

CHAPTER 13.

NOVEMBER 1978 ONWARDS: STRATEGIES OF LIQUIDATION.

"Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?"

Wordsworth: Intimations of Immortality IV.

"For each age is a dream that is dying,
Or one that is coming to birth".

Arthur O'Shaughnessy: We Are the Music Makers.

O'Keefe and his Corporation may have continued trying to inculcate the growth centre program upon the Government had it not been for the State election of October 1978. The results of that election generated changes of power such that the ensuing years have witnessed a gradual liquidation of B.O.D.C. and the growth centre program. This chapter briefly examines the election itself and then a series of events as strategies in that liquidation.

A "push" to win the Bathurst seat.

The State Labor Party persisted in its enchantment with the Bathurst seat. Having failed to gain the seat at his first attempt in 1976 the local candidate, Mark Worthington, was provided with considerable support for a second attempt. Premier Wran delivered the rural policy speech in Bathurst, hoping for similar success to that experienced from delivering the 1976 rural policy speech in Griffith. During the election campaign Worthington was supported with visits by five State Ministers and the Premier, and a substantial campaign advertising budget.

Growth centres, and Bathurst-Orange in particular, were not a significant election issue. In his rural policy Wran stated that his Government " ... will continue our commitment to the growth centres of Bathurst-Orange and Albury-Wodonga".¹ He went on to state that B.O.D.C. would receive \$13.5million in that year, claiming that to be an increase of \$4.5 million over the previous one. In making the claim the Premier stressed that his Government's commitment was in spite of the Federal Government's withdrawal from growth centres.

The claim of extra commitment to B.O.D.C. was more an election ploy rather than fact for the \$13.5 million comprised a permission to borrow \$9.0 million from the private financial market and a

projected \$4.5 million income by B.O.D.C. Whether this income would be generated, or whether the Corporation would be allowed to borrow the full \$9.0 million, was going to depend on the outcome of the review already initiated by Day. The increase of \$4.5 million over the previous year must have been calculated by what can only be described as "election arithmetic". As can be seen from Table 7 B.O.D.C. borrowed \$10.19 million in 1977/78. The difference between this and the \$13.5 million is significantly less than \$4.5 million increase being suggested. The increase is even smaller when it is pointed out that the Corporation generated \$2.15 million income in 1977/78.²

The significance for this research is not in the dubious electioneering with B.O.D.C. funding but, in hindsight, what the rural policy did not say. The Premier's commitment to the Bathurst-Orange program was one of obligation rather than any positive commitment to a policy of selective decentralisation with Bathurst-Orange as a pilot project. Any identifiable policy of decentralisation in the speech could be best described as one of widely spread rural largesse, not very different from the Country Party. In retrospect it is not difficult to understand why there was so little debate on decentralisation and growth centres in the election campaign. The policy differences between the Labor and Country Parties were minimal; both were interested in winning rural seats and neither were committed to a selective policy of decentralisation if it meant resources would need to be concentrated in Bathurst-Orange as the selected centre.

Although Wran won the election with a significant swing towards Labor the Government failed to gain Bathurst. If anything there had been a slight swing against the Government in the local electorate. Surprisingly, Labor almost won the neighbouring Orange seat, one not considered to be marginal prior to the election. This was to be of consequence, for the Labor Party's attention quickly swung towards Orange at the expense of Bathurst.

Disappointed at not gaining country seats Wran blamed the gerrymandering of previous Liberal/Country Party Governments. During 1979 the Premier proceeded to correct the situation with a State electoral boundary redistribution. If there had been a gerrymander towards the Country Party this may have been corrected in favour of

the Government since the Labor candidate did win the Bathurst seat at the next election. His win was dependent on the votes of the newly introduced areas to counter the strong personal support for the Country Party sitting member, Osborne, in those old areas of the electorate which remained.

Evaluation and re-formulation: a series of contrived reviews.

In the Cabinet reshuffle following the October 1978 election, Day was not reappointed as Minister. A more authoritarian Minister in Jack Hallam, a Premier acolyte, was given responsibility. In the way the new Minister handled the portfolio it became apparent the Government had abandoned any thought of maintaining its "softly-softly" approach to the growth centre. Perhaps this was an acknowledgement that it was unlikely to "buy" the Bathurst seat, and a confidence in the outcome of the electoral boundary redistribution.

It should also be acknowledged that Bathurst-Orange had by now become something of a nuisance to the Premier. Cabinet's development initiatives were being directed to employment generation in its electoral stronghold, the western suburbs of Sydney, and a projected resources development of the Hunter Valley. For a program devoid of any real policy commitment Bathurst-Orange had required an inordinate diversion of attention in what proved to be a vain hope of gaining one more rural seat. The growth centre also was the subject of many questions in Parliament. With information gleaned from Bathurst and Orange the Opposition raised questions aimed at embarrassing the Premier and his Government's handling of the project.

On his first visit to Bathurst-Orange Hallam indicated that "decentralisation would remain a major part of the policy of the N.S.W. Labor Government".³ He announced that the financial review instigated by his predecessor would rapidly be brought to fruition. Foreshadowing his intentions, even without the report, Hallam suggested that the program would need to lower its horizons.

With the benefit of reflection on the events that followed it is possible to identify several different interpretations of what policy was being stated by Hallam. B.O.D.C. perceived that a commitment to decentralisation meant selective decentralisation and that

the financial review should be directed towards marginal adjustments of the existing program, much as it had done under Day. In these first weeks of Hallam's leadership O'Keefe and his Corporation felt that it was once again a matter of tutoring the new Minister into the Corporation's program. Subsequent Ministerial pronouncements were to demonstrate that Hallam had a different interpretation of policy. Decentralisation did not mean a selective policy, nor was he committed to the Bathurst-Orange growth centre. His statement to the local community was expressed in political ambiguity, whether contrived or not. He was also indicating the outcome he expected from the financial review: that the program would need to be reduced. O'Keefe was to learn that the Minister could not be tutored.

B.O.D.C. completed the financial review which was presented to Hallam and several of his advisers at an all-day session in Bathurst on 18 December 1978. Acting on its understanding of the purpose of the evaluation, B.O.D.C.'s report emphasised the propriety and long term viability of the growth centre given sustained government commitment. Projections of cumulative indebtedness were superimposed over estimates of future income from the project indicating profitability towards the end of the century. These projections highlighted some short term difficulties once government loans required repayment by the mid-1980's. To overcome the shortfalls the Corporation recommended restructuring the financial gearing by considering all government loans as equity investments. Rather than loans being repaid at prescribed interest rates the Governments could consider their financial inputs as equity capital with dividends being expected in the long term. Private loans would, and could, be repaid as they fell due.

Within hours of completing the presentation B.O.D.C. learned its evaluation and presentation had been a futile exercise. Hallam was not convinced and announced that he intended to have the report analysed by "... the best financial brains in the State".⁴ It was obvious the Minister had addressed himself only to the debt structure, not to any equity restructuring when he sought to blame previous State Governments for allowing B.O.D.C. to get into such a bad financial position. Through his "grapevine" contacts O'Keefe discovered he had been pre-judged for what was perceived to be an incorrect approach and that the Corporation's grand plans were to be

downgraded. It seemed to him that despite the political rhetoric he would be held personally responsible.

A Financial Committee of Review.

The best financial brains in the State turned out to be an "immigrant" from D.U.R.D. (now on the Premier's staff), an anti-Corporation antagonist from D. & D., a senior financial adviser from the Premier's Ministerial Advisory Unit, and Alan Dane from State Treasury. It was belatedly decided to add a representative from B.O.D.C., mainly to interpret growth centre finances. These were established by the Minister as an ad hoc Committee of Review. If indeed these comprised the best financial brains in the State it is strange they were never to be brought together again to review any other State projects.

At the first meeting the expected outcome of the evaluation was made clear. Those members close to the Premier and Minister advised that only "lip service" would be given to the growth centre, there would be no government relocations, and certainly no thought of developing the new city. It would be the Committee's job to produce a minimal program. As if to placate the Corporation's representative it was suggested that more expansive options could be canvassed.

B.O.D.C.'s evaluation had been inconsequential because it had been premised on the wrong values, assumptions and objectives. O'Keefe had incorporated his attitudes rather than the Minister's or Government's. Weiss suggests that one of the reasons evaluations are so easily disregarded is that they address the wrong goals.⁵ She proposes the need for political-benefit analysis as well as cost-benefit analyses. Such analysis would evaluate the program relative to the political goals of decision makers. In making this suggestion Weiss acknowledges that "... decision-makers heed and use results that come out the way they want them to".⁶ She hastens to add that this is more than the rationalisation of predetermined positions: by including political values, assumptions and objectives evaluation reports are at least more likely to be read by the decision-makers. It is a moot point whether a political-benefit analysis was likely to work to the benefit of the public or public servants.

The experience of B.O.D.C. supports Weiss's contention. The

Corporation's evaluation report was disregarded by Hallam as irrelevant because it was premised on a view of growth centre development neither he nor his Government shared. The Committee of Review commenced its assessment with clear understanding of the political values against which it should review the programs, although the exercise did prove to be the rationalisation of a predetermined position.

Before rushing to criticise O'Keefe for not pursuing a strategy such as that outlined by Weiss it is necessary to identify problems he faced, for these are ones Weiss's proposition will need to overcome. Neither Hallam or Day were prepared to tell O'Keefe what their political objectives were for Bathurst-Orange. It was the lack of these which partly resulted in O'Keefe introducing his own. It is possible to conjecture three reasons why the two ministers would have refrained from stating their objectives. Firstly Weiss assumes decision-makers have definitive objectives capable of statement and that they are capable of explaining them to others. In the case of Day and Hallam they do not seem to have had clear objectives for the policy, rather they just did not want growth centres as a program. Secondly for a minister to explain his political objectives to his permanent head there would need to be mutual trust between minister and public servant. Experience was to show that Hallam's relationship with O'Keefe was not conducive to open discussion of political objectives. Third, and arguably the most important, to announce real political objectives in the case of Bathurst-Orange, held adverse electoral implications. The Government may have determined to look to redistribution to win the Bathurst seat but to advise B.O.D.C. that it intended to wind down the program still contained uncertain electoral reaction.

Before the Review Committee had even completed its work the expected outcomes were publicly canvassed. In a report on the front page of the prestigious Sydney Morning Herald, Hallam was reported as having said B.O.D.C. was \$60 million in debt and that the 8,000 hectares for the new city, purchased for \$5.8 million at the behest of the Liberal-Country Party Government, had been a "monumental mistake".⁷ The Minister was further quoted as stating that whilst not pre-empting the Review Committee's report it was his "... opinion that to continue with the city in the immediate future would not be justified".⁸ This report was disingenuous. It was true that about

8,000 hectares of land had been acquired but only 5,400 (66%) of them had been in the new city area. More significantly of the \$20.1 million expended on acquiring land only \$5.4 million (27%) had been in the new city, and of that more than half (\$3 million) had been spent under the Labor Government while Day had been minister. Hallam was publicly denouncing the acquisition of new city land, implying it to be the source of all B.O.D.C. problems. To denounce the use of \$5.4 million from a total source of \$47 million (total borrowings to that time) to acquire fixed property assets suggests a dubious understanding of financial management.

