

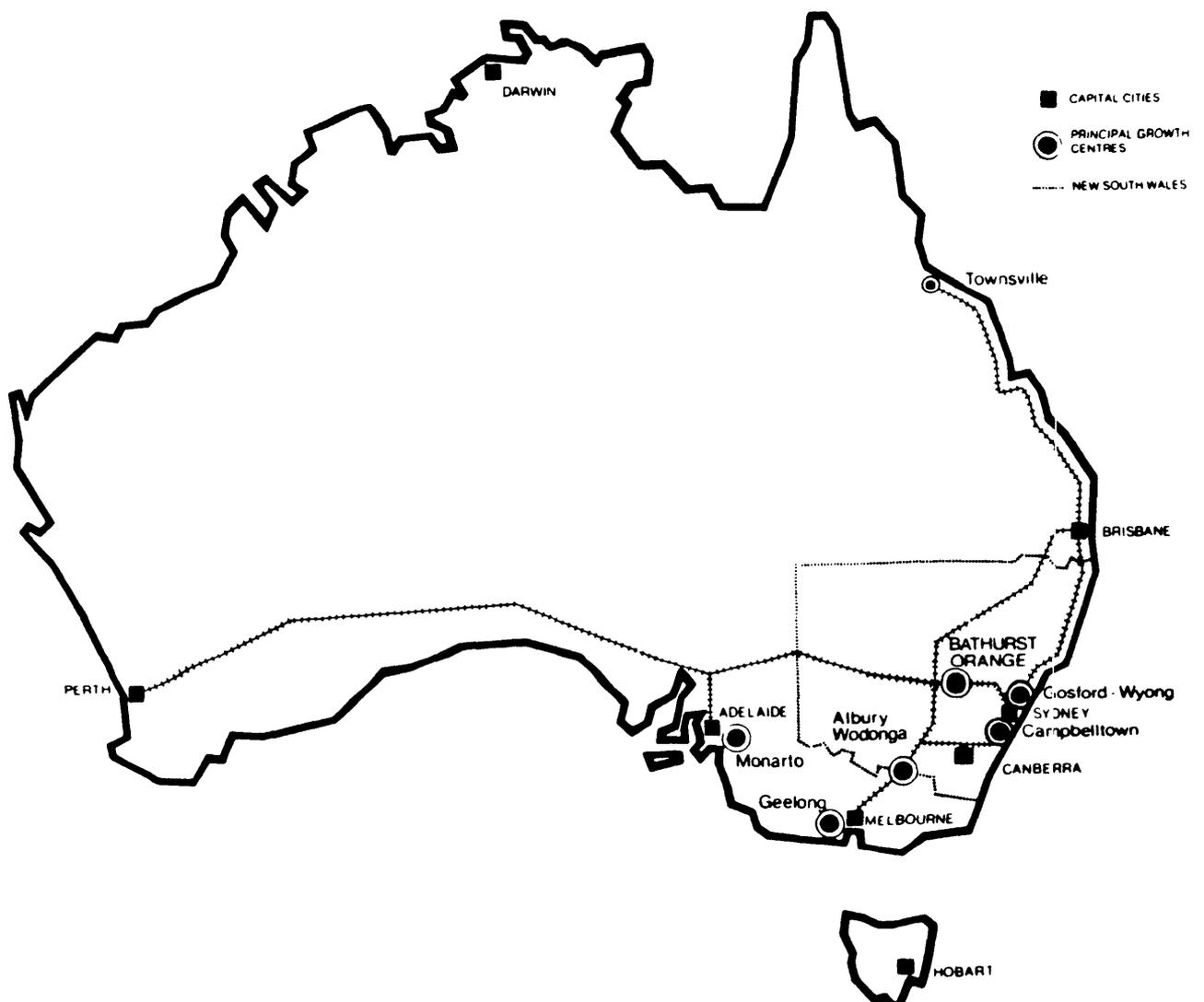
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"The State Government today selected the Bathurst-Orange area as the site for its first growth centre as a pilot scheme to promote regional development and relieve mounting social and economic pressures in metropolitan Sydney".¹

With these bold words the Premier of New South Wales, Sir Robert Askin, accorded two central western towns the status of a growth centre. Others on the eastern seaboard of Australia were to be added to the list.

Figure 1 Bathurst-Orange and Australia's eastern growth centres.



Bathurst is located 200 kilometres west of Sydney, with Orange 60 kilometres further west. A smaller town of Blayney is situated between the two and slightly to the south. Topographically all three urban areas lie on the western tablelands of the Great Dividing Range, between 700 and 900 metres above sea level. At the 1971 census the populations of Bathurst and Orange were 17,196 and 23,172 respectively. With 2,100 people in Blayney and 7,800 in the proximate villages and rural area, there were about 50,000 people living in the area.

The Premier's announcement in late 1972, was greeted with much enthusiasm by many perceiving it to be a turning point in State decentralisation. After years of persevering with an ineffective policy of dispersed development, here at last was a government grasping the nettle and selecting one centre for concentrated growth. When the Federal Government joined in the project shortly after, there were visions of Bathurst, Orange and the surrounding area being catapulted out of the doldrums into a crescendo of self-sustaining growth. Yet barely had a decade passed than the State's pilot scheme was being liquidated and one Orange news editorial lamented that "... it would almost have been better if they had never been part of a growth centre concept".²

The intervening years had seen a centrally commanded development program imposed on the local community; structure plans had been prepared to accommodate an additional 190,000 people in the growth centre, 110,000 of whom would live in a new city between Bathurst and Orange; urban development had been subjected to meddling by central politicians and bureaucrats; considerable public investment was poured into the project; a great deal of time and energy was expended by an enthusiastic Development Corporation. But in the end it all seemed to have ground to an ignominious halt.

What happened? What had gone wrong? After a bold start why had it come to this? It is these and similar questions that are addressed in this thesis.

Why study Bathurst-Orange?

That Bathurst-Orange was described by the Premier as a pilot growth centre suggested experimentation as a forerunner to further expansion of the concept. Of itself, that implies the scheme

warrants investigation. Growth centres as a public policy issue in Australia may have come and gone. History may show them to have been nothing more than a fleeting aberration, trying to counter the increasing dominance of Australia's coastal metropolitan cities, but that does not mean lessons cannot be gleaned from the experience. The claim that politicians do not learn from history should not prevent explanation of political events.

During the first eight years of operation the Bathurst Orange Development Corporation (the body established by the N.S.W. Government to manage the growth centre) utilised nearly \$70 million in its development programs. To this must be added the cost to the State Government of relocating a large public organisation to Bathurst. Even if development of Bathurst-Orange was nothing more than an ill-conceived aberration, the justification for expending such large amounts of public funds merits scrutiny.

According to Premier Askin's announcement the growth centre aimed to relieve the social and economic pressures caused by Sydney's rapid growth. Whether that was a valid basis for public policy, whether Sydney's problems were real or not, must be left to other research; but if Bathurst-Orange did not fulfil its intended purpose then reasons should be identified.

Out of all the competing country towns and cities in the State, Bathurst and Orange were selected for special treatment. The reasons for that selection and the brevity of the special treatment warrant examination, even if only as a guide for other rural towns seeking government patronage in the future.

The life of the Bathurst Orange Growth Centre was short enough to enable it to be traced from birth to a point near death. As such it provides an opportunity to not only examine the genesis of a project and its early life but also its subsequent scaling down and liquidation; that is, its life cycle.

A case study such as Bathurst-Orange also offers the potential for examining a number of traditional topics of interest to urban and regional planners:-

- * public participation in the planning and implementation of the growth centre

- * physical planning strategies - new cities versus expansion of old ones
- * land tenure arrangements - leasehold versus freehold title in new urban areas
- * growth centre strategies - the effectiveness of Bathurst-Orange as a mechanism for regional development.

A focus for this case study.

To systematically examine all these topics is beyond the scope of this study, however the analysis which is undertaken cuts across them all in a common theme - policy and action. This is the term used by Barrett and Fudge to condense " ... the relationship between public policy and action, the processes at work within and between agencies involved in making and implementing public policy and the factors affecting those processes".³

Despite their shortcomings as a research tool,⁴ case studies have heuristic merit in three areas of explanation.⁵ First, to understand how policy develops. Secondly, for scale and complexity of policy tasks. Thirdly, to identify the purposive behaviour of the actors involved; that is, why decisions were made. In the present study, policy and action refers to the planning of a growth centre. Those processes by which it was formulated, translated into a bureaucratic program and executed at a selected location. There is a focus on the interaction between planners and politicians in public policy making.

This interest in the relationship between planners and politics in the field of public policy is not new and some elaboration and identification of the contribution made by this study is appropriate before proceeding to explain the research methodology.

Planners, public policy and politics.

The Royal Australian Planning Institute has acknowledged the great diversification in the planning field in recent years and has identified a number of roles for planners, three of which have particular reference to this study. The Institute's education policy states that planners::-

"Devise and/or Advise on Policies

Planners are involved in the formulation of policy by government agencies both as employees of government and as employees of private organisations. Policy issues range across a variety of fields such as housing, health, services, resource management, environmental protection, heritage conservation and regional development etc.

Intervene Actively to Bridge the Technical and Political Aspects of Urban Change

The planner as an advocate or interventionist is a further role seen in recent years. This activity is often associated with efforts to articulate and resolve the conflicts inherent in urban change. It will often involve thoughtful attention to fundamental social values and a well-developed capacity to understand the political processes.

