Hastings, Bramley, Bailey & Watkins, 2012, p.65.
367. Moss, V. 4/3/12, 'True impact of brutal Tory cuts revealed: charities lose billions', *The Mirror* [retrieved 6 March 2012] <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/true-impact-of-brutal-tory-cuts-751275>
368. Penny, J. & Slay, J., 2012, 'The new austerity and the Big Society: An interim briefing', New Economics Foundation, London [retrieved 13 April 2012] <http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/the-new-austerity-and-the-big-society>
369. Robinson, J. & Teather, D., 20/2/10, 'Cameron - The PR years', *The Guardian* [retrieved 10 October 2011] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2010/feb/20/david-cameron-the-pr-years>

370. Kisby, B., 2010, 'The Big Society: Power to the People?' *The Political Quarterly*, Vol.81, No.4, pp.484-491.
371. Farndale, N. 18/1/12, 'Capitalism: We can rebuild it', *The Sydney Morning Herald* [retrieved 110 February 2012] <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/politics/capitalism-we-can-rebuild-it-20120117-1q4k4.html>
372. Entman, R.M., 1993, 'Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm', *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 43 No. 4, p.52.
373. Lakoff, G. 2004, *Don't think of an elephant: Know your values and frame the debate: The essential guide for progressives*, Chelsea Green Publishing, White River Junction.
374. Wheeler, B., 14/02/11, 'Big Society: More than a soundbite', *BBC News* [retrieved 15 February 2011] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-12163624>
375. Glasbook, H., 2009, 'Rudderless in a Sea of Choices: The Defeat of Your Rights At Work—Analysis and a Possible Response', *Dissent*, No.29. pp.33-43.
376. Fowkes, L., 2011, *Rethinking Australia's employment services*, Whitlam Institute and University of Western Sydney, Sydney, p.13.
377. Whelan, 2011.
378. Coombs, H.C., 1977, Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, p. 18.
379. Blond, P., 2010, p.35.
380. Berg, C., 7/6/11, 'Red Toryism holds little but giggles for local Liberals', ABC 'The Drum Unleashed' [retrieved 10 June 2011] <http://www.abc.net.au/unleashed/2750128.html>.
381. Blond, P., 2010, *Red Tory: How the left and right have broken Britain and how we can fix it*, Faber and Faber, London, p.1.
382. Macaskill, D., 6/12/11, 'What's big about the big society? Small is beautiful', *Equal and Diverse* [retrieved 14 February 2012] <http://www.equalanddiverse.co.uk/whats-big-about-the-big-society/>
383. Helm, T. & Stratton, A. 15/1/11, 'Ed Miliband claims notion of the 'big society' for Labour', *The Guardian* [retrieved 10 October 2011] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/jan/15/ed-miliband-attack-blair-brown>
384. Blond, P., 26/1/11, 'The Big Society will only get bigger: Phillip Blond defends the Big Society', ResPublica [retrieved 10 October 2011] <http://www.respublica.org.uk/item/The-Big-Society-will-only-get-bigger-qtin>
385. Glasman, M., 2010, 'Society not state: the challenge of the Big Society', *Public Policy Research*, pp.59-65.
386. Domokos, J. & Shariatmadari, D., 24/1/11, 'Maurice Glasman: "I think the Conservatives are right to point out that Labour was too statist" (video) [retrieved 10 February 2012] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/video/2011/jan/24/maurice-glasman-blue-labour-big-society-london-citizens>