To describe B.O.D.C. as being \$60 million in debt indicates either intention to grossly misrepresent or financial incompetence. The B.O.D.C. balance sheet at 30 June 1979 indicated that funds employed were \$59.1 million of which only \$21.2 million had been borrowed. The remainder included the State and Federal loan allocations plus their capitalised interest of \$10 million. What Hallam could have said was that in order to implement its instructions from government B.O.D.C. had borrowed \$21.2 million from private institutions (with the Government's authority), had been allocated \$27.9 million by the Federal and State Governments which so far had accumulated capitalised interest of \$10 million. He might also have explained that the funds had all been accounted for, with 86.5% of cash available to B.O.D.C. represented by land and buildings, construction projects, other fixed assets, investments and current assets. Of course B.O.D.C. was in debt; it was always intended that it would be so in the early years.

The reaction to the newspaper article was vitriolic with Bathurst's mayor accusing Hallam of being the hatchet-man for the growth centre. Astoundingly, Hallam denied that he had made the statements directly attributed to him. He may have denied making the statements but within two weeks he was publicly agreeing with the content of the article when he accused the Bathurst Mayor of being destructive and said that the new city was being " ... suspended as an economy move..."⁹ The Sydney article can only be considered as a contrived leak.

In their chapter on ministers and the media Weller and Grattan discuss several reasons and techniques ministers utilise to leak information to the media: "Most obvious and machiavellian, but

probably not the most frequent, is that a minister hopes to influence the outcome of an issue ..."¹⁰ One former ministerial press secretary categorises this as "the strategic policy leak, where the leak is to achieve, prevent or influence policy decisions".¹¹ Media leaks may come from ministerial press staff or the bureaucracy, permitting the minister to convey a prescribed message whilst remaining distanced from any reaction.

Again before the Committee had completed its deliberations another leak embarrassed the Government when the Opposition became aware that Cappie-Wood was to be substituted as Director of D. & D. by John Woodward, a member of the Premier's staff, and the D.U.R.D. "immigrant" member of the current Review Committee. The Minister was forced into the farcical position of waiting on the Public Service Board to move the innocent Cappie-Wood sideways, advertising the position publicly, just so that Woodward could be appointed

After all the public discussion the Review Committee eventually reported to Hallam early in 1979 recommending a minimal level of activity in the growth centre. Land acquisition was to cease, there should be no development in the new city, and any future annual programs should be financed from the Corporation's own resources and, subject to ministerial approval, limited private borrowings. The report was not released for public scrutiny or even forwarded to B.O.D.C. for comment. O'Keefe was not advised of the content of a financial evaluation of the project he had been commissioned to implement. In any event the content of the report may not have been very important for it was the Sydney-based members of the Committee who handed the report to Hallam and presumably interpreted its content

With Cappie-Wood removed and the financial evaluation providing the Minister with his desired outcome, reinforced with media denigration of the growth centre, there were further moves to change the power structure of the Corporation.

A Public Service Board management review.

In June 1979 a small team of Public Service Board officers, led by the Corporation's current inspector, was instructed to review B.O.D.C. and report to Hallam by 31 August 1979. Their review was to cover four aspects: staffing, organisation, classifications and functions of B.O.D.C. Precisely who instigated the review has never

been clear. The Public Service Board itself denied having done so and in the absence of clear ownership it became accepted that Cabinet had directed that the review be undertaken.

If the Minister was using this review to undermine B.O.D.C., O'Keefe may have had confidence in the outcome, expecting now to realise on his investments of linking his organisation into the N.S.W. Public Service. The power of the Public Service would protect his Corporation from any political machinations. Even if the Public Service Board did not endorse the growth centre policy surely it would support the innovative, experimental nature of this public organisation.

Any confidence O'Keefe had in his strategy of Public Service allegiance proved to be misplaced. The team's report was strident in its criticism of the management of B.O.D.C. It transpired that just when it was required B.O.D.C. could not rely on any patronage from the Public Service Board. Any interest in O'Keefe's management innovations and experiments had only ever been confined to the Chairman of the Board (Sir Harold Dickenson who was now retired) and a few Board officers.

The team's report to Hallam was critical of B.O.D.C. and its management. The Corporation was criticised for subscribing to unrealistic development plans (like new cities), and preparing development programs based on unrealistic theoretical models of idealistic growth centres. In short, B.O.D.C. was adversely judged because it had sought to implement the Government's long term, grand growth centre policy. At a time of considerable political uncertainty about growth centres, B.O.D.C. was criticised for lacking a unity of purpose and clear objectives. Because B.O.D.C. had attempted to sustain the stated growth targets it was criticised for not accepting population projections promulgated by antipathetic metropolitan demographers. After having been unable to obtain approval to appoint top-level marketing staff B. O.D.C. found itself criticised for not undertaking aggressive industrial marketing.

Aware of shortcomings in its financial management, and the problems associated with introducing new management approaches to so many public servants, the Corporation had been working on improvements for the previous two years. It now found that it was these attempts

to improve its own performance which were cited as evidence of management deficiency. As if to rub salt into O'Keefe's wounds, project teams, the one feature on which O'Keefe had so often been invited to address public servants, were virtually dismissed as inappropriate management practice.

The report recommended changes to both the management practice and the power structure. What O'Keefe had perceived to be innovative management was dismissed in favour of a traditional functional structure. Staff were to be significantly reduced to a ceiling of thirty five. Government allocations were to be restricted on the basis of identified commitment from the private sector (whatever that meant), and stricter financial accountability was to be introduced. Momentously, top management was to be amended to a part-time Chairman and a General Manager. This General Manager would operate under the auspices of the Director of D. & D. It had taken five years but at last B.O.D.C. had been brought back to its "rightful" place within the departmental fold.

Whether O'Keefe's management practices were innovative is not the main purpose of this research but the experiences of B.O.D.C. supports Friedmann's contention that:

" ... innovative planning is likely to run into the opposition of central (allocative) planners, who will strain to incorporate the innovative effort into the normal bureaucratic molds, limit its claims on central resources, and improve its reporting and accounting systems".¹²

As an exercise in evaluation the review was guilty of extreme reductionism and dissemblance. O'Keefe and his Corporation were blamed for holding what were perceived to be idealistic, far sighted and theoretical aims: the essence of the original growth centre policies. At a time when Federal and State Governments had been vacillating over growth centres, B.O.D.C. was blamed for not having clear, unified objectives.

Despite assurances to the contrary the report was not released for public consideration, nor were O'Keefe or the Corporation given the opportunity to refute its claims. As previously, the report must have provided the Minister with sufficient cause to blame the victim, unless he proceeded regardless, for O'Keefe was not re-appointed

once his term expired in mid-1979. For a time Bernie Clune, an officer from D. & D. (incongruously one of the original applicants for O'Keefe's position), was installed as Chairman. Following legislative amendments, in February 1980 Tom Dalton, a corporate real estate executive from Sydney, was appointed as Chairman. Clune was established as General Manager.

This new executive team was to introduce new directions changing the program from "buying and building" to "selling and telling".

Selling off the "ideological farm".

The new directions included changes from the existing public sector accounting to one perceived more appropriate to a commercial development organisation. Emphasis was to be placed on B.O.D.C. trading its way out of the financial predicament.

Sociologists utilise theories of labelling in their study of deviance. Deviant behaviour may be regarded as such because those in power label it so. Eventually deviants are adversely judged not necessarily because of what they actually do but due to the hegemonic force of having been labelled as deviant. In the case of B.O.D.C. it became accepted amongst those latterly in power, and amplified by the media, that there was a financial predicament created by O'Keefe and his Corporation's grand plans. There was never any suggestion that the financial position may have been a manifestation of governments launching a long-term program, financing it accordingly, and then withdrawing the political commitment. By implication it was the Corporation which was labelled as having deviated and generated a financial predicament.

Trading its way out of the predicament meant refraining from further borrowing, revaluing the acquired property, and the selling of the "ideological farm". At the end of his first year Dalton was able to report that as a result of revaluation of properties \$8.7 million was written down. A further \$0.84 million was written down as having incurred as previous development expenses. As a result of these book transactions the much criticised \$60 million debt had been conveniently reduced, through fiat, by \$9.5 million.¹³ One year later, by June 1981 (completing Dalton's first full year of leadership) the Corporation's 1980/81 Annual Report was able to boast a successful year following a better marketing performance,

ensuring that the Corporation would not have to call for Government support for the ensuing year. The Report claimed a record surplus before interest of \$1.2 million. That Dalton could claim a successful, profitable year through better marketing came not from vigorous industrial marketing (he acknowledged that new industry had not been attracted), but through selling off the "ideological farm". Income from marketing of real estate increased massively from \$0.81 million in 1979/80 to \$4.84 million in 1980/81.¹⁴

Any evaluation which tried to compare the success of O'Keefe in buying the land with Dalton's success in selling it would be irrelevant for each operated under different prevailing attitudes. O'Keefe acquired an "ideological farm" for a growth centre policy to be implemented under sustained political commitment. Dalton marketed real estate to finance a program no longer having any policy progenitor or political commitment.

A ministerial change: yet again.

In the new Labor Ministry, announced in October 1981, Day was reinstated as Minister for Decentralisation and Hallam given the Agriculture ministry. It was not possible to establish the motives for this portfolio juggling but questions can be posed. Could Day once again be entrusted with growth centres now that the powerful bureaucrat O'Keefe had been removed? Had the intransigent Hallam completed his task of decimation? Was Hallam being promoted for a job well done? Was Hallam's capricious approach considered electorally suspect and the delicate handling of Bathurst-Crange assigned once more to Day? Answers to these questions can only be conjectural, but it seems reasonable to conclude that Hallam's brief interlude with the growth centre had not been an unfortunate accident.

The new ministry did provide an indication of the Labor Government's attitude to decentralisation. Day's portfolio and department became Industrial Development and Decentralisation. In the intervening period there had been dramatic changes of power in the Department. Most of those involved on the growth centres were replaced and even within the Department a new outlook prevailed; and it did not support Bathurst-Orange. The main emphasis of the Department became employment generation in Western Sydney, Wollongong and Newcastle; pertinent given the economic climate. The reconstructed Department

simply acknowledged that decentralisation was no longer a policy imperative.

A power struggle developed between the new central bureaucrats in the Department of Industrial Development and Decentralisation (I.D. & D.) and B.O.D.C. The Department perceived that B.O.D.C. operating under its auspices meant that central bureaucrats should have total control. The Corporation's financial manager was removed to the Sydney office to work under I. D. & D.'s direction. Increasingly I.D. & D. sought to maintain stringent management of even the minutiae of B.O.D.C. activities. The Departmental power brokers were not those earlier involved but the struggles between them, the new B.O.D.C. Chairman and the Minister were variations on the earlier theme.

In September 1982 Day requested the Development Corporation of N.S.W. to undertake a review of B.O.D.C. and the growth centre. This was partly a review of the growth centre policy but surely it was also a mechanism to try and resolve the interminable power struggles between central bureaucrats and a decentralised organisation.

Decentralisation comes full circle.