Implement Plans for Urban Development

In some instances large-scale urban development is the particular responsibility of substantial development corporations or similar bodies. Planners within and consulting to these organisations are concerned with the implementation - by means of direct investment and active co-ordination of the investment of other bodies - of urban or regional development".⁶

When the Whitlam Labor Government came to power in 1972 and established its Department of Urban and Regional Development (D.U.R.D.), it attracted a new breed of urbanists. They may not have all fulfilled the requirements for professional membership of the Institute but they were involved in the activities described above and as such are classed as planners in this study. They were committed to a more comprehensive, multi-disciplinary and democratic approach to planning, integrating economic, social and physical elements through a central authority.⁷ It has been suggested they may have been longer on ideology than technical skills,⁸ and the difficulties they had giving effect to their new planning perspectives in a volatile political climate and an inhospitable bureaucracy have been documented.⁹ There have also been examinations of the content of Australian urban and regional policy.¹⁰ But growth centres were not the sole prerogative of the federal policy planners, State governments and their bureaucracies were also involved. An examination of the activities of these Federal and State planners provides lessons in the business of planning conducted in the political world of public policy making. Their more exclusive professional brethren can learn from them.

In what was to be a precursor to a series of studies on the

problems in Australian politics, Emy acknowledged that there was a lack of investigations of the way political and quasi-independent institutions interact to produce distinct configurations of activity, or what making policy means in any given field.¹¹ More specifically he noted

"there is virtually nothing on public policy formation in the States ... there has been little systematic explanation of the way in which a power-sharing system affects and constrains the development and implementation of policies ..."

at federal and state levels of government.¹²

Bathurst-Orange became embroiled in a political-bureaucratic network of Federal and State government policy and action. As such this study seeks to redress the deficiency expressed by Emy.

In a recent article Minogue observes that one of the greatest problems facing policy analysts in their inability to cope with politics.¹³ Arguing that the study of public policy is ever in danger of becoming a tedious rehearsal of tired concepts with too much emphasis laid on theory, he advocates pursuit of the timehonoured method of discrete analysis of issues and problems, acknowledging that "... issues of public policy do not lend themselves to neutral, value-free, scientific analysis".¹⁴ Any such study of problems and issues, according to Minogue, should be informed by a strongly developed consciousness of the primary influence of politics. Throughout this study of Bathurst-Orange, emphasis is made on identifying and explaining the influence of politics in growth centre policy planning. The need to do so reflects the growing recognition that planning must be seen as an integral part of political processes.

The era of the grand central policy plans may have passed and, as suggested recently, in a changed economic climate planners will need to contemplate less grandiose forms of intervention, smaller in scale, requiring more sensitivity and more diverse skills, performed in an environment where planning will become increasingly politicised.¹⁵ In short this means that planners will need to learn to serve the political process and be less ambitious. But there are dangers in serving mammon alone. By hitching their star

to the performance of politicians, planners may lose public respect and professional integrity. However, given that deity is beyond planners, a middle ground is necessary. One of the purposes of this thesis is a search for middle ground between the political world of the politician and the scientific, professional, technical world of the planner.

Urban and regional planners, whether trained in traditional planning schools or new urban studies schools, bring to the political process diverse skills and knowledge. The loosely knit collection of concepts, ideas, strategies and theories have been differentiated as theories in, of and for planning. The distinctions are neither clear cut nor does any one idea, concept, strategy or theory fit only one of the categories. McConnell has sought to explain them as:

"first, the substantive theories used in planning which are derived from many disciplines; second, the procedural theories of planning in which processes and operations of planning are analysed and explained, and which normatively and prescriptively offer theories for the improvement of these processes and operations, i.e., how planning should be operated and organized. And third, the social theories for planning which explain why society and planning is as it is and how it should be in the future".¹⁶

Traditionally planners were seen to offer rational, technical advice. When asked, they would reach into their bag of theories, extract an appropriate theory of how planning would best operate or substantive theories to be utilised in the process, and submit those in an apolitical, value-free way. It was left to politicians to determine why planning should proceed.

Few experienced planners persist with the pretence that planning does operate free from value judgements and without political bias. This is a constant theme in the burgeoning literature on urban and regional planning theory as it searches for new directions and relevance. There is a recognition that planning is more than naive commitment to physical determinism and cannot be divorced from political, social and economic activity.¹⁷

In fact, as Allensworth pragmatically acknowledges:-

"the substance of planning has little or no meaning outside politics, outside the constraints of the political system ... in the final analysis politics and the political system will dictate the actual substance of planning - that is, what planning is all about".¹⁸

Planners have been shown that their supposedly rational procedural approaches are not merely analogous to political theories but are fragments of them.¹⁹ Further, it has been shown that the ever-expanding methods, strategies and roles being recommended for planners incorporate values embodied in political contexts, that planning cannot claim neutrality. In fact, how problems and solutions are perceived will be biased by the political values and contexts of the actors involved.²⁰

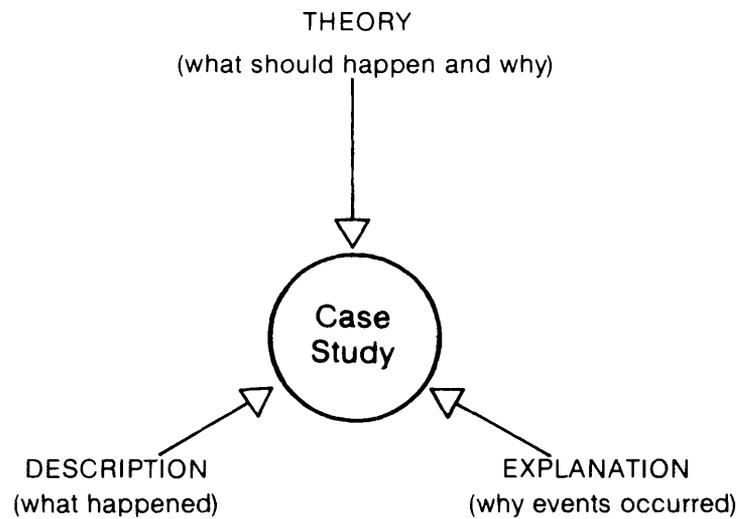
Friedmann defines planning as the process by which scientific and technical knowledge is linked to organised action.²¹ This is a definition which has application throughout this study. It applies in the sense that if planners are to learn to serve the political process they will need not only to understand their knowledge in political terms, they will need to learn how knowledge can be linked into political action.

These various threads can now be drawn together and the study more closely defined as a contribution to the broad field of urban and regional planning, utilising a case study of one Australian growth centre to focus on public policy and action, with specific reference to the interaction between planners and politicians.

Analysing the case study.

In approaching the analysis there needed to be an integration of theory, description and explanation, the three elements shown in Figure 2. Existing theory can be used to predict outcomes against which observed results can be compared and normative judgements made. Analysis also involves accurate description of what actually happened and explanations of why it happened.

Figure 2 Analysis of a case study



These three elements are not mutually exclusive but interconnected. However, there is a question of emphasis. To emphasise the normative aspects may be impossible if there is not a strong theoretical base or, as in the case of policy and action in a growth centre, it is disparate and multi-disciplinary. To limit the analysis to description may make a fascinating story but is unlikely to contribute to knowledge in the chosen discipline, (in this case urban and regional planning). The same can be said of explanation, if left on its own.

The locus of this thesis is the explanation of why events occurred in Bathurst-Orange as they did. In the chapters to follow theoretical positions are introduced when discussing events and features of the case. Obviously there will be the need for description in order to proceed to explanation, but both theory and description are servants of explanation.

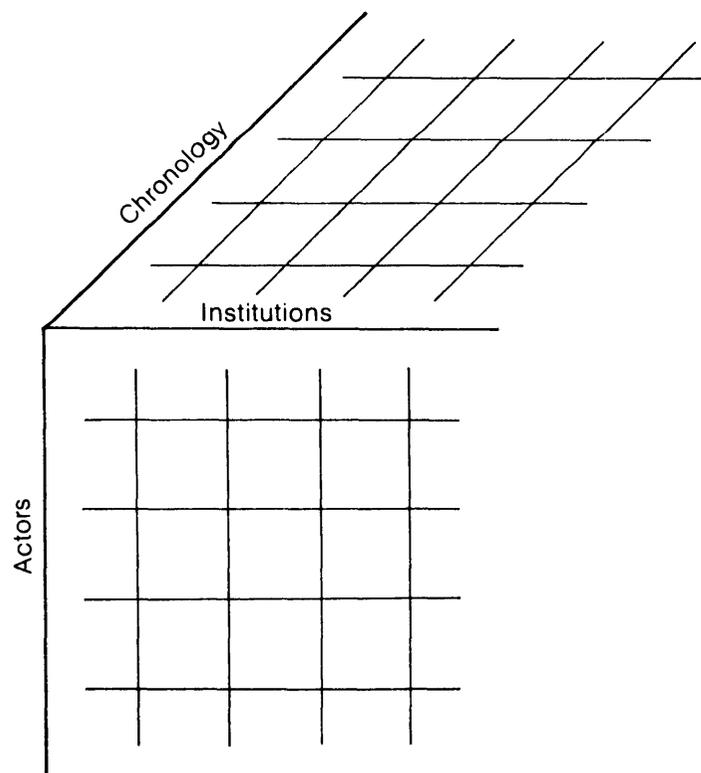
With this emphasis in mind, three general tasks were set. The first task was to present cogently and systematically the story of Bathurst-Orange. In presenting this story the second task was to explain progressively issues and problems salient to the under-

lying focus on planning and politics. The last task was to integrate selected theoretical positions with the explanation of practice. Some elaboration of these tasks is warranted.