387. Whelan, J., 5/12/11, 'Public service race to the bottom', *ABC The Drum Unleashed* [retrieved 10 January 2012] <http://www.abc.net.au/unleashed/3713434.html>
388. Whelan, J., 2011.
389. Kisby, 2010, p.489
390. Rustecki, D., 7/12/11, 'Big Green Society: Creating cleaner, greener neighbourhoods in a time of austerity', *eGovMonitor* [retrieved 15 December 2011] <http://www.egovmonitor.com/node/44965>
391. Hastings, Bramley, Bailey & Watkins, 2012.
392. Rackley, A., 10/2/12, 'Big Society could threaten biodiversity conservation', Natural Environment Research Council [retrieved 11 February 2012] <http://planetearth.nerc.ac.uk/news/story.aspx?id=1156>
393. Ashton R., 5/8/11, 'It's out with the big society and in with the big reality', *The Guardian* [retrieved 10 February 2011] <https://socialenterprise.guardian.co.uk/social-enterprise-network/2011/aug/05/out-big-society-in-reality>
394. Gittins, R., 3/3/12, 'Workers create wealth, even in the public sector', *The Sydney Morning Herald* [retrieved 4 March 2012] <http://www.smh.com.au/business/workers-create-wealth-even-in-the-public-sector-20120302-1u7zw.html#ixzz1oCUPk728>
395. See for instance: Sinclair, D., 15/3/12, 'Government must live within its means', *ABC The Drum* [retrieved 28 March 2012] <http://www.abc.net.au/unleashed/3891216.html>
396. OECD, 2009, OECD Stat Extracts [retrieved 15 July 2011] <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx>
397. OECD, 2011, *Taxing Wages: Country note for Australia* [retrieved 10 January 2012] http://www.oecd.org/document/11/0,3746,en_2649_34533_47420811_1_1_1_1,00.html
398. OECD, 2011, *Revenue Statistics 1965-2010* [retrieved 10 January 2012] <http://www.oecd.org/ctp/revenuestats>
399. Rutherford, J. & Shah, H., 2006, 'The Good Society: Compass Programme for Renewal', Compass and Lawrence and Wishart Limited, London [retrieved 10 March 2012] http://clients.squareeye.net/uploads/compass/documents/good_society.pdf
400. Lyons, M., 2009, 'Measuring and Comparing Civil Societies', *Cosmopolitan Civil Societies*, 1(1), pp.71-84.
401. McAuley, I., Menadue, J., Carney, N. & Lyons, M., 2006, *Reclaiming our common wealth: Policies for a fair and sustainable future*, Centre for Policy Development, Sydney.
402. Mintzberg, H., 1996, 'Managing Government, Governing Management', *Harvard Business Review*, pp.75-83. p.83.
403. This was the subject of the 2011 inquiry by the Senate Economics Committee into 'Finance Options for the Not-for-Profit Sector that reported to Government' (Recommendation 5.2).
404. Glasman, 2010, p.59.
405. Glasman, 2010, p.59.

-
406. Pathik, 2011.
407. Boychuk, 2011, p.211.
408. Hasan, M. & Macintyre, J., 2011, 'There's no such thing as a "big society"', *New Statesman Online* [retrieved 15 April 2010] <http://www.newstatesman.com/uk-politics/2010/04/society-cameron-state-labour>
409. Sullivan, 2012, p.145.
410. Parenti, C., 5/2/12, 'Why climate change will make you love big government', *Grist* [retrieved 14 February 2012] <http://grist.org/climate-change/why-climate-change-will-make-you-love-big-government/>
411. Sullivan, H., 2012, 'Debate: A Big Society needs an active state', *Policy and Politics*, Vol 40, No.1, pp.145-148.
412. Rutledge, D., 22/3/11, 'The Big Society', Radio National 'Encounter' [retrieved 8 December 2011] <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/encounter/the-big-society/2997794>
413. Butler, P., 18/11/11, 'Council cuts: Traumatic, yes, but you ain't seen nothing yet', *The Guardian* [retrieved 22 November 2011] <http://m.guardian.co.uk/society/patrick-butler-cuts-blog/2011/nov/18/council-spending-cuts-likely-to-get-worse?cat=society&type=article>
414. Rogers, E., 18/10/11, 'Library closures: What can local people do?' *The Guardian* [retrieved 10 February 2012] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/oct/18/library-closures-local-people>
415. Davies, L. 16/11/11, 'Court rules library closures unlawful', *The Guardian* [retrieved 10 December 2011] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/nov/16/court-challenges-against-library-closures?newsfeed=true>
416. Brant, P., 6/2/12, 'Big Society? Legal wrangles turn voluntarism into big headache', *The Guardian* [retrieved 8 February 2012] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/local-government-network/2012/feb/06/big-society-legal-wrangles-voluntarism>
417. Ross, T., 9/6/11, 'Archbishop of Canterbury was wrong, David Cameron says', *The Telegraph* [retrieved 10 December 2011] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/8565824/Archbishop-of-Canterbury-was-wrong-David-Cameron-says.html>
418. Hudson, S., 26/09/11, 'Commissioning is damaging the voluntary sector, says NCIA founder', *Third Sector Online* [retrieved 26 September 2011] <http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/news/rss/article/1090082/Commissioning-damaging-voluntary-sector-says-NCIA-founder/>
419. Ramesh, R., 22/6/10, 'Interview with Mr Big Society', *The Guardian* [retrieved 10 September 2011] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2010/jun/22/nat-wei-big-society-adviser-conservatives>
420. Darlington, S., 25/1/12, 'Big Society!', *The Morning Star* [retrieved 20 January 2012] <http://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/news/content/view/full/114580>
421. Lawson, D., 26/1/12, 'Napalm Death: playing fast and furious' [retrieved 1 February 2012] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2012/jan/26/napalm-death-playing-fast-furious?newsfeed=true>
-