Sixteen years after evaluating aspects of an existing decentralisation policy the status of the Development Corporation of New South Wales was again used to evaluate features of decentralisation policy. In 1966 the N.S.W. Corporation commenced its study with a pre-disposition towards selective decentralisation, directed in the first instance to the north coast of the State. The 1982 report made it clear the N.S.W. Corporation still retained that perception. In his covering letter to the Report Dr. Harold Bell, foundation member of the N.S.W. Corporation, and now Chairman, pointed out that the original N.S.W. Corporation had "... commenced a further study with the aim of identifying the optimum locations for growth centres ..", reminding him that before that "... study had been completed the then Government announced Bathurst-Orange as the site of the State's first growth centre".¹⁵ By clear implication the Minister was being advised that if Governments had left selection to the N.S.W. Corporation it would have been done optimally, in all probability avoiding the necessity for the present review of a less than optimum

location.

With three reviews of B.O.D.C. already completed why undertake a fourth? The earlier three had all been bureaucratically insular, closely identified with the previous Minister, and once again the N.S.W. Corporation was used for its status and perceived expertise. This last evaluation also had political benefit for Day. The earlier reports had generated considerable vitriolic local reaction, even though none of the reports had been released publicly. Just as Fuller had been able to do in 1969, Day would be able to release the N.S.W. Corporation's report whilst remaining aloof from it. If public reaction was negative and widespread he would still have the option to not support the findings. The status and expertise of the N.S.W. Corporation could also be used as the justification for downgrading Bathurst-Orange if the Government chose to pursue that course of action. With downgrading in mind, the Government had little to lose in choosing the N.S.W. Corporation as the mechanism to evaluate the growth centre. This would be particularly so if the option to support or upgrade Bathurst-Orange was withheld and the terms of reference given for the review were an imprimatur for downgrading. The N.S.W. Corporation was to: review achievements; establish realistic population targets; identify sound financial and funding arrangements in accordance with those targets; advise on a new administrative structure; identify B.O.D.C. functions which could be transferred to other agencies; and suggest legislative changes. These were certainly not terms which could entertain upgrading.

It had taken three years to undertake the necessary studies and prepare the 1969 report on a selective decentralisation policy. In 1982 the N.S.W. Corporation was given six weeks within which to present its review to the Minister. There would be insufficient time to prepare detailed cost-benefit analyses, goal achievement matrices, or any of the other quantitative evaluation techniques. The evaluation would, and did, rely on information supplied by B.O.D.C. and I.D. & D., each likely to present contrasting perspectives: B.O.D.C. seeking to justify its existence, I.D. & D. providing substance for a downgrading.

Two related aspects of growth centre development formed the crux of the N.S.W. Corporation's report and highlighted the futility

of pursuing a contrived selective decentralisation policy in the absence of the propulsive forces envisaged by Perroux. The review concluded that Bathurst-Orange had not, and could not, attract significant propulsive industry and that population targets were beyond reasonable attainment. The Report stated that:

"the general economic downturn in Australia, coupled with very significant changes in the structure of Australian industry is undoubtedly affecting the number of companies willing or able to establish in the Bathurst-Orange Growth Centre".¹⁶

The only industries likely to establish in Bathurst-Orange were " ... the smaller scale resource-based industry which would grow up in any case in regional centres".¹⁷

Difficulties in the growth centre attracting employment were being exacerbated by the State Government's policies for urban consolidation and the Macarthur Growth Centre. Concerned at the declining population in the inner metropolitan areas the State Government had launched a policy of urban consolidation through redevelopment at increased densities. Although the anticipated consolidation has been slow, and may not be attractive to potential residents and industry, it remains a countervailing policy. Any Government interest in decentralisation is limited to intra-metropolitan decentralisation (particularly the western suburbs and Macarthur on the metropolitan fringe), and encouragement of natural growing areas of the State (notably the North Coast).

The N.S.W. Corporation rightly emphasised the difference between population projections (those estimates of future growth most likely to occur) and population targets (those estimates which could only be attained through significant intervention). Population targets had been a constant problem for B.O.D.C. Those originally prescribed had been premised on perceptions of the stage at which urban growth would take off and be self-sustaining. Differences between historically based projections for Bathurst-Orange and those given to B.O.D.C. had been massive. B.O.D.C. had always been conscious that it would be judged against these targets and had sought to reduce them to what it perceived to be realistic targets, provided the growth centre received sustained Government support. The realism of the N.S.W. Corporation was even more pronounced than B.C.D.C. for

it concluded that:

"the setting of a population target which differs from that which would be achieved by the normal growth rate that might be expected on the basis of past experience is of doubtful value, as there appears to be no practical or feasible way in present circumstances, of significantly increasing growth rates".¹⁸

The real import of the N.S.W. Corporation's report was a recognition that in the absence of any Government commitment to the Bathurst-Orange growth centre there was no point in proceeding. This was realistic! Accordingly it recommended a strategy of liquidation. There should be an orderly disposal program of all landholdings and buildings, primarily as a means of servicing private loans. All promotional activities should be transferred to local community organisations. B.O.D.C. was to be incorporated with the regional Industrial Development Board into some form of regional development corporation. The need for this restructure, effectively abolishing B.O.D.C., was presumably to permit the sale of the "ideological farm" without the possibility that B.O.D.C. could wage guerilla tactics for its survival during the intervening period.

Awaiting a decision.

As would be expected local reaction to the Report, when released early in 1983, was hostile. Orange's daily newspaper reflected local attitude when stating that

"if the recommendations are adopted by the State Government, the two cities will be dealt a body blow".¹⁹

For eleven years the central State Government had been meddling in the development of Bathurst, Blayney and Orange. One can only speculate what would have been the outcome if these country towns had been left to their own resources. State Governments may have clamoured to glory in their successful growth rather than shed them as a burden.

Minister Day has prepared his recommendations for State Cabinet but these remain confidential. Any culmination of this research

must await, along with the people of Bathurst-Orange, on the outcome of continued political procrastination. With a State election due some time before the end of 1984, and Bathurst remaining a swinging seat, any final decision to abandon the growth centre may have to await its result.

END NOTES. CHAPTER 13.

1. Western Advocate, Friday, 22 September, 1978, p. 1.
2. B.O.D.C. Annual Report, 1978-79.
3. Western Advocate, Friday, 3 November, 1978, p. 1.
4. ibid., 19 December, 1978, p. 1.
5. Weiss, C. H. "Evaluation Research in the Political Context", in E. L. Struening and M. Guttentag (eds.), Handbook of Evaluation Research. Sage, Beverly Hills, 1975, pp. 13 - 26.
6. ibid. p. 19.
7. Sydney Morning Herald, Friday, 20 January, 1979. p. 1.
8. ibid.
9. Western Advocate, Wednesday, 31 January, 1979.
10. Weller, P. and Grattan, M. Can Ministers Cope? Hutchinson, Melbourne, 1981, p. 161.
11. ibid. p. 161.
12. Friedmann, J. Retracking America. Anchor, Garden City, N. Y. 1973, p. 67.
13. B.O.D.C. Annual Report 1979-1980.
14. B.O.D.C. Annual Report 1980-1981.
15. Development Corporation of N.S.W. Report of the Bathurst-Orange Growth Centre Review Committee, November, 1982.
16. ibid. p. 26.
17. ibid. p. 26.
18. ibid. p. 33.
19. Central Western Daily, Saturday, 15 January, 1983.

PART 4EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS

As a feature of Australian urban and regional policy, growth centres have come and gone. If the growth centre program is not already dead it is at least suffering a terminal illness. The detailed explanation of policy-making covered in Chapters 2 to 13 forms part of the contribution of this study. The story of Bathurst-Orange has been an Australian example of the policy-action relationship that Barrett and Fudge maintain can be understood only when examined in a political context:

"as an interactive and negotiative process taking place over time between those seeking to put policy into effect and those upon whom action depends".¹

The interplay of actors in the political and bureaucratic network; the translation of a political policy into a bureaucratic program; the pervading influence of politics, power and perceptions; are all fascinating features of a dramatic tragedy involving two towns in central western New South Wales. As a case it could have been selected readily by Hall to add to his collection of great planning disasters.² It met his criteria for selection in that tens of millions of dollars were invested in geographical space, and it came to be perceived by many to have gone wrong.

But whilst a case study must be first and foremost a good story (in this case emphasising the process through which policy and action took place), Encel and his co-editors stress that morals also need to be pointed out and generalisations extracted.³ It is to this that the fourth Part turns.

Caution is required in drawing conclusions from a single case study, no matter how rich the data and detailed its examination. On the one hand extravagant claims about the general application of conclusions are likely to be dubious. On the other hand to suggest conclusions which are too circumspect or disclaimed invites criticism that any generalisations are disappointingly trite. A balance between the two is required.

In Chapter 14 an inquest is presented, somewhat analogous to a physician's diagnostic examination of a patient or a court of enquiry's attempt to synthesise the main reasons for an accident. It does not claim to provide unequivocal identification of all causes of the current state of the policy, the tangled web of policy making in this case is like a pernicious disease where symptoms may be observed readily but causes are elusive. Diagnosis may be inconclusive because the examination overlooked an unsuspected feature or, as is often the case, cause cannot be attributed to any one feature on its own, but several acting in concert. The merits of any diagnosis or inquest will reflect the skills of the analyst. Judgement must be exercised in selecting features for examination and the choice of appropriate diagnostic tools. Other researchers, from different disciplines and with different diagnostic perceptions, may have concentrated on other features and provided alternative interpretations.

There are two aspects of the inquest presented in the next chapter. First, the process of policy and action in which Bathurst-Orange was snared is likened to the impulsing of a nova star. Second, using this analogy, reasons are presented for the sudden flaring and the gradual decline.

Chapter 15 draws some final conclusions about the planning process and the growth centre policy itself. This is followed with a brief discussion of two alternative approaches which merit further examination and experimentation.

END NOTES: PART 4.

1. Barrett, S. and Fudge, C. (eds.), Policy and Action, Methuen, London, 1981, p. 29.
2. Hall, P. Great Planning Disasters, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1980, pp. 2 ff.
3. Encel, S. et. al., (eds.), Decisions, Case Studies in Australian Public Policy, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1981, p. xix.

CHAPTER 14.AN INQUEST.

"After the event even a fool is wise".

Homer: Iliad XVII.