In fulfilling the first task it is acknowledged that, in seeking to reproduce faithfully the reality of what happened, limits had to be established lest the story became overwhelmed by its own detail. There was also the need to guard against the constant temptation to wander off into interesting but tangential issues. To do this, three aspects were emphasised: the chronology of events, the actors involved, and the institutions within which they operated. They can be shown as a three dimensional matrix (Figure 3).

Policy making involves actors in a process of action and reaction over time.²² The chronology has controlled both the research and presentation of this study. It is, in fact, the only constant variable in the process. Actors come and go, institutional arenas in which they operate are constantly forming and reforming, but time marches uniformly on. Much of the data for this study came from interviews with selected actors. The chronology of events provided a basis for codifying parts of the story as it unfolded and also provided a useful control against which interview responses could be checked for validity.²³

Figure 3 Research framework.



Selected actors and sources of information.

Etzioni talks of elites as social control centres, processing incoming knowledge from the environment, making major decisions about alternate policy options and strategies, and issuing action signals to the body.²⁴ Applying this concept to the public policy process Williams argues that it is the strategic elites who are able to catalyse action in response to crisis perception in the environment.²⁵ It is their perceptions and beliefs which are important in the formulation of policy and they who might create, or at least define, the problem in the first place. In this study, strategic elites primarily meant politicians, advisers and bureaucrats. That is not to say that politicians do not listen to a wide circle of advice and glean knowledge from general community attitudes. However, the focus of the study is on the planner (whether adviser or bureaucrat) actively participating in the political process, not just proffering advice as part of the general community.

One implication of this focus on the participating politicians and planners, the decision makers, has been the exclusion of data from outside this inner circle. On many occasions throughout this study there are accounts of decisions which were made on the basis of perceptions held by these decision makers about some community problem or anticipated electorate reaction. It would have added another dimension to the analysis if these perceptions could have been tested by finding out what people in the community, especially electors, actually felt at the time. With a story spanning twenty years and involving many decisions it was clearly impossible to expand the research into this area. Stated reasons were generally accepted and subjected to critical comment where the validity of the perceptions seemed dubious.

Weller and Grattan suggest that there is no way to discover what politicians think is important other than by asking them.²⁶ Similarly, aspects of this story were derived from extensive personal interviews. In selecting those to be interviewed importance was given to those who had been directly involved.²⁷ The interviews with the "strategic elites" were supplemented from various other sources:-

- (i) Less extensive interviews with others who had some knowledge of the case. These were often nothing more than a passing conversation, but on occasions they provided useful pieces to fit into the puzzle. They were also often useful in supporting impressions about various parts of the case.
- (ii) The participant observation of the years 1974 to 1978. The usefulness and significance of this was discussed in the Preface.
- (iii) Official documents and files, minutes of meetings, publications and reports of the Bathurst Orange Development Corporation.
- (iv) Correspondence with actors who, for various reasons, were unable to be interviewed.
- (v) Political speeches and Parliamentary debates of the Australian and New South Wales Parliaments.
- (vi) Published literature on Australian urban and regional affairs; particularly that of the Whitlam years and their aftermath.
- (vii) Media reports; primarily newspaper reports and articles.
- (viii) Published material from the N.S.W. Department of Decentralisation and Development.
- (ix) Minutes and discussion documents produced for various Federal/State conferences, inter-departmental committees, Ministerial conferences.
- (x) Reports of reviews into the activities of the Bathurst Orange Development Corporation.

Institutions

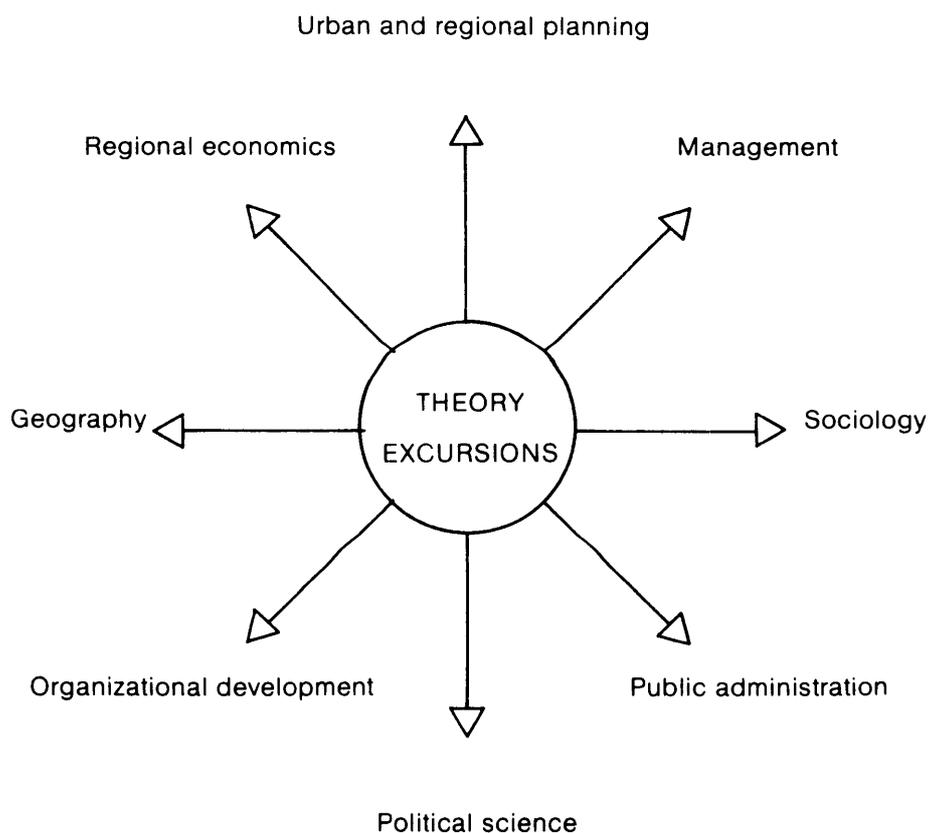
Interaction between actors occurred within political and bureaucratic networks. Some were well established prior to 1972 and became the forums within which policy was formulated. Others were formed specifically for growth centre programs. In analysing the case attention was given to the definition of formal institutional networks. Where they could be identified, informal networks were also examined.

In a case involving Federal and State Governments, their respective bureaucracies, a local development corporation, and a local community, the elaboration of institutional arrangements is necessary for both an understanding of the scale and complexity of the growth centre policy and program, and as a road map to guide planners wishing to participate in the process.

Salient features and theories.

The second major task set for this analysis required selection of features of the emerging story which merited further examination. The third major task required the introduction of theoretical positions. Both these tasks required judgement: the second in selecting which features to discuss, the third in determining which theories, if any, had application. Excursions were made into a wide range of interdisciplinary literature, depicted in Figure 4. As a methodology this reflects the dynamic nature of the planning process being examined in this thesis and the eclecticism of much of urban and regional planning theory.

Figure 4 Excursions into theory.



Literature explorations were often into unfamiliar territory. On occasions the ground was found to be barren, whilst at other times the ground proved to be fertile, increasing understanding and interpretation of the unfolding story. The problems with such an eclectic approach are the ever-present dangers of missing what might have been relevant theory, misapplying what is found,²⁸ or producing such an incoherent scattering of theoretical positions that any foundation of theory the study may have simply crumbles. If these are judged to be weaknesses in this thesis then they exemplify the problems faced by the types of planners on which it focuses.

As already discussed the term planner in this story has not been restricted exclusively to the technical land-use allocator. It is used in a much broader sense to include anyone directly involved in linking knowledge and action in urban and regional public policy making. They may not be faithful to academic purity and disciplinary elitism. They may not be architects of paradigm shifts but they are more than just technical doers-of-plans. When operating in the political arena they are not afforded the luxury of undertaking profound and comprehensive theory searches every time they are involved in linking knowledge to action, although they are likely to recognise that theory and practice must stand in a fruitful and symbiotic relationship to each other.²⁹ They exercise judgement in selecting which knowledge to link to action as it happens.

The results of this research may be perceived in different ways. Those with a liking for markets and individual freedoms will detect a failure of central command planning to counter urban and regional forces. Those committed to social democratic planning ideologies, particularly in matters of equity, will identify problems to be overcome and opportunities for improved intervention in urban and regional affairs. Marxist theorists may dismiss the growth centre exercise as further evidence of the futility of bourgeois planning approaches. Those who favour power at the lowest level will find evidence supporting their predilections. The case as presented can finally only claim to be in the tradition of empirical studies of the planning process.³⁰ Its contribution must be left ultimately to interpretations according to the theoretical position and ideological bias of readers.

Structure of the thesis

There are four parts to the thesis. The first three recount the story of the growth centre, each being prefaced with a brief introduction. The common theme which pervades the story is the impact of perceptions, politics and power on policy and action.

The three chapters of Part 1 trace the evolution of growth centre policies leading up to the selection of Bathurst-Orange as the State's pilot growth centre just prior to the 1972 Federal election. Part 2 comprises four chapters and examines the translation of policies into programs through political bargaining and the legislation of a political-bureaucratic network. The third Part comprises five chapters and explains the launching of the local program in the Bathurst-Orange area and the subsequent struggles to sustain it in the face of dwindling political commitment.