422. See for example: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Big-Society-BS-Bull-ShT-Campaign-to-Stop-it-Save-our-Services/164544526927878> and <http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Big-Society/113620708652863>
423. Cancesco, M., 23/2/12, 'Cameron's "Big Society" fizzles out in Britain', *The Vancouver Sun* [retrieved 28 February 2012] <http://blogs.vancouversun.com/2012/02/23/camerons-big-society-fizzles-out-in-britain/>
424. Angus Reid Public Opinion, 'Britons Start to Turn Against Cameron's Big Society Policy', Public Opinion Poll [retrieved 28 February 2012] http://www.visioncritical.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/2011.02.23_Society_BRI.pdf
425. Deacon, M., 23/2/12, 'David Cameron still isn't giving up on the Big Society', *The Telegraph* [retrieved 24 February 2012] <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/michaeldeacon/100139341/david-cameron-still-isnt-giving-up-on-the-big-society/>
426. Watts, R., 1/4/12, 'Minister stands by Big Society plans', *The Telegraph* [retrieved 2 April 2012] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/9178441/Minister-stands-by-Big-Society-plans.html>
427. <http://www.capita.co.uk>
428. Abbott, T., 31/1/12, 'My plan for a stronger economy and a stronger Australia' [retrieved 10 April 2012] <http://liberal.org.au/Latest-News/2012/01/31/My-Plan-for-a-Stronger-Economy-and-a-Stronger-Australia.aspx>
429. Mannheim, M., 9/05/12, 'Coalition: go harder on job cuts', *Sydney Morning Herald* [retrieved 11 May 2012] <http://www.smh.com.au/national/public-service/coalition-go-harder-on-job-cuts-20120509-1yc4j.html>
430. Vasek, L., 4/04/12, 'Julia Gillard says surplus bid means 'tough choices' on public service jobs', *The Australian* [retrieved 25 April 2012] <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/julia-gillard-says-surplus-bid-means-tough-choices-on-public-service-jobs/story-fn59niix-1226318677243>
431. *The Canberra Times*, 1/2/12, 'Labor MPs reject job loss projections' [retrieved 5 May 2012] <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/opinion/politics/labor-mps-reject-job-loss-projections-20120201-1t86k.html>
432. The Coalition-proposed cut of 12,000 positions may be intended as additional beyond any already implicitly factored into the Budget forward estimates. The temporary efficiency dividend increase in the November MYEFO had little if any impact on the forward estimates of salary and wage expenditure, which had already anticipated reductions in forward year spending associated largely with terminating programs. The Government mid-year papers state that the impact of the higher efficiency dividend is to be targeted to various procurement costs. Nonetheless, it is clear that successive Labor budgets are leading to significant public service job losses.
433. Mannheim, M., 31/01/12, '14,000 jobs set to go', *The Canberra Times* [retrieved 2/2/12] <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/news/local/news/general/14000-jobs-set-to-go/2439580.aspx?storypage=0>