With seemingly universal adoption of new urban and regional policies by all political parties, observers may have been excused for anticipating a major paradigm shift in Australian politics. Kuhn's model of paradigm shifts in the physical sciences¹ must be used with caution when explaining essentially political events, but there were features of the Bathurst-Orange story which resemble his conception. Past urban and regional development policies were judged to be inappropriate to meet current perceived problems. The change in Federal Government in 1972 might have been sufficiently revolutionary to have heralded in and established new paradigms. Whitlam, Uren and Troy may have been at the leading edge of new social democratic paradigms, which captured the interest of other political parties. As it happened the Whitlam era was short lived and did not leave a legacy of new paradigms; at least not in urban and regional affairs for they returned pretty much to where they had been, although, as Sandercock maintains, the problems of a decade ago remain.²

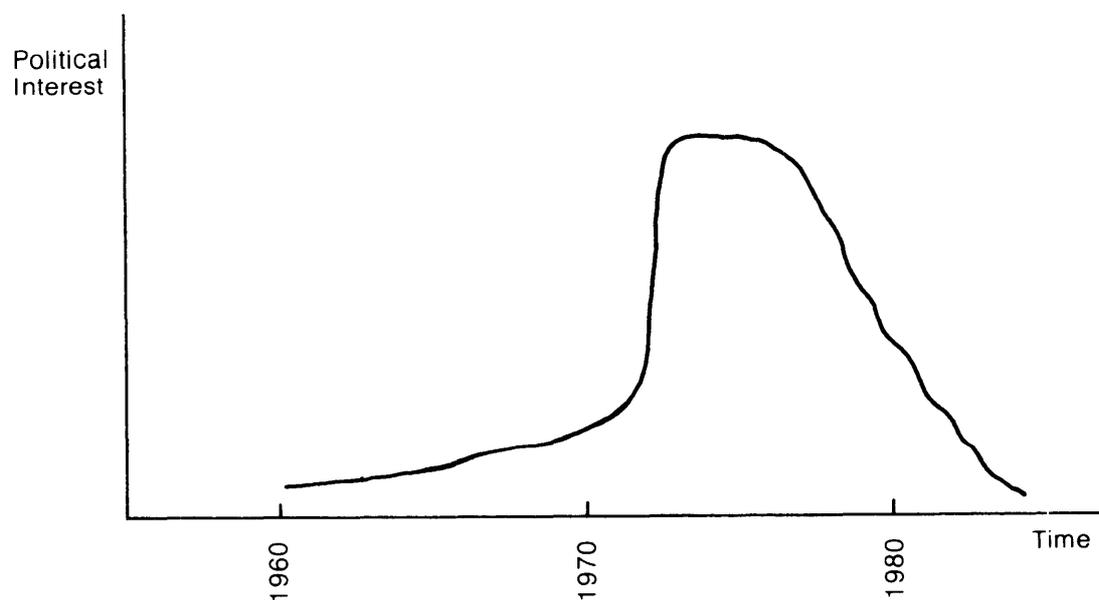
More analogous to the history of Bathurst-Orange is the impulsing of a nova star; those stars with the distinctive feature of sudden flaring in brightness, as much as 10,000-fold in a day, and then fading erratically over weeks and months back to their former level.

Growth centres: the flaring of a Nova.

The political interest in growth centres as public policy is shown in Figure 16. The impulse built up slowly through the 1960's, accelerated into the 1970's and then flared in 1972. The impulsing of the nova star is not self-sustaining. Having flared, it commences its erratic return to normal to await the next impulse. Continuing with the analogy, the very concept of selective decentralisation and growth centres assumed that selected centres were incapable of sustaining the impulse. Once initiated by government intervention, it would require continued political commitment in the hope that given time a self-sustaining impulse could be generated.

The experience of Bathurst-Orange was that without that sustained commitment, even in the short term, the program declines. As depicted in Figure 16 the decline of policy may be very much longer than its explosion onto the scene. The entrance may be dramatic but the exit tortuous.

Figure 16 The growth centre nova.

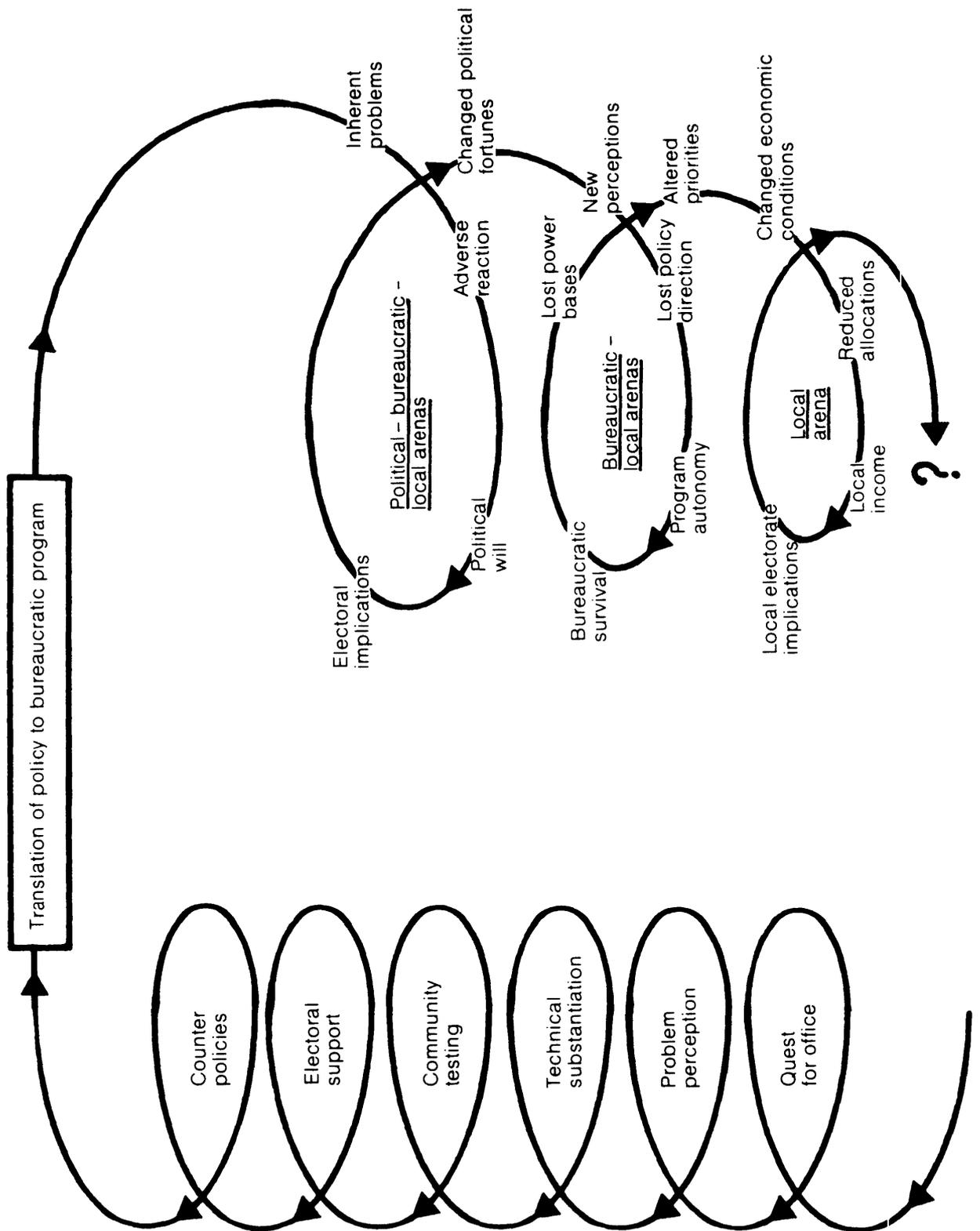


A process of impulsing and contracting commitment.

The simplified flaring and fading of a nova star depicted in Figure 16 can be expanded into a more general model of impulsing and contracting commitment to policy. This expanded model is shown as a series of rising and falling spirals in Figure 17. The rising spirals represent the build-up of the impulse, the downward spirals represent the contraction of commitment to the policy.

Before proceeding to explain the model in more detail a word of caution is necessary. The model is claimed to fit the Bathurst-Orange example but may not fit all types of public policy making. In examining the cases he selected, Hall did not attempt to develop any grand overarching model which would explain all previous planning

Figure 17 Impulsing and contracting commitment to policy.

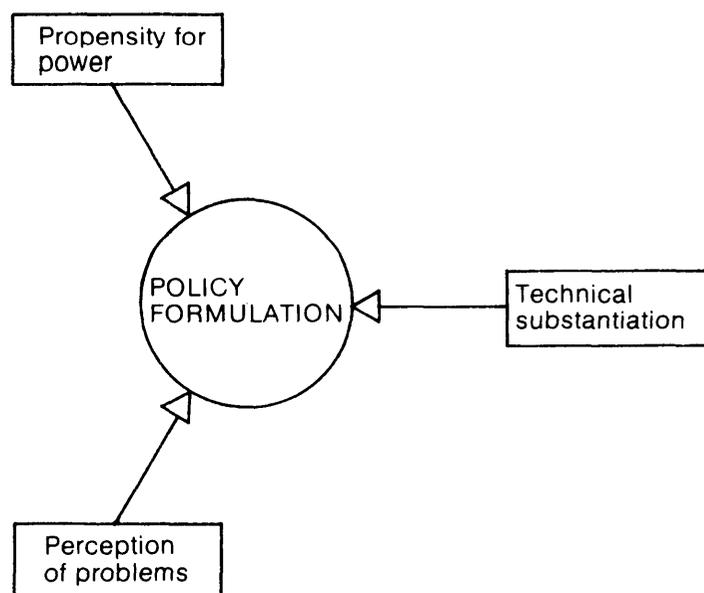


disasters and guarantee avoiding new ones.³ He claimed only to have started an exploration which he hoped would lead to further examinations, using different explanatory theory, to start an eclectic understanding of the planning process. The model to be explained here is one contribution to that understanding.

Impulse building up.

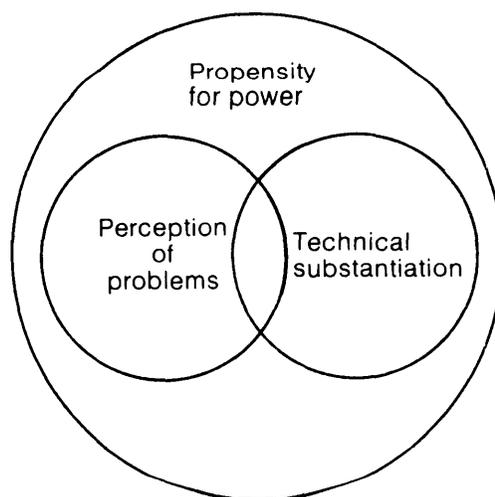
Australian growth centres emerged as a public policy through interaction between politicians, advisers and community issues. Pervading this interaction were: political propensity for power, perceptions of community issues and problems, and technical substantiation. These three, shown in Figure 18, form the lower three spirals and are the foundations from which impulse commences. These will be examined before turning to the upper three spirals which accelerate the impulse.

Figure 18 Factors in policy formulation.



Formulation of the growth centre policy was generic to quests for political power. The policies of all four parties were, at least in part, a contrivance for either seeking or retaining power. It may have been in the form of a meticulously orchestrated strategy, such as Whitlam's, or a belated, last-ditch effort to counter an opponent's policy, like McMahon's desperate attempt to stave off defeat. Even the decision to act on Bathurst-Orange was finally made by Fuller and his colleagues in response to anticipated changes in power in Canberra. It is acknowledged that this does not entirely account for the policies for they did have substance derived from perceptions of issues in the community, substantiated by technical advice. However it was the search for power which dominated the other two factors. Perhaps the relationship of the three elements is better shown in Figure 19.

Figure 19 The relationship of policy forming factors.