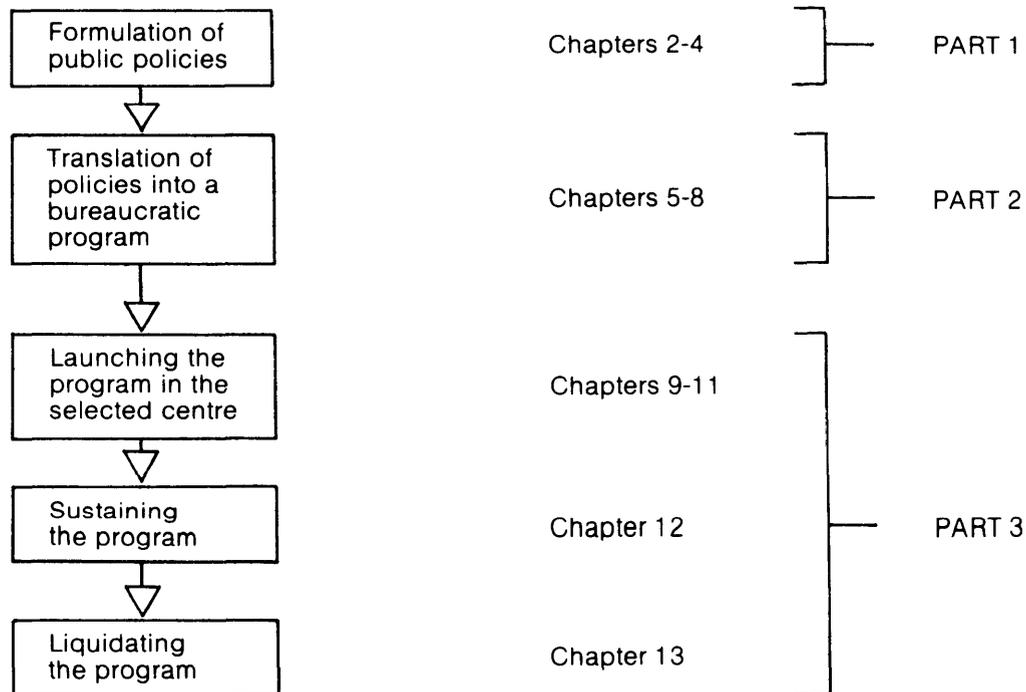
The first chapter of Part 4 is in the form of an inquest which draws together otherwise disparate issues and problems discussed progressively through the story. This is followed by a chapter which draws some final conclusions.

The first three Parts, illustrated in Figure 5, represent stages in the policy making process for Bathurst-Orange. As the thesis is structured according to this process it warrants some comment here rather than pointing out the obvious in the conclusion.

The expression of policy making in this form is not unique. It might be better considered as a variation on the procedural themes in the planning and public policy literature. Although they generally acknowledge the process to be one of dynamic interaction rather than a linear sequence, some authors have found it convenient to express it simply as formulation, implementation, evaluation and re-formulation.³¹ More elaborately, Williams³² advocates five stages in the public policy process: crisis perception, strategic choice, justification, institutionalisation, followed by iterations of the model. In another version, the elements of a complex process have been reduced to:

- "1. an environmental system, from which demands and needs arise, and upon which policy seeks to have an effect
2. a political system in which policy decisions are made
3. an organizational system through which policy is mediated and executed".³³

Figure 5 The policy making process for Bathurst-Orange.



One attempt by a group of planners to compile a general model of the planning process included twenty nine sequential steps with recycle loops at various stages; and this was suggested as a simplification for the purpose of exposition.³⁴ The models all explain, whether descriptively or prescriptively, a process through which policy emerges, is put into effect, and changes over time. Variations usually reflect differences of emphasis or ideological bias. The emphasis in the model presented here is consistent with an underlying focus on political commitment.

END NOTES. CHAPTER 1.

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PART 1.

BIRTH OF GROWTH CENTRE POLICIES

AND

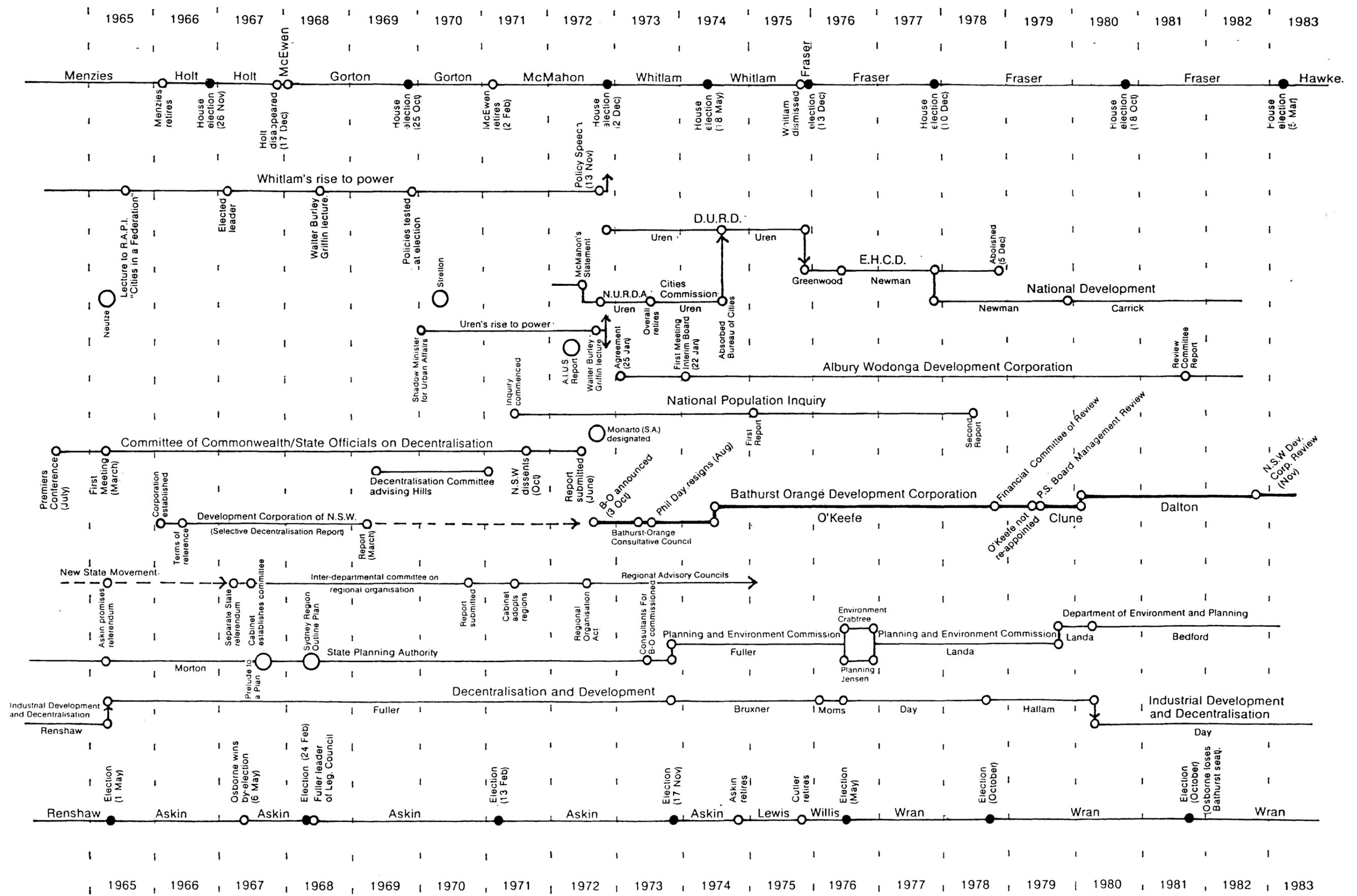
SELECTION OF BATHURST-ORANGE

Dye suggests that in its simplest form public policy is whatever governments choose to do or not to do.¹ During the decade leading up to 1972 governments in Australia chose to formulate policies about growth centres and Bathurst-Orange was selected as one centre for the expression of those policies. This part of the study examines why four political parties became enchanted with growth centres and how they formulated that enchantment into policies.

The process through which the policies evolved is explained in three chapters. Firstly a discussion of contextual issues in the Federal and State arenas which both fostered and impinged on the evolution of policies. The second chapter examines the people involved and strategies employed to shape the policies to the point of action. The third chapter considers the catalytic effect of the 1972 federal election in providing the impulse necessary to launch growth centre policies beyond mere political rhetoric.

A chronology of events covered in this thesis is shown in Figure 6. It may prove a useful reference for readers as they progress through this and subsequent parts. The upper portion of the time chart traces Federal Governments and selected events which were primarily federal in their orientation. The lower portion traces N.S.W. Governments and includes selected State issues.

Figure 6 Chronology of selected events.



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CHAPTER 2.

A CONTEXT FOR POLICY FORMULATION.

"If we could first know where we are and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do and how to do it".

Abraham Lincoln: House divided speech, June 1858).

What were the features peculiar to this period which fostered the formulation of growth centre policies? Why was it possible to select Bathurst-Orange in 1972 and not earlier in 1962, or why did it not occur until later in 1983? Were they part of what Shakespeare noted as tides in the affairs of men? The context is not the main substance of this part of the research but it is necessary to set the events of policy formulation, recounted in the chapters to follow, within a framework of wider social issues of the time. Like the stage for a play, it is not of itself the story being portrayed but does provide a setting in which the play gains relevance.

A general context.

The golden age of western economic development from 1950 to 1970, which saw the ascendancy of Keynesian orthodoxy together with a faith in science, provided a facilitative environment in Australia in which it was not only possible to express concern about urban and regional issues but also to contemplate prescriptive action.

Three decades of experience and apparent success with Keynesian-oriented economic policy had legitimised an increasing spread of government intervention in managing the economy. Direct benefits from government involvement were evident for all to see in such projects as: the mammoth Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme, the founding of Qantas, the introduction of orderly marketing schemes for primary industries.¹ With the increasing government intervention, public bureaucracies had expanded,² filled with public servants whose career prospects were linked to public policy and action being maintained or, even better, expanded.