434. The latest budget papers maintain the Labor government's commitment to keeping taxes below 24 per cent of GDP on average; lower than they have been since the Keating government. As noted above, Australia already has very low taxes compared to other developed countries. Budget 2012/13, 'Budget Paper No 1, Statement 3, Overview of Fiscal Position', Australian Government, http://www.finance.gov.au/publications/commonwealth-budget/2012-13/2012-13/content/bp1/html/bp1_bst3-01.htm
435. Abbott, T., 31/1/12, 'My plan for a stronger economy and a stronger Australia', *The Canberra Times* [retrieved 31 January 2012] <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/news/national/national/general/my-plan-for-a-stronger-economy-and-a-stronger-australia/2438815.aspx?storypage=0#>
436. Mr Abbott took this policy to the 2007 election.
437. Grattan, M., 19/4/12, 'Hockey blasts culture of entitlement', *The Sydney Morning Herald* [retrieved 19 April 2012] <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/political-news/hockey-blasts-attitude-of-entitlement-20120418-1x7zs.html>
438. UK Cabinet Office, May 2011, 'Unshackling Good Neighbours: Report of the Task Force established to consider how to cut red tape for small charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises' [retrieved 10 February 2012] <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/unshackling-good-neighbours.pdf>
439. Ostrum, E., 1991, *Governing the Commons: The evolution of institutions for collective action*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
440. Fairbrother, P., Paddon, M. & Teicher, J. (eds), 2002, *Privatisation, Globalisation and Labour: Studies from Australia*, The Federation Press, Annandale, p.3.
441. Geoff Gallop interview.
442. Australian Taxation Office, 2012, 'Is your organisation non-profit? Tax basics for non-profit organisations' [retrieved 10 February 2012] <http://www.ato.gov.au/nonprofit/content.aspx?doc=/content/33732.htm>
443. Kernot, C., 7/12/11, 'Social Impact/Social Benefit Bonds grow... an update', Online Opinion [retrieved 10 February 2012] <http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=12980&page=0>
444. Laird, A., 7/5/11, 'Mutual spin-outs: A flash in the pan?', Pop-up Social Enterprise [retrieved 10 February 2012] <http://popse.wordpress.com/themes/mutuals/>



Become an Ideas Sustainer - add your voice to ours!

CPD needs your help to develop a positive, evidence backed agenda for bringing our economy within environmental limits.

Ideas can change Australia – we need 100 Ideas Sustainers so we can inject great ideas into the debates that will decide the future of our environment, society and economy.

We need you to add your voice to ours: become an **Ideas Sustainer** now!

The Centre for Policy Development (CPD) is endorsed as an approved research institute so all donations over \$2 are tax-deductible. You can donate online at <http://cpd.org.au/donate> or fill in the form below.

YES! I want to become an Ideas Sustainer.

Contribution amount

- \$100 per month
- \$250 per month
- \$50 per month
- \$20 per month
- Other ____ monthly donation or one-off donation (please tick): _____

Personal details

Name: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Postal address: _____

Payment details

- Cheque:** *Please make payable to the Centre for Policy Development and mail to us at:
Centre for Policy Development PO Box K3, Haymarket NSW 1240.*
- Direct Deposit:** *Centre for Policy Development Ltd, BSB 032006, Account 392 494*
- Credit card:** Visa MasterCard

Card holder name: _____

Card number: _____ / _____ / _____ / _____ Expiry date : _____ / _____

Signature: _____ **Security code:** _____

Sign me up to the CPD! I'd like to receive CPD e-newsletters

Please tick this box if you do not want to be acknowledged on the CPD site.

Thank you for your support





Centre for Policy Development, May 2012

Published under a Creative Commons License

This document can be downloaded from

<http://cpd.org.au/2012/05/big-society/>