This interaction, dominated by the pursuit of power, is not unique to Bathurst-Orange. MacLennan found public policy to be the outcome of the interplay of political power, cultural values, competing priorities and the known facts about problems and solutions.⁴ According to Tullock, notions that politicians attempt to maximise the public interest are unrealistic; it is those politicians seeking power who are most likely to be elected, not those with high policy ideals trying to persuade voters of their truth.⁵ Even those politicians already in power respond to quite other pressures than public opinion and entertain, first and

foremost, loyalty to their chosen party, not their constituents.⁶ In fact, a capacity for independence of thought or action will almost certainly mark a politician in office as unreliable in party terms and hinder his progress.⁷

With what may seem an inordinate faith in the political marketplace, Tullock sees no reason to be disturbed by this phenomenon for " ... democracy operates so that politicians who simply want to hold public office end up doing things the public want".⁸ Those with a more elitist perspective of political power would disagree, arguing that it is likely to be the perceptions of those in power which will prevail; with which Marxists would concur, adding that hegemony would sustain those perceptions in power.

As discussed in the introduction to this study the influence of politics is not a new concept for planners. Nearly twenty years ago Altshuler lamented the lack of studies of planning by political scientists, which had limited the horizons of American planners, restricting them to their contemporary practice.⁹ A decade ago Wildavsky argued that planning assumes power; planning is politics.¹⁰ Over the years interest in politics and planning has grown through an acknowledgement that planning would become more rather than less political,¹¹ to a point where recently McConnell maintains that in developing theories for planning there will need to be a recognition "that politics is about power; and urban planning is one way that power is used".¹²

The kinds of societal problems dealt with in the political arena have been described as inherently wicked.¹³ That is they are malignant (in contrast to benign), vicious (like a circle), tricky (like a leprechaun), aggressive (like a lion). As such they rely on elusive political judgement for resolution. But as Emy states "there is evidence that expert knowledge is rarely a decisive consideration in resolving essentially political questions".¹⁴ He also argues that it now appears that

"attempts to import objective knowledge into the polity brings not consensus but a new and more critical tension between the spheres of rationality and politics. The tension is reflected in the problems of power and accountability: how can the men of knowledge, the experts, the planners and the social engineers, be accommodated within the muddled and apparently 'irrational' procedures of party politics?"¹⁵

Altshuler identified a dilemma which still remains for planners wishing to participate in this arena: on the one hand seeking professionalism in their planning yet faced with the lure of political opportunism to secure success for their chosen plans.¹⁶

Taking up Emy's question, if planners are to be accommodated in the political arena, the experience of Bathurst-Orange illustrates that they will need to appreciate the political interdependencies of issues, ideology and political office. They must also comprehend that their own advice is never value free; their own action judgements are themselves the outcome of a personal appreciative system. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Vickers used this concept of the appreciative system to explain the psychological interaction of reality, value and action judgements.¹⁷ Reality judgements are exercised when observing the facts in any situation. Value judgements involve making judgements about the significance of these facts to the appreciator. "The relation between judgements of fact and of value is close and mutual; for facts are relevant only in relation to some judgement of value and judgements of value are operative only in relation to some configuration of fact".¹⁸ According to Vickers an action judgement, a decision to do something about the perceived situation, will come when the situation has first been defined by judgements of reality and value.¹⁹ In other words, how we appreciate our problems will influence how we deal with them.

During the long build-up during which growth centre policies were formulated planners had interacted with politicians. Those identified in this study can be characterised as: the bureaucrat, the party ideologue, the person or persons of status. Each of these can be examined in turn, using the example of Bathurst-Orange to identify roles and value positions.

Strategic bureaucrats, are usually involved in influencing the perceptions of those already in power. They participate in the political arena of policy making because of a position of authority in the bureaucracy. This authority may grow as the strategists' pet ideas assume the mantle of conventional wisdom. Alternatively, normal progress up the promotional ladder may provide a power base from which personal value judgements can be foisted as the ruling wisdom.

The bureaucrats may be used to provide substance to government policy ideas. This notion is one of giving impartial advice, not substantiating government prejudices, however, such a notion gives insufficient credence to the power of the bureaucrat to shape policy.²⁰ That power is substantial. They are able to channel public funds into areas of research supporting their own predilections and interests. As full-time operatives they are able to influence, if not direct, the recommendations of part-time advisers. Because of their authority they are able to suppress alternate views within the department. Depending on their broking skills, they are able to combat the machinations of competing sections of the bureaucracy. Through direct association with a cabinet minister, senior bureaucrats are able to manipulate government to the extent that they choose what information and advice to offer or withhold.

There are also disadvantages in seeking to shape policy from a bureaucratic base. Existing programs must continue to be run efficiently even when the underlying policy is under review. As Day found in his relationship with Fuller, the process of changing an operating program may be a long and frustrating business.

The problem for the strategic bureaucrat comes when a clash of value judgements surfaces, such as that between Day and his Minister. Fuller was able to castigate his Director for running away with his own ideas of what should be done. Once the Minister had let the chastisement be known publicly the public servant faced a dilemma: he could either accept the criticism as an obedient "servant" or resign. To choose the former may not be abrogation, for public servants often outlive their ministerial masters and have their own way in the end. Day chose the latter course of action, partly as a result of frustration with continued political procrastination and vacillation.

In contrast to the bureaucrat, party ideologues, such as Troy, Mant and Cunningham, are chosen specifically by politicians because of an ideological affinity with the political party. Not only will there be greater freedom for the ideologue to exercise value judgements, there may be a requirement to do so. Those identified in the Bathurst-Orange case were all involved in strategies to depose prevailing perceptions. In such a position the ideologue must have

some knowledge of politics as well as the substantive policy areas. There must be an ability to communicate readily in both technical and political dimensions, and to integrate technical rationality with political rationality.

The ideological strategist is more likely to be able to introduce theories for planning and alternate procedural approaches. Uninhibited by any notions of planners as political neuters, the ideologue has the opportunity to raise such ideas for consideration and debate without necessarily being put into his or her bureaucratic "place". This assumes of course, an understanding and appreciation of the role of theories in policy and action. There is no guarantee that ideologues will be any less blinkered than their political counterparts.

Troy played a significant ideological role in the Federal Labor Party, as to a lesser extent did Mant, but as was shown in Chapter 12, the Federal Liberal Party also used its own strategists whilst in opposition. The example of Bathurst-Orange seems to be suggesting that ideologues have a place as advisers only to Opposition parties. There are two reasons why this suggestion may not be substantiated: firstly, just because none were identified in this example does not mean that governments do not seek advice from ideologues. By accepting a position as a consultant to D.U.R.D., Troy could be characterised as a "resident ideologue". Secondly, the suggestion assumes a bureaucrat entertains no ideological position or exercises no value judgements, which has been shown in this case not to be so. They are technical rationalists when it suits them, ideologues on other occasions, pragmatists when necessary, defenders of their own rights and privileges more often than not.

Having been identified clearly with a particular political party, the ideologue is linked to the electoral fate of that party. Their tenure as providers of advice to government is likely to be short-lived once their party loses office.

Persons of status may be chosen by politicians to add prestige to decisions. McMahon was able to cite Overall as Australia's foremost authority on urban and regional development. Fuller used prominent businessmen, members of his advisory Corporation, to influence his vacillating colleagues. The status of the Australian

Institute of Urban Studies, with its business and academic membership, had galvanized McMahon into action. The prestige of academic advice was evident during the long gestation of Whitlam's policies.

Status strategists may be used to provide real substance to policy proposals or simply the pretext of it. A policy may be presented with an imputation that it is correct only on the basis that a prestigious individual or group has been involved. There is one other factor: with a hastily prepared policy, the involvement of a status strategist might be the only chance that a policy could have substance.

Persons of status may be utilised because their publicly expressed value judgements are akin to those of the politician. A right-wing politician is hardly likely to cite the views of a Marxist academic to support a decision, no matter how high the academic's status may be. However, the type of status may be safe enough for any party to use. Presumably the status of the N.S.W. Corporation was useful to the Liberal/Country Party coalition in starting growth centres, and then also to the Labor Party to end the one in Bathurst-Orange.

The role of those with status would seem to come and go, depending on their usefulness to politicians. Once their status has been utilised they may be expediently cast aside until next required, as was the case with the N.S.W. Corporation.

Impulse accelerates and flares.

Out of the first three spirals in the model come policy proposals which can be tested in the community. As these receive support, perhaps after several rounds of adjustment, other political parties are drawn to offer counter proposals. Finally pressure reaches a crescendo and flares as a public policy; during an election campaign in the case of Bathurst-Orange.

Using a systems approach Hall et. al. describe this process in relation to two variables: demands and supports.²¹ "Demands are directed towards the authorities of a political system who are being pressed, encouraged or persuaded to make certain kinds of decisions and take certain actions".²² Not able to meet all demands, political

systems respond selectively. Among those which survive this regulation "the content and timing of many policies are fundamentally affected by considerations of support".²³ Community support may come simply because of the direct outputs of the policy, though governments aim at more diffuse long-term support for their regime.

This explanation of policy formulation does not entirely explain the present case for neither Whitlam or Fuller could be said to have been responding to a screaming community demanding consideration of growth centres. If these two politicians and their advisers were not leading the community, they were at least keeping pace in an interactive process of testing and adjusting policy proposals. Fuller had determined to change an existing policy but was faced with a difficult task in obtaining party and electoral support. He tested the electoral "wind" through a case prepared and presented to the community by a status group. Whitlam's, and later Uren's, proposals were a mixture of solutions to problems they perceived existed in the community and electoral strategies. McMahon entered the policy debate only when he was forced to counter Whitlam's apparently popular proposals. Fuller also was to gain his authority to proceed from the influence of Whitlam's proposals for Albury-Wodonga.

Translating policy into a bureaucratic program.

In this example it was elections which heralded the transition from policy proposals to bureaucratic programs. In the euphoria of an election mandate policies quickly became programs to be executed. Bathurst-Orange became enmeshed in a centrally commanded network of ministerial conferences, comprehensive plans and budgets, inter-governmental agreements, and competing departmental responsibilities. The proclivity for direct government intervention and central bureaucratic command of the program meant that action would take place in three arenas: political, central bureaucracy and local. These arenas and administrative arrangements had had functional rationality but also comprised a conglomerate of competing power bases.

Conglomeration is used here in its geological sense. A rock classified as a conglomerate is one in which a collection of separate rocks (usually small pebbles) is bound together by some medium. A feature of conglomerate rocks is that they are only as strong as the medium binding their separate parts together. Once the medium dissolves, the conglomerate disintegrates into its earlier separate

pieces.

Once a policy is translated into a program, competing political power bases are brought together and new bureaucratic power bases are added. In the case of Bathurst-Orange there were Federal and State Governments, competing ministerial power bases within each, and departmental bases. The bureaucratic bases were not only those departments directly responsible for the program, but others impinging on the program such as Treasuries, or indirectly involved such as the N.S.W. Department of Main Roads. The B.O.D.C. was established as a new power base.

The medium which bound these individual power bases together was a commitment to implement the Governments' joint policy.