With faith in both science, and the ability of rational man to control human affairs, there was little doubt that having identified

problems, solutions were possible. Pursuit of scientific solutions fostered in-depth knowledge of process, building of complicated models, collection of more and more data necessitating ever expanding information systems, increasingly sophisticated attempts at predicting the future, and belief in the efficacy of rational enquiry and policy recommendations.

This is not to say that problems, or indeed solutions, had not been pondered before. However, success in combating unemployment and recession had produced a growing economy with rising wealth so that through the 1960's (before problems of inflation had begun to challenge the economic orthodoxy), it was possible to contemplate diverting public resources towards dealing with problems in urban and regional affairs.

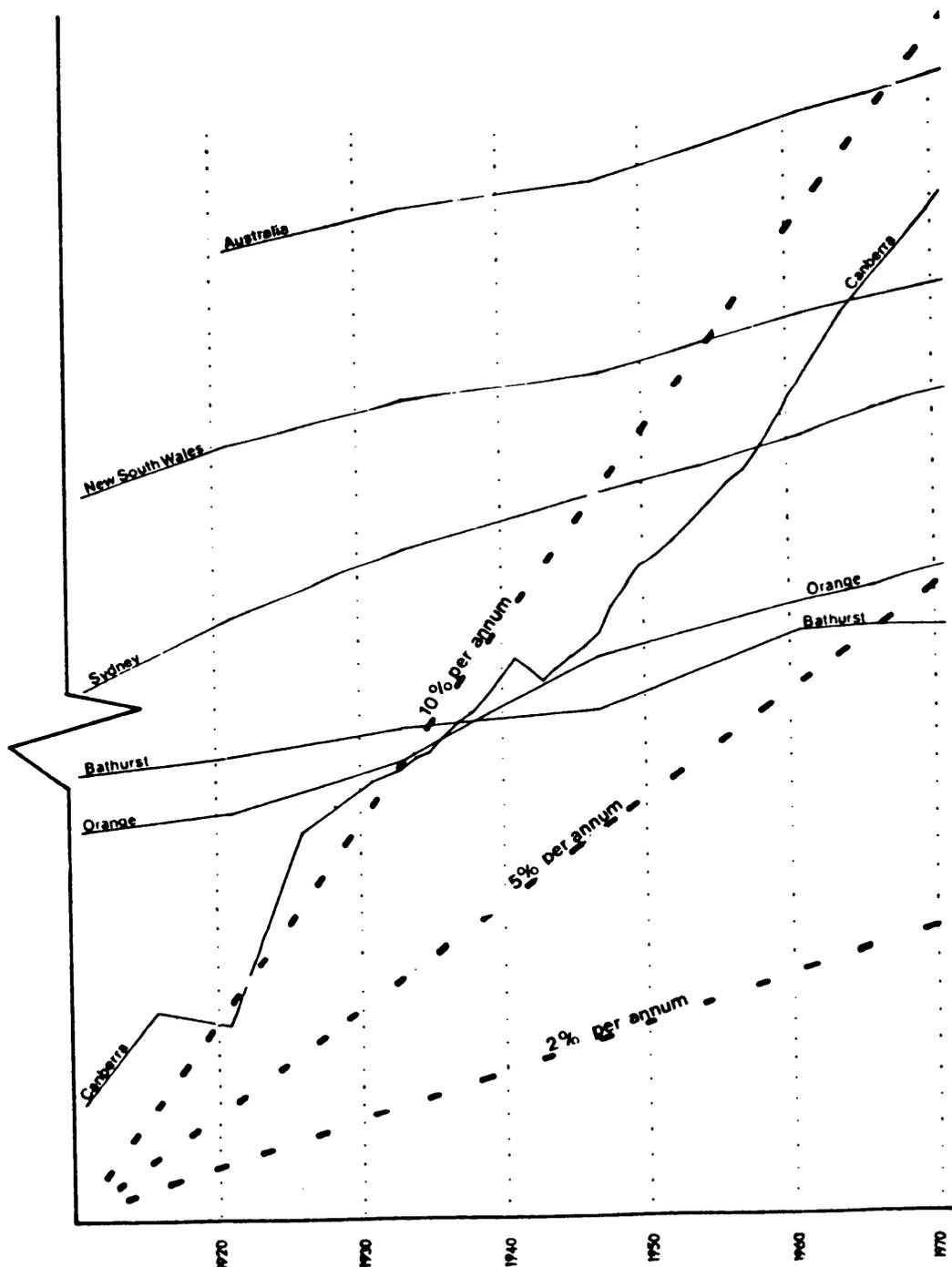
Successful economic management and interest in science were correlated to rising levels of education, and that had "... been one of the most spectacular social changes in Australia since 1945".³ This involved not only an expansion in numbers receiving education but increases in the level of education. Tertiary education, in particular was no longer the exclusive province of the wealthy. Rises in the affluence and education of middle classes generated knowledge, time, and resources for an increasing interest in environmental and quality of life issues.⁴ Problems which were to redirect attention ten years later were not yet receiving general public attention in the early 1970's. The effects of technological change, particularly on manufacturing industry, were only beginning to be recognised.⁵ Inflation, worldwide recession, or fuel and energy issues were largely the realm of academic speculation.

The broad context for interest in growth centres was then the interplay of these forces, rising into a crescendo by the early 1970's: the belief in scientific analysis of social problems allied to the demonstrable success of physical science in providing better lifestyles; tolerance of social experimentation due to buoyant economic conditions; willingness to accept a redistribution of wealth in the community for the same reason; rising education accessible to all through merit. To these can be added an expanding, self-seeking bureaucracy - a monolith which provided work opportunities and career prospects for those educated -

ever looking for new problems to which its attention could be directed.

Drawing again on the analogy of the stage more detailed pieces of the set can now be added. The set pieces to be described may seem discrete but without their inclusion on the stage the play lacks clarity.

Figure 7 Annual population growth rates 1911-1971.



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Specific Issues.

Based on high rates of immigration Australia has achieved strong and sustained population growth since World War II. Relevant growth rates are shown in Figure 7. They have been plotted vertically in semi-logarithmic form for comparison and, for reasons of space, this vertical axis has been broken between Bathurst and Sydney.

As can be seen Orange had experienced continuous growth since the 1930's, passing Bathurst during the latter half of that decade. Following a period of growth after World War II, Bathurst had begun to decline in population during the 1960's. Neither of these two rural cities could compare to the spectacular growth of the national capital, Canberra.

The distribution pattern of this growing population had been dominated by the major urban areas, particularly the primate metropolitan cities. By 1971 60 per cent of Australia's population lived in the capital cities, an increase from only 51 per cent in 1947.⁶ The primacy of the metropolitan areas was exacerbated by a drift of rural population to them. By 1967 planning agencies in N.S.W. were assuming a continuation of these trends and projected that Sydney would double to something over 5 million people by the end of the century.⁷

The N.S.W. State Planning Authority (S.P.A.) was directing considerable effort towards the making of a metropolitan plan to cope with this projected growth rate of Sydney. A Sydney Region Outline Plan, released in March 1968, recommended "... a provisional aim to steer 500,000 of Sydney's projected growth to new centres in other areas of the State, outside the Sydney Region".⁸ This was not strongly indicative of any abiding interest in decentralisation initiatives, for the Authority's planning outside the metropolitan complex of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong rarely went beyond statutory development control. Nor was the diversion of population within any comprehensive plan of State development; the Authority seemed to have been primarily concerned to divert people away from what was perceived to be an overcrowding city. Insight into the attitudes of the Authority's planners can be gained by acknowledging from whence many of them came.

The Authority's precursor agency had produced the Sydney region's County of Cumberland Planning Scheme. This scheme, typical of plans of the time, incorporated a green-belt around the metropolitan city aimed at restricting expansion to the then perceived desirable limits. Writing about that scheme, the late Professor Dennis Winston, arguably one of the most dominant figures in Australian planning, stated that it would be

"... impossible to implement the provisions of the County of Cumberland Planning Scheme unless this Scheme is assisted and supplemented by an active decentralisation policy which would need the help of the Commonwealth as well as of the State Government".⁹

He further argued that "in the long run only the growth and development of Orange and Bathurst, Tamworth and Wagga (Figure 8) and similar country centres can save the County of Cumberland from becoming just another Manchester or Chicago".¹⁰ Many of the senior staff of S.P.A. had previously worked in the earlier organisation and had been involved with the preparation of the Cumberland Scheme, bringing with them their attitudes, values and perceptions. If there had been any strong interest in decentralisation it must have hibernated for "decentralisation just drifted along in the S.P.A."¹¹ with no real concern other than to ensure Sydney did not grow too large.

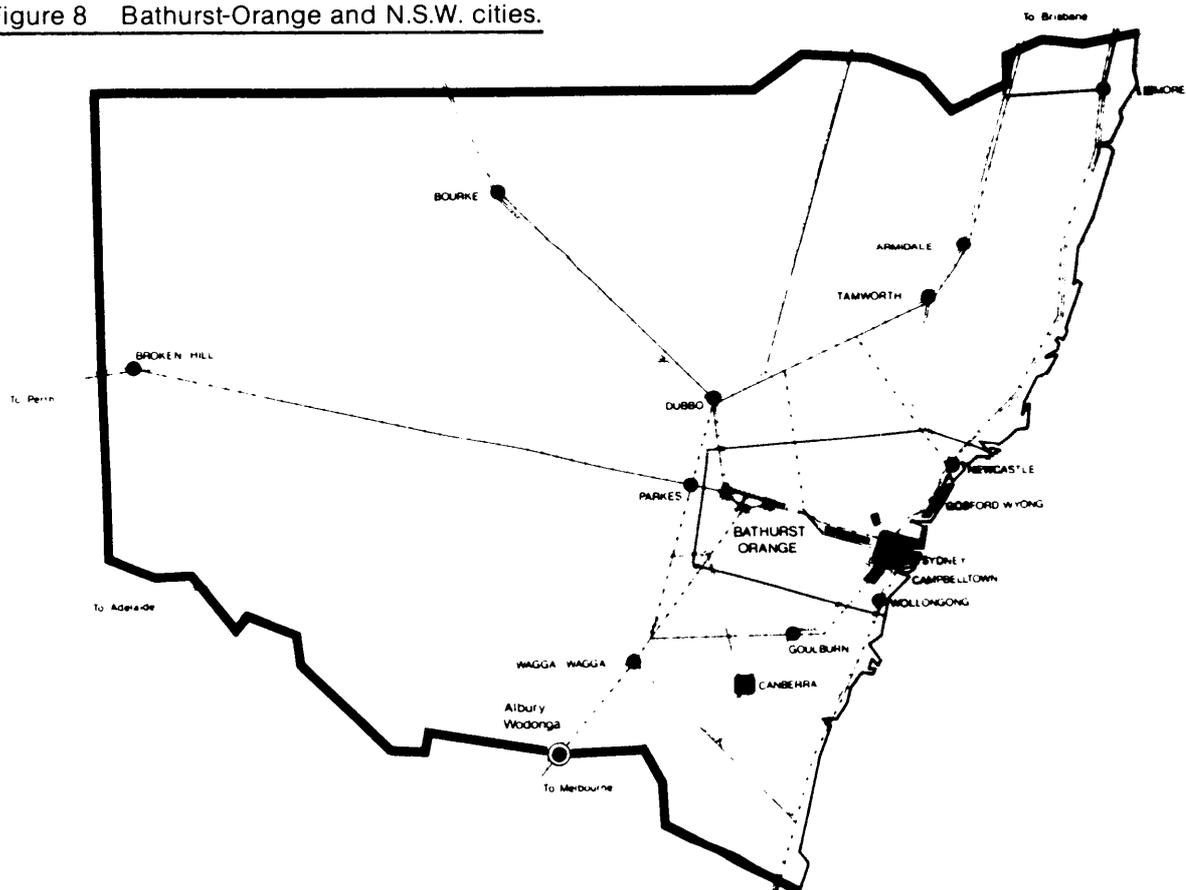
Concerns about continued metropolitan growth were not restricted to the professional planners. Academic contributions of the period were widely read by planners and politicians. Neutze,¹² a leading urban economist, provided a seminal study of comparative costs of country town expansion rather than continued metropolitan growth. He was later to take this work further as a case for new city programs in Australia.¹³ Another important contribution came from Stretton as an account of what the planners of Australian cities were attempting to do and what was going wrong.¹² It was a critical account of the planning orthodoxy and offered prescriptions for alternative planning policies for the cities. Stretton argued that planning needed to do more than land-use allocation and design; it should be more overtly political and incorporate social and community issues integrated within a national strategy. Stretton argued in favour of suburban life and suggested linear expansion of the metropolitan area into a series

of districts "strung like beads along a thread".¹⁵

The ideas of these and other academics engendered responses from people concerned that social problems were emerging in large residential estates in the western suburbs of Sydney. These estates had been built by the single purpose Housing Commission of New South Wales. Co-ordination in the provision of urban services was poor, with many residents having to travel long distances to work and shop. Much of the expressed concern came from professional planners and welfare workers rather than the residents themselves. These lack of services and problems of social alienation may have been real to the residents, but of more significance, it was politicians and professionals who were interested and they had access to those in positions to formulate policies.

In a recent study of multiculturalism Sestito argues that both of Australia's major political parties espouse policies of multiculturalism " ... because there are votes to be gained by promoting

Figure 8 Bathurst-Orange and N.S.W. cities.



Source: N.S.W. Planning and Environment Commission, **New Cities For the Bathurst/Orange Growth Area**, January, 1975.

it",¹⁶ rather than responding to ethnic group pressure. Social problems in Sydney's burgeoning western suburbs may well have been a similar perception: there were political votes to be captured.

With the rapid metropolitan growth in Sydney and Melbourne the provision of basic urban infrastructure had fallen behind. Large areas of the western suburbs of the two cities remained unsewered at the end of the 1960's. Distribution of education, health and welfare services among Sydney's suburbs was deemed to be inequitably biased away from the western suburbs.

As residential development expanded the cost of land and housing had risen. The rises were partly attributed to the cost of providing infrastructure over ever increasing distances. But costs also rose because the residential consumer was demanding a larger, higher quality land and housing product. By the end of the 1960's the costs of housing were increasing more rapidly than other prices "... making it more difficult, in some cities, for the average family to be able to afford to purchase a house".¹⁷ Planning itself was also partly to blame for the increased costs through: inflexible standards, requirements and specifications stifling innovation; and inordinate delays in the planning and approval process.¹⁸ Developers, planners, and local councils all blamed each other for creating the problem.

Many of these issues had been fermenting through the decade of the "sixties". In combination, they covered a broad spectrum of urban and regional affairs. Interest was, however, disparate among: academics and professional groups, a few politicians, individuals without urban services or unable to purchase housing, and groups interested in fragmented environmental issues.

Sandercock¹⁹ has identified that publicity associated with an unusual alliance in 1971 brought many of these issues into a wider community debate. This alliance was between the radical N.S.W. Builders Labourers Federation and 'middle- and upper-class greenies' concerned with the environmental quality of inner Sydney areas threatened by developers and freeway builders. The charismatic leader of the Federation, Jack Mundey, was concerned for the need "... to do something about resource consumption, overpopulation,

pollution and conservation".²⁰ Munday introduced green bans on many development projects in Sydney receiving "almost as much publicity as the prime minister" about his actions and ideas.²¹ Many, possibly opposed to Munday's radical politics, were faced daily in the media with urban issues and the need for policy action.

The arena of federal politics was marked with the leadership power struggles of the conservative parties and the ascendancy of Whitlam as leader of the Federal Labor Party. The years following the retirement of Sir Robert Menzies and the death of Harold Holt saw struggles for leadership of the Federal Liberal Party involving John Gorton and William McMahon. These struggles precluded any attempts at rethinking Menzies' entrenched policy of non-involvement by the Federal Government in urban affairs. Earlier Menzies had been approached by the N.S.W. Government to assist in the implementation of the County of Cumberland Scheme but had resisted with a perception that "there would be no end to federal involvement if it got involved in urban issues".²² Whitlam had been elected leader of the Labor Party in 1967 and began a structured campaign to overcome the Party's internal problems, prepare new policies, and lead Labor to power.

New South Wales was politically stable with the Liberal/Country Party coalition becoming entrenched in power. A thorn in the Government's side was a New State Movement in the north east of the State. The Movement, fermenting for some years, was agitating its case showing what was perceived to be disenfranchisement of that section of the State's population. Following an election promise a referendum had been held on 29 April 1967 and it was only by including a large area of Newcastle that the Government avoided an embarrassing result favouring separation. The results of the referendum, together with parochial attitudes of country members of Parliament, increased pressure for the Government to do more for rural areas.

A by-election on 6 May, 1967 for the State seat of Bathurst resulted in the election of a Country Party candidate, Clive Osborne. The N.S.W. Labor Party smarted at the loss of this assumed safe Labor seat. The winning and retention of this particular seat has been an important factor in decentralisation

policy throughout the ensuing years (and continues to be in 1983).

It was on this stage, amongst these set pieces, that four major political groups, two in the State arena and two in the Federal arena, acted out their policy formulations.

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CHAPTER 3.GROWTH CENTRES BECOME THE IDEA IN GOOD CURRENCY.

"Idealism is the noble toga that political gentlemen drape over their will to power."

Aldous Huxley: New York Herald Tribune,
24 November, 1963.

Within twelve months of the establishment of a separate Department of Decentralisation and Development to implement a policy of statewide decentralisation, moves began in 1966 to change the policy. In New South Wales decentralisation meant attracting people away from metropolitan Sydney. To do this incentives were offered to manufacturers prepared to establish in rural towns within the State. The hope was that people would follow the jobs. Fuller, the Minister, and his advisers thought the existing policy of dispersed decentralisation should be replaced by a more concentrated approach. To understand why the change was contemplated and the problems involved in effecting even a marginal change to policy, it is necessary first to appreciate its derivation within the N.S.W. Country Party.

Fuller and incremental changes to policy.

The Country Party had advocated decentralisation for many years and whilst in Opposition the Country Party members constantly criticised the Labor Government's lack of initiatives in this direction. A blueprint for the development of N.S.W., introduced in 1961, stated the Country Party's attitude and, according to Bruxner, was the "genesis of ideas about political action".