MacLennan argues that the establishment of a power base is essential. "Key influential figures who can form coalitions to support the provision of resources must be identified and brought together".²⁴ This is simpler in theory than practice for, rather than coalition, individual power bases may be more likely to compete for supremacy and territory, often manifesting competing ideological bias.²⁵ This is not surprising to Tullock, for whom bureaucrats in most western democracies, like ordinary men, will make most of their decisions on the basis of what benefits them, not society as a whole.²⁶ This perception is shared by Thompson who claims that when Australian bureaucrats translate vague policies into operational programs, they exercise value judgements "... based not necessarily on notions of broad public interest, but perhaps on the narrower range of interests of the bureaucrats and their organization".²⁷

The ultimate manifestation of the original policy proposals presented at elections comes through annual programs of a local development agency. Establishment of this agency to effect the program in the local community precipitates additional power bases in the competition. The new, centrally sponsored local agency is in competition with established local bases and is also likely to be in competition with those sponsoring or controlling it from the centre. Power struggles within the agency may be, like those in any organisation, matters of management but their impacts in a public agency are likely to be widespread.

The contracting spirals of policy commitment.

Referring back to the right hand side of Figure 17 we can now consider the spiralling contraction of commitment to the growth centre policy. The program in Bathurst-Orange initially had support in all three arenas: political, bureaucratic and local. The first contraction occurred in the political arena. This was followed by a contraction of central bureaucratic support, leaving the local arena to struggle for survival. These contractions will be examined in turn.

Political contraction.

The translation of policy to program exposes inherent problems not foreseen, or conveniently ignored. In the case of Bathurst-Orange these manifested themselves in three ways, contributing to diminishing political commitment. The selective nature of the policy confronted existing urbanisation patterns and parochial attitudes. The policy, once translated into a program became involved in Federal/State relations. Borrowed ideas were found to be of dubious application.

Development of Bathurst-Orange was always going to be swimming against the tide of Australian urbanisation. There was little illusion about that; it was the faith in political commitment to resist it which proved to be the illusion. If commitment of central, electorally sensitive politicians was to be sustained the growth centre would need to display evident signs of growth. But just growth would be insufficient, it would need to be exceptional growth.

The constant comparison of the growth in Bathurst-Orange with those centres not selected, or the north coast area so favoured by early advisers, engendered a weakening of commitment. Table 11 lists percentage changes in population for the main competitors of Bathurst-Orange. Three inland cities, Dubbo, Tamworth and Wagga Wagga (see Figure 8: respectively west, north and south of Bathurst-Orange) generally had greater growth than the selected growth centre. Of the statistical divisions in which these cities were located, that including Bathurst-Orange experienced the least growth between 1976 and 1981. The difference is even more marked when compared to the mid and far north coastal areas (Mid-North Coast and Richmond-Tweed). At a time when the National Population

Inquiry was predicting lower population growth for Australia,²⁸ prevailing parochial attitudes surfaced, particularly in locations not selected, pointing out what was claimed to be the failure of the growth centre.

TABLE 11. INTERCENSAL GROWTH: PERCENTAGE CHANGE.

	<u>1971-76</u> (%)	<u>1976-81</u> (%)
<u>Local Government Area</u>		
Bathurst	8.10	10.34
Orange	8.55	5.79
Dubbo	12.56	22.61
Tamworth	12.66	8.11
Wagga Wagga	18.99	9.96
<u>Statistical Divisions</u>		
Bathurst-Orange Subdivision		6.92
Central Western (includes Bathurst-Orange)		2.72
North Western (includes Dubbo)		7.16
Northern (includes Tamworth)		3.69
Murrumbidgee (includes Wagga Wagga)		3.70
Richmond-Tweed (Far North Coast)		28.02
Mid-North Coast		25.82
Sydney		6.05

Source: 1971-76: Hurst, W. and Pullen, G. "Urban Growth in N.S.W."
1976-81: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Whether these critical judgements were fair, given the long lead times before government inputs could be expected to redress declining growth and accelerate it significantly, was largely irrelevant in an arena where short-term political horizons prevailed. At best the political commitment had been tenuous and never strong enough to withstand pressure from other rural electorates, all too ready to bring to politicians' attention the paucity of growth in Bathurst-Orange compared to their centre. This judgement would seem to be typical of other growth centres outside Australia: long-term government intervention, requiring statesmanlike political commitment, being subjected to short-run appraisal.²⁹

With Federal and State Governments both involved in the growth centre programs, Bathurst-Orange became a pawn in a much larger, more complex game. It suffered delays from the Federal Labor Government's parliamentary situation with its lack of Senate control.³⁰

It was the innocent victim of Federal bureaucratic politics. That both governments were involved meant that Federal/State relations were confronted, and, as Howard points out,³¹ they are noted for power struggles over centralism and State rights, not co-operation. For a local program claiming Federal commitment through an expedient political bargain, its elasticity of survival was not great. There was another aspect, the greater the number of participants in the political arena the more likely both policy and program would be overwhelmed by the exigencies of political life.

The third set of inherent problems came with the application of borrowed ideas and ideological imperatives. To the extent that Australian growth centres had a substantive foundation it had been borrowed from an overseas theoretical debate and a British New Towns policy. By the time B.O.D.C. had commenced operation the growth centre literature already contained critical evaluation of the theory and its policy applications,³² and the state of British New Towns policy was not healthy. When parochial criticism came, recourse to a strong theoretical base to counter it was not likely to be productive, and the glowing example of the British New Towns was beginning to fade. Basing the development corporation model on experience drawn from Britain and Canberra was simple in policy terms but manifested practical problems in its application to existing competing communities with their established social and political cultures. The imposition of a development corporation, in essence a centrally controlled government department, generated antagonism and little co-operation. Acquiring all the land for future development had worked in Canberra, so it could also be made to work in growth centres, giving rational expression to an ideological precept. But the purchase of an "ideological farm" divested electors of their property, propagating extreme animosity.

These inherent problems and adverse community reactions militated against sustained political commitment, but there were factors in the political arena which countered them. There was the personally committed will of strategic politicians and uncertain electoral consequences of precipitous action to stop the program.

None of the contracting pressures were of themselves insurmountable given time and political support for the program. When their political colleagues may have been weakening in their resolve,

if in fact it ever existed, Bruxner and Uren showed that it was possible to persevere with a seemingly unpopular program. But that is not all. Even when there is no political support, such as when Fraser assumed office, it is not always easy to slash precipitously a program. Stopping it may have uncertain electoral consequences. People may be ready to criticise and judge, but that does not necessarily mean they want the program stopped. It is a difficult matter of political judgement to differentiate between the Australian penchant for "knocking" and genuine objection. The extent to which Bathurst-Orange was really unpopular in the general electorate has not been researched in this study and must remain an open question. The important point here is that some politicians judged it to be unpopular.

For as long as political commitment can be sustained, all three arenas function in the circular process of policy and action. The program is likely to continue operation until changes take place in the political arena. Change may come when different problems are perceived in the community, eliciting new policy responses from politicians to combat them. It may come when what were thought to be problems requiring solutions are perceived in a different way. Change may also be forced as the political fortunes of elections. In Bathurst-Orange there were features of all three. The euphoria of the early Whitlam years diminished under the exigencies of inflation and unemployment in the Australian economy. With the publication of reduced population projections by the National Population Inquiry in a time of economic recession, the need for growth centres came to be perceived differently. However, the most significant contracting change came with the ideological bias of the new government following the traumatic events of November 1975.

This kind of political contraction does not mean that programs need cease. Action can continue with only a modicum of political support, sufficient only to maintain some allocation of resources.

Bureaucratic contraction.

An outcome of political contraction may be the loss of policy direction. Political commitment may continue to be espoused, because of electoral implications, but such commitment is likely to be equivocal and any policy direction ambiguous. The Wran Government

in N.S.W. continued to espouse commitment to Bathurst-Orange and, incongruously, selective decentralisation³³ but in doing so provided no substantive policy direction other than there was to be a contraction in the previous program and the "ideological farm" was to be sold.

This loss of political direction need not necessarily be detrimental to the program. It may simply be replaced by bureaucratic direction. Like politicians, bureaucrats pursue power and fight for the retention of programs which provide that power. As Thompson suggests, public servants not only question the objectives of government, they remake them.³⁴ In doing so, bureaucrats bring into play their own value judgements and imperatives and, again like politicians, these are based not necessarily on notions of public interest. Tullock maintains that it will only be the exceptional public servant who will sacrifice personal well-being for the wider good.³⁵ As Cox found, once a program has commenced it may take on an almost autonomous life of its own.³⁶ He claims " ... it is only human for a department not to want to undo a programme on which it has worked for years, for instance, at the behest of a new and perhaps inexperienced team of political masters".³⁷

Bureaucracy might be able to provide substitute, albeit self-interested, policy direction but, in a program predicated on central allocation of resources, there must remain at least a vestige of political support to ensure continued allocation. In the case of Bathurst-Orange the vestige was preserved by the electoral implications of not espousing commitment.

This bureaucratic sustenance is subject to pressures, internally and externally. Whilst bureaucratic coalitions may, as MacLennan claims, provide the power base to sustain the program,³⁸ bureaucratic politics may equally impinge. Department heads are very jealous of their power and territory, and may not agree to a coalition with other departments just to support an endangered program. There may be scores to settle (such as between D.U.R.D. and Treasury) or a disinclination to be tainted by a program out of favour with government. Painter and Carey point out the power struggles between departments even in institutionalised arenas supposed to provide co-ordination and co-operation.³⁹ The ability to survive in this game of bureaucratic politics will depend on the skills of the program

leaders, but even those skills may be unable to withstand external pressures.

Governments may be prepared to permit the continued operation of a program and sustain it with the allocation of resources, although at a reduced scale, to retain the pretence of commitment. Provided the program avoids embarrassing the government, one may even speculate that this farce could continue indefinitely if central funds remained available. Unless Treasury coffers abound such speculation is in the realms of fantasy, for any one program is only ever one of a portmanteau of programs in competition for priority in the allocation of resources. In the absence of any powerful political patronage the chances of an unfashionable program obtaining funds are slim. Once program funds dry up, centrally bureaucratic support is likely to evaporate, resulting in a further contraction, isolating the local arena.

Local survival.

The Bathurst-Orange Development Corporation did not die when central allocations ceased, it has continued in operation without significant political or central bureaucratic support. There have been three reasons for this. Firstly, the legislative and administrative arrangements were not readily abandoned. Although, as previously discussed, there are parliamentary risks in amending legislation, they are not insurmountable, particularly if the Opposition also no longer has any interest in the program. It is also possible, with the support of the Public Service Board, to abandon administrative arrangements, relocating redundant public servants. Suggestions of this in Bathurst-Orange have raised an incongruous situation. Some senior Corporation staff would not be easily deployed in country locations (within a public service concentrating senior staff in Sydney) and could, with some justification, claim "centralisation assistance" if forced to move to the metropolitan area.

Secondly, and of more importance, has been the Corporation's ability to generate sufficient local income to meet its contractual and administrative commitments. This revenue, a fortuitous dividend of past ideological bias, has permitted the Corporation to buy time in which to maintain its struggle for survival.

Neither of these reasons is likely to have been sufficient if there had not been the need for the N.S.W. Government to avoid undermining its tenuous hold on the Bathurst electorate.

The future for Bathurst-Orange Development Corporation.

"How goes the war?" Chapter 13 provided an account of the state of the Corporation's battle for survival. In terms of the model for impulsing and contracting commitment where does it go from here? If the model were to be applied it would seem to have three choices: seek to sustain its program within the local arena; seek to re-establish policy commitment up the contracting spiral; or seek new policy direction and commitment in a further nova impulse.

Given the background of the growth centre it would seem unlikely the program could be sustained entirely in the local arena for anything other than the short-term. Centrally allocated loan funds fall due for repayment from 1984 onwards unless the Governments are prepared to make adjustments. Local income may meet present commitments, but without a substantial upgrading of its development programs, B.O.D.C. will not be in a position to generate revenue sufficient to meet the government loans, and any upgrading of the program would require government approval.

The Corporation seems to have already abandoned the second choice. The bureaucratic and political arenas now contain new power bases and other perceptions prevail. Those who may have held any empathy for the growth centre, or subscribed to its original policy intent, have been replaced or have moved on to other things. There would seem little prospect of redressing the contracting spiral.

Since the election of the new Labor Federal Government in March 1983, B.O.D.C. has begun pursuing the third option. Within this lies the possibility of a further nova impulse. A policy proposal gaining credence in the Federal arena has been generated by a perceived need to ensure Australian scientific and technological discoveries do not escape overseas for manufacture. The Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Mr. Barry Jones, has advocated the need to encourage and assist Australian manufacturers to put the country's scientific and technological discoveries into production, creating much-needed employment. Funds were allocated in the Hawke

Government's first budget to give preliminary effect to this encouragement. B.O.D.C. has begun exploring the opportunities for the growth centre to become a centre of excellence, possibly attracting some of the hoped-for new scientific/technological "sunrise" manufacturers. The credibility of Mr. Jones' perceptions, or whether these new manufacturers will emerge and, if they do, whether they can be attracted to Bathurst-Orange, must remain an open question. It is sufficient to observe that if the model discussed here has any prescriptive value, the Corporation's strategy would at least offer some hope for survival in that it might be caught up in an impulse of a scientific/technological "nova", should one eventuate. But the Corporation must hope that any new impulse will be more than a nova which is destined to die down again. Long-term survival will require industrial development and sustained growth in the long term.

END NOTES. CHAPTER 14.

1. Kuhn, T. S. The structure of scientific revolutions 2nd Edition, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1970. For an application of Kuhn's concepts to planning see: Galloway, T. P. and Mahayni, R. G. "Planning Theory in Retrospect: The Process of Paradigm Change". Journal of American Institute of Planners, Vol. 43, January, 1977, pp. 62 - 71.
2. Sandercock, L. "Urban Studies in Australia. Producing Planners or Educating Urbanists?" Chapter 1 in: Murray-Smith, S. Melbourne Studies in Education 1982, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1983.
3. Hall, P. Great Planning Disasters, Penguin, Hammondswoth, 1981, p. 12.
4. MacLennan, B. W., "Political power and policy Formulation, implementation and evaluation; Policy Studies Journal, Vol. 8, No. 7, 1980, p. 1127.
5. Tullock, G., The Vote Motive, The Institute of Economic Affairs, London, 1976, p. 24.
6. Howard, C., The Constitution, Power and Politics, Fontana-Collins, Melbourne, 1980, p. 34.
7. ibid. p.35
8. Tullock, G., op. cit. p. 25.
9. Altshuler, A. A. The City Planners Process: A Political Analysis, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1965.
10. Wildavsky, A. "If Planning is Everything, Maybe it's Nothing". Policy Sciences 4. 1973. pp. 127 - 153.
11. Burchell, R. W. and Sternlieb, G. (eds.), Planning Theory in the 1980's. Centre for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, 1978. p. xlvi.
12. McConnell, S. Theories for Planning: An Introduction. Heinemann, London, 1981. p. 109.
13. Rittel, H. W. J. and Webber, M. M. "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning". Policy Sciences 4, 1973. pp. 155 - 169.
14. Emy, H. V. Public Policy: Problems and Paradoxes. Macmillan, Melbourne, 1976. p. 24.
15. ibid. p. 2.
16. Altshuler, A. A. op. cit.
17. Vickers, Sir G., The Art of Judgement, Basic Books, New York, 1965.
18. ibid. p. 40.

19. Vickers, Sir G., Towards a Sociology of Management, Chapman and Hall, London, 1967, p. 58.
20. Thompson, E. "Ministers, Bureaucrats and Policy Making: A Sharing of Power" in: Parkin, A., Summers, J. and Woodward, D. (eds.), Government, Politics and Power in Australia, (2nd Edition) Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1980.
21. Hall, P. et. al. Change, Choice and Conflict in Social Policy, Heinemann, London, 1975.
22. *ibid.* p. 25.
23. *ibid.* p. 26.
24. Maclennan, B. W. *op. cit.* p. 1132.
25. Thompson, E. *op. cit.* p. 30.
26. Tullock, G. *op. cit.* p. 26.
27. Thompson, E. *op. cit.* p. 30.
28. National Population Inquiry. Population and Australia: A Demographic Analysis and Projection. A.G.P.S. Canberra, 1975.
29. Richardson, H. W. "The State of Regional Economics: A Survey Article". International Regional Science Review, Vol. 3, No. 1., 1978, p. 30.
30. Wilenski, P. "Reform and its Implementation: The Whitlam Years in Retrospect". Chapter 3 in: Evans, G. and Reeves, J. (eds.), Labor Essays 1980. Drummond, Richmond, Victoria, 1980.
31. Howard, C. *op. cit.*
32. For one example of the ideological, theoretical, political and practical problems see:
Conroy, M. E. "Rejection of growth center strategy in Latin American Regional Development Planning". Land Economics, 49, (4), 1973. pp. 371 - 380.
33. As recently as 30 September, 1983. Western Advocate, 30 September, 1983, p. 3.
34. Thompson, E. *op. cit.* p. 30.
35. Tullock, G., *op. cit.* p. 26.
36. Cox, H. W. Cities: The Public Dimension, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1976. p. 139.
37. *ibid.* p. 140.
38. Maclennan, *op. cit.* p. 1132.
39. Painter, M. and Carey, B. Politics Between Departments. University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, Queensland, 1979.

CHAPTER 15CONCLUSIONS

"Nothing is ended with honour which does not conclude better than it began".

Samuel Johnson: The Rambler No. 207.

"The end cannot justify the means, for the simple and obvious reason that the means employed determine the nature of the ends produced".

Aldous Huxley: Ends and Means I.

The primary focus of this study has been the process by which a growth centre project emerged onto the political agenda, stayed there for a brief period and then was removed. The details of the process have been explained in four stages: a period when ideas were shaped into policy proposals; the translation of those policies into a bureaucratic program capable of execution; the launching of program at a selected location through the imposition of a centrally commanded development corporation; the gradual changes of policy direction and eventual liquidation of an unwanted project. In Chapter 14 political commitment to the Bathurst-Orange was found to have flared like the impulse of a nova star and then gradually contracted. The pervading theme throughout has been the relationship of politics and planning: how the perceptions, imperatives and power relationships of politicians and bureaucrats melded to determine planning policy and action.

The enactment of public policy making in Bathurst-Orange leads to a similar conclusion as Hall when he found that:

"decisions arise from a complex process of interactions among actors. All these people think themselves rational, and are trying to behave rationally for much of the time; but their conceptions of the rational differ. They have different goals, and different ways of achieving these goals. Some of them, particularly senior professionals and bureaucrats, have been trained according to rational modes and will try particularly hard to apply these in decision-making. Others, in particular politicians, will tend to follow more intuitive, adaptive, piecemeal methods".¹

In this study the distinction between rational bureaucrats-technical advisers-ideologues and intuitive politicians was found

not to be as distinct as Hall seems to suggest. It was pointed out in Chapter 14 that bureaucrats had been technical rationalists when it suited them, ideologues pushing their own value judgements on other occasions, pragmatists who adapted their stance when necessary, defenders of their own positions more often than not. Some sought to manipulate and outlive their political masters, others identified with a particular party and suffered with its political fortunes.

If the planning process did not follow the normative rational approach, it could not however be described as irrational, for it was possible to identify reasons why decisions had been made. The reasoning behind decisions was found to be a function of actors' perceptions of problems, ideological biases towards prescriptions, integrated with pursuit of political or bureaucratic power. This case suggests that what is needed is a broader appreciation of rationality. If planners are to serve the political processes of democracy they must understand the conception of the rational which motivates the politician. To use Catanese's notion: planners must become more like politicians (still professional planners and not professional politicians), exercising their planning skills in the political process with greater understanding that political decisions involve matters of power and equity.² Friedmann was referring to the same thing when he stated that:

"the action-planner cannot ignore the effect of his proposals on a given balance of power. Nor can he afford to ignore the instruments of power by which resistance can be broken down and action accomplished. This calls for knowledge of the process of politics, the bases of power, and the arts of persuasion".³

The second conclusion about the planning process concerns the centrally commanded allocative approach. This study has shown that within a democratic federation of national, state and local governments, any planning which depends on central allocation and command is likely to face a daunting task sustaining programs. This may be even more so when the allocation of resources is directed to one selected urban centre. Despite the considerable technical expertise directed towards Bathurst-Orange the project was unable to achieve its originally stated objectives. Bathurst-Orange suffered from problems of leadership and complexity. The

complex network necessary to accommodate governments, ministers, departments, development corporations, and bureaucrats was like an orchestra of competing perceptions and power bases. In concert these did not produce harmony, but rival melodies. Any underlying central theme was not sufficiently clear or dominant to withstand the constant changes of conductor. As each new political conductor took the ministerial podium another policy "score" was added.

To expand on this, but changing the analogy into economic terms, in the absence of the propulsive economic forces envisaged by Perroux, there would need to be the countervailing force of political commitment. Any economic inelasticity would need to be countered by the project's elasticity for political survival.

If growth centres ever emerge again onto the political agenda and a centrally commanded allocative planning approach is contemplated, the track record of governments in Australia to successfully intervene in Bathurst-Orange is hardly likely to inspire confidence that it would be any different next time.

The problems of Bathurst-Orange were not only those of the planning process. There were inherent problems in the policy itself. There was never any clear conception of what growth centre policy meant. Conventional wisdom among the actors involved blamed privatism for problems in the city which only governments could solve, although there was little certainty that the new governments and their bureaucrats were capable of achieving the goals or even understanding the mechanisms by which the perceived problems might be addressed.⁴ The very problem itself was mis-stated when Bathurst-Orange was chosen. The possibilities for development of a different urban structure for New South Wales was poorly understood, partly through imperfect appraisal of the mechanisms working to create the urban system. There was no strong identification with the growth pole theory as an intellectual foundation for the growth centre program. The political policies which were to be translated into a bureaucratic program were built on feet of clay.

In his conclusions Hall raises the need for better forecasting and improved evaluation in the planning process.⁵ To these can be added from this study, the need for increased understanding of what the policy is and why it is being pursued. This conclusion accords

with Solesbury's recent lament that:

"for too many planning theoreticians and practitioners the new obsession with procedures is - in the much more political context of planning today - a convenient way of avoiding analysing, arguing and defending substantive issues and policies".⁶

Did the Bathurst-Orange growth centre ever really have a chance of success? Was the Bathurst-Orange Development Corporation, despite all its good intentions and dedicated efforts, fighting a battle it could never win? Was the policy the problem or the way the program was implemented? The general conclusion is that the Bathurst-Orange project failed dismally to achieve its stated objectives because both the policy on which it was predicated and the planning process through which it was undertaken contained inherent problems which militated against success. It now remains to suggest alternative approaches which might be utilised if ever there is a next time.