Introduced by Hughes, the Country Party member for Armidale (the centre of the New State Movement), the blueprint saw an urgent need for a huge increase over the ensuing twenty years in the population of N.S.W.² The doubling of the State's population envisaged reflected a utopian dream that people should fill the vast open spaces, provide an ever-increasing home market for rural industries and set up a chain reaction of industrial activity in country towns.³

This policy clearly favoured sectional interests in opposition

to the market forces generating metropolitan growth. The development of New South Wales had been characterised by the dominance of the metropolitan cities and increasing urbanisation.⁴ "In 1947, 69 per cent of the population were urban dwellers; by 1976 more than eight out of ten Australians lived in cities and towns".⁵ During this same period the proportion of the State's population living in metropolitan Sydney grew from 50 per cent to 63 per cent.⁶ This capital city growth had been at the expense of rural areas rather than the smaller urban areas of the State.⁷

It might seem paradoxical that a political party, supposedly espousing the virtues of private enterprise and a market-oriented economy, could justify a policy resisting the historical and economic reality of agglomeration and people's attraction to metropolitan cities. There was no paradox, for as Scott and Roweis rightly suggest, politicians are motivated by real human interest rather than abstract ideas and theories.⁸ Bolan also argues that notwithstanding the work of academics, researchers and others, it is the practitioner who is ultimately the theorist when tasks are being performed.⁹ Decentralisation simply reflected self-interest. The Country Party had been formed in the 1920's through an amalgamation of politicians representing specifically and exclusively rural interest groups. In 1961 the Country Party in N.S.W. was seeking, in coalition with its Liberal partner, to gain power and the blueprint represented both a pragmatic strategy to attract rural support and a 'theory' of decentralisation.

The blueprint was more than the spontaneous utterances of one country politician. An elaborate plan had been worked out to manage the balanced development of the State. Co-ordination and, if it proved necessary, control of both public and private enterprise would be achieved through a ministry of development and decentralisation. This new ministry would be "... geared to ensure that the activity of every department and of the State itself are directed towards planned development of the whole of New South Wales".¹⁰

From the address given to Parliament it seems Hughes perceived his 'super' department bringing all the metropolitan-oriented departments into line, forcing them to work for the benefit of

rural areas. Bold plans, but to have contemplated that one new department could undertake overriding co-ordination of all entrenched State activities suggests a naive appreciation of the power of established functional departments. However, similar to Whitlam a decade later, the State coalition parties had been in opposition for twenty years and only a few had any experience of government. From the isolation of the opposition benches it is possible to speculate grand plans for the comprehensive co-ordination of public enterprise. On forming government the reality of allocating ministerial portfolios and the power structures of existing government operations militates against 'super' co-ordinators. Such was the case when the Liberal/Country Party coalition eventually won power in May 1965. Even though Hughes wanted to implement his blueprint he was allocated the more 'senior' established ministry of Public Works. Although Decentralisation and Development may have been conceived as a 'super' ministry, comprehensively co-ordinating State development, at birth it was found to be stunted, nothing more than a 'junior' portfolio, incremental to the more senior functions of government. Fuller, a Country Party member of the Legislative Council, was appointed the inaugural Minister.

A vain attempt at State co-ordination was included in the new Department with a State Development Co-ordination Committee comprising senior officers drawn from other government departments and authorities. Even a cursory review of the activities of this Committee reveals the paucity of the attempt. Members were senior officers, not chief officers who had power to co-operate and co-ordinate. Matters dealt with were limited to disparate projects when it was perceived inter-departmental co-operation was desirable. In terms of any balanced State development this Committee was ineffective, even irrelevant.

The realities of establishing government may have dissipated the grand blueprint but it had served to establish the concept and initial policy guidance for a separate decentralisation ministry.

The new Department.

The decentralisation program of the new department was to

attract manufacturing industries to centres outside the metropolitan complex of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong. Incentives were provided to assist manufacturers' establishments costs if they located in a rural centre. There was no real restriction on the choice of rural centres. In essence, providing it was outside the metropolis, the choice was free. The instrument for this dispersed policy was the State Development and Country Industries Assistance Act, 1966.¹¹

In the first ten years of operation the Department expended \$63.5 million on decentralisation initiatives.¹² There is some doubt how far these incentives were responsible for decentralising the manufacturing operations and that many location decisions may have taken place even in the absence of any state assistance.¹³ Nevertheless, the program of seeking to disperse employment opportunities anywhere in the State was pursued.

As part of his departmental structure Fuller established a Development Corporation of New South Wales. A number of prominent businessmen and academics were invited to join, acting as an advisory body to the Minister. The idea for such a body had been in the earlier blueprint but this was only a vestige of Hughes' conception: a powerful group of business, academic and political minds deliberating on matters of State development. From the inception it was apparent that advice would be sought only on disparate projects and that often the Government would find it convenient to use the N.S.W. Corporation to deal with "skeletons which had been lying around for some time, and needed burying."¹⁴ (This thesis ends with the N.S.W. Corporation still burying problems for the Government seventeen years later).

Several members of this new Corporation expressed concern to Fuller about the dispersed nature of the existing program which reinforced advice being proffered by staff in the growing new Department.

Perceptions begin to change.

At the invitation of the British Government Fuller went to Britain in 1966 to inspect the new town program. It was then still a time of buoyant optimism among those involved in new towns management. The program was entering the stage of 'Mark III'

new towns including Milton Keynes and others. A politician visiting in 1983 would be likely to gain a different impression within a context of the winding down of much of the British program.

Fuller returned impressed with what he had seen, feeling that such approaches had application in N.S.W. and concluded that the existing dispersed policy would need to change. Even though members of the N.S.W. Corporation felt that the Minister had come to the conclusion himself¹⁵ it now seems there was a certain inevitability that he would reach such a conclusion. In the absence of any knowledge of theories of regional development, the Minister's perceptions had been shaped by those around him - his Department and advisory Corporation - and what he had seen in Britain, all of which pointed to intensive development of selected urban centres. The perceptions and ideological commitments of his Party would not tolerate any debate on the fundamental need for decentralisation per se. The need for decentralisation was equally an a priori tenet for the Development Corporation.¹⁶ It is not known whether the members had been selected on the basis of any personal commitment to decentralisation, although it is reasonable to assume the Minister is unlikely to have appointed advisors antagonistic to the fundamental policy. Career public servants in his Department could not be expected to challenge openly the underlying raison d'etre for their employment. The inaugural Director of the Department, Bill Butterfield, had previously been the State's senior public servant dealing with development of secondary industry and regional planning under the Labor Government. It had been his organisation which had assisted Neutze's research into the economic virtues of decentralisation.

It was not just that Fuller was surrounded by advisors who all shared a mutual perception of decentralisation through a selective program; it was the fact that they were in positions of power, able to influence policy. This is simply a manifestation of the government system in practice where both a Minister and public servants, including statutory advisors, are together responsible for formulating policies. With their knowledge and experience senior public servants are immensely powerful in developing policies and programs¹⁷ and in this case the influence became

more pronounced when P. D. Day joined the Department as Secretary of the N.S.W. Corporation. A graduate in law and town planning, Day strongly advocated a selective approach to decentralisation. As Secretary of the Corporation, and subsequently as Deputy Director then Director, he became arguably the dominant force seeking to change from the purely dispersed program.

It transpired that Fuller was not the only politician dubious of the dispersed approach. Several of his Party colleagues also felt the initiatives should not have been so open, but their political instincts warned them that pressure from local electoral branches would be strongly against any more selective program at that time. The selective allocation of decentralisation funds held inherent political problems for the Country Party. While ever industrialists had a free choice to locate anywhere in the State all electorates had potential to receive benefit from the public largesse. Once one or two centres were selected to receive all the allocations those electorates not chosen would perceive themselves subsidising the chosen few at their own expense. This may have been nothing more than parochial politicians' paranoia at the prospect of other electorates receiving benefits, but it held currency amongst the Country Party at the time.¹⁸

This was no direct concern to Fuller, for as a member of the Upper House he had no personal electorate to placate and was in a position to take a more statesmanlike perspective. But the decision to change the program was not his alone. He required the approval of Cabinet and was well aware that "any attempt to suggest growth centres to Cabinet at that time would never have seen the light of day".¹⁹

How to change the program?

Fuller was in a difficult position. On the one hand his technical advisors were advocating a change and his visit to the British new towns had demonstrated to him what could be done.²⁰ On the other hand his political colleagues ensured he was aware of the perceived electoral implications of a more selective approach. Their reasoning was no less rational than that of the technical advisors. At that time technical rationality lost out to political rationality.

To bolster his position Fuller agreed that the N.S.W. Corporation should prepare a case showing the weaknesses of the dispersed program and highlighting the benefits of a selective approach. The evaluation of the existing policy, if it could be called that, would start with a prearranged conclusion: The need to change the program.

Fuller was attracted to the N.S.W. Corporation as a medium through which the case should be prepared. While the case was being prepared to change the policy his Department could get on with the job of implementing the existing program. No politician is prepared to simply stop what his department is doing while the time is taken to review the efficacy of the program. The status of the Corporation members would also be important. Fuller would be seen to be seeking the advice of prominent businessmen, not just bureaucrats. This proved to be important when he eventually sought the support of his political colleagues.²¹

The Department was not unhappy that the N.S.W. Corporation would be responsible for preparing the case. The Corporation had no staff of its own and was serviced by Departmental staff, especially Day as its Secretary. Through the influence of Day the Department had already begun to swing its research efforts towards changing the program away from what Day considered "a scatter-gun approach".²² The Department would now be in a position to influence the result both through direct staff involvement and the imposition of its research findings.

It took three years to produce the report, released in March 1969 as a Report on Selective Decentralisation.²³ That it took nearly three years to prepare a case with a predetermined result reflects the part-time nature of the research, undertaken as and when resources were available. The conclusions claimed that the case for a selective approach were unassailable and recommended that country centres with demonstrable growth potential be selected and accelerated by the exercise of public powers. Just what those powers should be were vague.