Future directions for regional planning approaches.

Wildavsky has distinguished between two fundamental modes of addressing policy making: intellectual cogitation and social interaction.⁷ He claims planners-come-decision makers have a choice, whether:

"to use the method of cogitation in which the world is conceived as if it were in a great computer in the mind, a computer that made the requisite calculations and came out with correct decisions, or whether certain rules would be set up within which the participants could bid and bargain over outcomes".⁸

Given the problems he perceives in the former approach Wildavsky favours the latter. The experience in Bathurst-Orange was with the former, though several times in preceding chapters reference has been made to market and social action approaches. Let us finally turn to them again as possibilities for improving the derivation of policy and its implementation. These both reflect a bias towards local control, offering prospect for minimising the problems of centrally commanded planning identified in this study.

Market-oriented approaches.

In their review of planning theory, Friedmann and Hudson⁹ describe a debate about planning the reconstruction of Britain after the second world war. The debate revolved around appropriate planning approaches. Arguing for an open system were von Hayek and Popper. Opposing this view was Barbara Wootton, who favoured the proposed centrally controlled system, claiming that the powers of reason could comprehend social reality and guide it towards an enhancement of the human spirit. Centrally controlled planning prevailed. Ever since there have been those who, benefitting from laissez-faire, have opposed the intervention implicit in such planning; although most serious argument from the right has been less extreme. Acknowledging that it is not simply a matter of non-planning, there have been arguments for the use of fewer government controls and more sophisticated use of market systems.¹⁰ One such argument in this vein has been the series of articles by Sorensen.¹¹

Attempts to integrate the goals and methods of spatial planning with market benefits and imperatives have yet to be well developed, but some features of the approach appear to have application to growth centres. It is possible to speculate how the approach might operate by drawing on Sorensen's recent work.

Flexibility, diversity and innovation would be encouraged. A feature of the present decentralisation program has been its basic uniformity. With the dubious exception of the growth centres all towns compete on centrally determined equal terms if they wish to utilise available government assistance. Market planning would encourage country towns to innovate in their development, incentives offered to people and industry, and promotions. They would not be bound by state-wide precedents. Diversity in approach and product offered by competing towns would be actively encouraged, not just tolerated by central bureaucrats with their own perceptions of what all country towns should be like. Flexibility would not only be encouraged, it would be facilitated; particularly when central decisions needed to be made. Planners would act as reticulists ensuring rapid approvals through the bureaucracy, for even under market approaches a bureaucracy is required but at a reduced size and scale of intervention.

Entrepreneurship would be encouraged. A problem seen in central command planning is its potential for stifling entrepreneurial initiative. Market planning would seek out and encourage local entrepreneurs. Opportunities not seen by the market would be proffered. To do this planners would need new outlooks. They would need to dispense with their traditional propensity for prediction, caution, order, co-ordination. Risks would have to be taken and failures accepted on the premise that speculation is an essential concomitant to accumulation.

Power would be decentralised. Flexibility, diversity, innovation and entrepreneurship would all be fostered by locating power at the local level. This would be true devolution of power to the local level, with higher levels being bound by local decisions, not just the delegation of ordained authority from above. This is almost the antithesis of the power relations in Bathurst-Orange and may be the most difficult hurdle for a market approach. For central politicians true decentralisation of power runs the grave risk of fermenting power bases which might be the genesis of regional governments - a paranoia of state governments. There is another aspect of decentralised power; it assumes local governments want that power. It may well be, that if power were offered, local government may not wish to accept the inevitable consequences of responsibility.

The decentralisation case would be established, and re-established. The only claim for government intervention would be identified cumulative detrimental impacts of permitting the market to continue in one direction. This is the negative side of the market approach. The previous features would be intended to facilitate and reinforce the market; this would monitor its outcomes, providing an overview of the impacts. Where communities are growing a market approach may gain approbation. Where they are declining, dissatisfaction may set in. Perhaps market oriented decline policies could be implemented to help communities die gracefully. These could include policies to help people to move to more prosperous places and avoid the poverty trap of declining property and building values.

Market-oriented approaches offer prospects for minimising the interference of politicians and bureaucrats but this may be more an illusion than reality. It is far easier to espouse small

government and the merits of private markets than to determine just how small that government should be and to what extent it should intervene in the marketplace. To cast government only in the role of overseer, checking who wins and who loses from policy decisions and correcting inequities, does not reflect the way private enterprise works. Butlin et. al. have recently shown that Australian private enterprise has fostered government activity in the marketplace.¹² Private enterprise requires government support for the market to operate at all, if for no other reason than the desire of private developers to reduce their capital outlays by transferring some of the infrastructure costs into the public sector.

Social action approaches.

In Chapter 10 aspects of the social action approach were raised specifically in relation to the type of staff employed in B.O.D.C. It is raised again now with a more general application.

To have approached the implementation of growth centres from a social action bias would have meant less time wasted interminably producing growth projections and long-range plans; which were only ever "aunt sallies" to be knocked down by the Corporation's critics. More effort would have been directed to marshalling the local community into co-operative action. Planners and community would mutually learn as they sought to link knowledge and action in an unfolding future. The criterion for successful planning would be the extent to which all sectors of the community participated in and were responsible for the development of the growth centre, not the implementation of allocated plans.

In his important contribution to this field of public learning at the local level, Hambleton points out that the so-called centralisation-decentralisation dichotomy should be avoided in policy planning.¹³ The issue is not whether the management of planning should be top-down or bottom-up, but to combine the best of both.¹⁴ Like market approaches the fertile ground for establishing policy and action in future growth centres lies in the middle. The creative work will be in producing strategies which are neither exclusively dependent on central command nor left entirely to local social action but harmonise both in concert.

Social action and market approaches are not mutually exclusive

but share much common ground, reinforcing each other. Creative policy making might include not only a harmony of central and local action, it might also facilitate both public and private action.

Further research opportunities.

From a case study such as this it is possible to contemplate many areas for further research. Some of the obvious are:

- * The analysis of other cases in Australian regional policy making to determine if the way it was done in Bathurst-Orange was typical. Is the nova star analogy reasonable to describe the rise and fall of interest? Does the model of circular and contracting commitment have general application in describing public policy making?
- * Examination of management institutions where regional development has been primarily by private enterprise, where market forces have been dominant, where government intervention has been minimal. Such studies could be compared to Bathurst-Orange or similar government-led projects.
- * Any studies which advance the knowledge of how regional towns and cities grow will improve the substantive base on which regional policies can be formulated. It is possible to speculate that the development strategies of the Bathurst-Orange Development Corporation were counter-productive and that the two cities may have grown better if it had not been involved. A more fanciful speculation could ponder the ramifications on the towns if the \$70 million invested through the Corporation were simply given to ten companies. What would be the impact if each of these firms was provided with a \$7 million grant on the condition that they established and sustained a viable enterprise in the growth centre? Would that generate the propulsive forces necessary, without the constriction of a bureaucratic monster?
- * The case of decentralisation and growth centres as an issue for Australian public policy warrants further examination. In a changed social and economic environment the fundamental case for decentralisation could be analysed.

Readers will identify these or other issues of relevance and interest to them. From the planning perspective of this researcher, three specific areas are recommended as having contributions to make

to the understanding of planning and politics.

The first area involves the politics of regional planning and development. More work could be usefully done on the politics of decentralisation policy. Even if a substantive basis for such a policy could be established it is again likely to confront the selective-dispersed issue; and that has electoral implications. There would seem little point in pursuing a policy which has no chance of political support. Questions which might be addressed are: Is a bottom-up approach, with no interference from central government, the only politically feasible way to approach decentralisation? To what extent does political fear of regional government and "new state" movements inhibit prospects for decentralised growth? What are the limiting factors to the decentralisation of administrative power? Could structural adjustments be made to State Government ministerial arrangements such that regional co-operation could be fostered? (The current ministerial and departmental arrangements are on functional bases. It is possible to contemplate ministerial responsibility on a territorial basis with departments following suit).

A second area of examination could be directed to mechanisms for integrating different, even competing, perceptions, ideas, value judgements into coherent policies. This study has identified some strategists and strategies involved, but it has also shown them to be in tension rather than consensus. Must that ever be so, with no mechanisms for reconciliation? Is bargaining and negotiation the only possibility for resolution? Is it a matter of survival of the ideologically fittest?

The middle ground between intellectual cogitation and social interaction would comprise a third area of study. Bathurst-Orange was an example of the interaction of planning and politics when there had been contrived government intervention. Studying cases of more market oriented planning may do little more than reinforce existing biases. Those who already prefer serendipity, few rules and many transactions¹⁵ would identify the triumph of markets. Those predisposed towards many rules, strong boundaries and predictability are likely to decry the perceived disorder of market spontaneity.¹⁶ It may be the middle ground which will provide the creative area for both the practitioner and theorist. The real problem is not

which approach is better but how can public and private venturing be integrated, maximising the contributions of each whilst minimising the excesses of both? The practitioner might be encouraged to experiment in the management of planned action with this in mind. Theorists might provide the normative paradigms upon which management can be practised.

Having worked in both public and private enterprise it is this author's intention to continue exploring this third area of research.

END NOTES. CHAPTER 15.

1. Hall, P. Great Planning Disasters, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1981, pp. 196 - 197.
2. Catanese, A. J. Planners and Local Politics, Impossible Dreams, Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, California, 1974, p. 161.
3. Friedmann, J., "Notes on societal action", Journal of the American Institute of Planners, Vol. 35, No. 5, 1969, p. 317.
4. Parkin, A., Governing the Cities, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1982, p. 34.
5. Hall, P., op. cit. Chapter 13, pp. 249 - 276.
6. Solesbury, W., "Urban Planning's New Ideologies: A Review Article", Policy and Politics, Vol. 10, No. 3, July, 1982, p. 367.
7. Wildavsky, A. "Aaron Wildavsky writes ... " Town Planning Review, Vol. 53, No. 1, January, 1982. pp. 77 - 78.
8. *ibid.*
9. Friedmann, J. and Hudson, B. "Knowledge and Action: A Guide to Planning Theory". Journal of American Institute Of Planners, Vol. 40, No. 1., January, 1974. pp. 2 - 16.
10. Walters, A. A. et. al., Government and the Land, Institute of Economic Affairs, London, 1974.
11. Day, R. A. And Sorensen, A. D. "Libertarian Planning", Town Planning Review, Vol. 52, No. 4, October, 1981. pp. 390 - 402.
Sorensen, A. D. "Planning comes of Age: a liberal perspective". The Planner, November/December, 1982.
Sorensen, A. D., "Towards a Market Theory of Planning", The Planner, May/June, 1983. pp. 78 - 80.
12. Butlin, M. G., Barnard, A., and Pincus, J. J., Government and Capitalism, George Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1982. p. 324.
13. Hambleton, R., Policy Planning and Local Government, Hutchinson, London, 1978. pp. 178 - 179.
14. *ibid.* p. 309.
15. Wildavsky, A., op. cit. p. 78.
16. *ibid.*