Day does not recall that the term growth centres used in the report was drawn from the theoretical concepts in the seminal work on growth poles. Rather he felt it just grew along with the

N.S.W. Corporation's thinking on selective decentralisation. The report does however refer to the work of economists, geographers and regional planners, and does mention names like Hirschman,²⁴ Perroux,²⁵ Myrdal,²⁶ and Neutze.²⁷ It appears the work of these theorists was accepted and included in the Report, not because of its theoretical integrity, but because it supported preconceived notions.

The Report did not immediately improve Fuller's ability to change the program. He remained unable to secure the necessary support in either the Party Room or Cabinet. The Report provided no answers to the political needs of a rural party requiring a widely spread electoral support. There was a problem of ends. The Report had taken the Government's end to be decentralisation and had produced a convincing case for a selective approach as a means to that end. However, for the majority of Country Party members at that time the policy ends must include a distribution of decentralisation largesse over all areas of the State. For them the more efficient program of decentralisation did not attain their policy ends. What for Day and the N.S.W. Corporation was an efficient change in the decentralisation program was, in reality, a change in the policy itself, at that stage unacceptable to the Country Party.

The Corporation and Day must have acknowledged the political delicacy of the recommendations for they included a proviso that selective initiatives should not prejudice the existing dispersed assistance. Apart from this passing reference, the pervading tenor of the report was the technical rationality for change. In hindsight this was a fundamental weakness of their case. If the N.S.W. Corporation was seeking to prove a case for change, why recommend a continuation of the existing program? To have recommended the way it did suggests its members were either unable or unwilling to integrate strategically the political considerations. It appears they were hedging their bets. They may have been wiser to dress up the change as an experiment, running the two programs side by side and comparing the results. This would have been politically more realistic.

Day and the N.S.W. Corporation were convinced of the selective case. In effect the decision had been made but not taken (drawing

on Faludi's distinction of decision-makers and decision-takers), the latter being the sole province of the politician.²⁸ Even though Fuller remained interested in changing the program he was unable to take the decision. The problem was how to marshal the necessary support for the change. It took him until mid-1972 to achieve it.

During those intervening two years Fuller worked in the political arena whilst Day continued to push the technical case at every opportunity.

Pushing the technical case.

Day's ability to push the technical case was considerable. As Secretary of the N.S.W. Corporation he had written or edited most of the Report, injecting his own ideas and perceptions.²⁹ This is not to say that he manipulated the Corporation members or that they did not concur with the conclusions. It is a fact of life that part-time members of statutory bodies such as the N.S.W. Corporation are, to some extent, at the mercy of full-time operatives. What matters are placed on the agenda, what ideas generated in a meeting are acted on, how those ideas are acted on, the form in which research results are presented back, are usually at the latter's discretion. It takes the astute mind of a unique part-time member to counteract such pressures.

Day also represented N.S.W. on a Committee of Commonwealth/State officials investigating decentralisation. This body had been established following the Premiers Conference in July 1964 with the vague brief to "exchange ideas on the problems of decentralisation".³⁰ Day used this as another forum to further the selective case. When this Committee concluded that there appeared to be no decisive net advantages or net disadvantages to the continued centralisation of the Australian population, Day provided a dissenting view. The final report, published in 1972, contained a supplementary statement prepared by Day's Department outlining its concern at the Committee's ambivalent conclusion about the inevitability of population centralisation, restating the case for selective decentralisation. That this should have occurred is hardly surprising. The difference between the attitudes were matters of interpretation, not data, for both the Commonwealth/

State Committee and the N.S.W. Development Corporation were using essentially the same research. Day was staking his interpretative judgement against that of the other Committee members. If his judgements about the needs for decentralisation were questionable then his advocacy of a selective approach to it would have been cast into doubt.

Whenever the opportunity afforded itself Day presented the case. The earlier N.S.W. Corporation case was expanded with further economic and sociological arguments. These were included in an address to the 1972 ANZAAS Congress in Sydney.³¹

There were some officers in the Department who did not share Day's views, maintaining that the existing program produced a more market-oriented approach. They argued that market competition between country towns would select its own growth centres. This would avoid what they argued was the dubious probability that correct centres could be selected for special treatment and sound development programs contrived to accelerate their growth. At a time when selective decentralisation was being applauded and dispersed decentralisation castigated, this was an unpopular position to hold. Despite any substance to their case it was not influential for by 1971 Day was the Acting Director (appointed Director in December 1972) and the power of his personality and position were sufficient to restrain other than the departmental position : selective decentralisation.

There was one concept, discussed within the Department which had the potential to bring the technical and political rationality closer. The Department had considered the possibility that a second form of selection might also be implemented. As well as the selected growth centres, cities in other regions could be chosen as regional administrative centres. Major resources would still be directed towards the growth centres but lesser allocations would be used to foster the others as administrative, decision-making centres within a concept of regionalisation. Such a conception, with the potential for selection of either a growth centre or an administrative centre within each region - and thus spread over more electorates, may have been attractive to the politicians. The proposal for regional centres did not receive much attention from either the Department or politicians. Perhaps one or both felt that it would appear preposterous to formulate

a policy based on such patently electoral benefaction.

Presenting the political case.

While Day was working at the technical case Fuller proceeded to influence his political colleagues, local government and the rural electorate. The Selective Decentralisation Report was published and released by the N.S.W. Corporation, permitting Fuller to stand apart from the published findings without necessarily being seen as committed to them. He was able to test the public reaction to the Report and "see if he had backed a winner in the electorate before publicly committing himself".³² The favourable public reaction overwhelmed even the N.S.W. Corporation members, particularly the positive reaction of the regional press. There was no explicit criticism of the Report, only doubts that the Government would actually implement such a policy. The statesmanlike editorials did not turn parochial until Bathurst-Orange had been selected; then the enthusiasm waned. It is interesting to speculate on this positive reaction. It seems to have stemmed from an almost cargo-cult belief in the Government being better at concentrating development more beneficially than markets.

Despite the early acceptance "Fuller maintained a stance of keeping the Report at arm's length."³³ Even in the heat of the February 1971 State election campaign, when Labor was making a concerted effort to win Bathurst, he maintained "the Government had not yet made a decision for or against the concept of selective growth centres in N.S.W."³⁴ :

Fuller also sought to sell the concept to the Country Party. In this he was assisted by Charles Cutler the Country Party member for Orange. These two were in powerful positions to influence Party thinking. Cutler was Party Leader and Deputy Premier. Fuller was, by 1969, leader of the Government in the Legislative Council and fourth on the Cabinet list. With politicians in these lofty positions of power involved it might be thought decentralisation had become a senior government function. Such was not the case: there had been no significant real increases to the commitment of resources since 1965. The cause of decentralisation had fortuitously climbed with the rising political

seniority of its minister.

Even from such a powerful position and the support of the powerful Cutler, Fuller remained unable to convince his colleagues to proceed with selective decentralisation. Parochial country politicians were still not prepared to countenance one country town receiving selective Government support. Or was it that some of them saw through the conventional wisdom being advocated?

Local Government support.

There had been strong contacts between the Department and local government as both were involved in providing the incentives to decentralising industries, but local government had not been directly involved in the central government deliberations on decentralisation. When it had suited the central bureaucrats they had consulted local councils, but selective decentralisation had been the conception of central government.

After 1970, discussions with local government became more direct. The N.S.W. Corporation was permitted to invite country towns to submit cases for the selection of their centre. Some of these had previously submitted cost reports on major urban expansion of their respective towns as part of the Commonwealth/State studies. For the N.S.W. Corporation it " ... was a geographical exercise seeking to identify centres, or even a virgin region from scratch".³⁵ With its technical approach it was unconcerned about electorates. A main criterion became the need for sufficient water for 100,000 people with associated industry. It was thought the bulk of towns would exclude themselves through lack of an adequate water supply. The choice of this criterion seems problematical as in most cases water supplies could be augmented through public works such as dams. The criterion may have proved useless (the N.S.W. Corporation did not complete its task) as every town may have been able to substantiate an adequate water supply. It seems the N.S.W. Corporation was heading towards a selection of sites based on inadequate, dubious information.

For local politicians the selection was not so technical. Aware of the way political decisions were made, N.S.W. country mayors had formed an association in 1968 to ensure the case of country towns remained before central State and Federal politicians.

Fuller visited the Association's meetings on a number of occasions, even though he considered each of the mayors was lobbying parochially. He received a positive response to selective approaches from these country mayors. This support continued through into 1972 until Bathurst-Orange was actually selected; then, not surprisingly, parochial politics prevailed, support evaporated and the Country Mayors Association died. Obviously country mayors were only prepared to work co-operatively for as long as there remained a chance of winning the selection lottery.

Bureaucratic power struggles.

During this period a power struggle manifested itself which would shape the State policy for several years. The State Planning Authority (S.P.A.) having released its Sydney Region Outline Plan, recommended that it should select centres to absorb the 500,000 people it proposed should be diverted from the future growing Sydney. Day, who was also a member of the Authority, could see the implications of this and prevailed on certain people to allow his Department to recommend on selected centres; or so it seemed to senior S.P.A. officers.³⁶ The two responsible ministers, Cutler and Fuller, determined that both D. & D. and S.P.A. should co-operatively discuss possible selections. What may have seemed reasonable to the ministers stood little chance of success. Day mistrusted S.P.A. which he felt was only interested in metropolitan growth and decentralisation to its fringes, particularly Campbelltown on the southern edge of Sydney where S.P.A. had been quietly buying land for some years. The mistrust was mutual for S.P.A. perceived that D. & D. was trying to encroach on its functions. If anyone was to select sites for new growth centres it should be the State's planning authority. The two public bodies worked together but not co-operatively and the tension remained submerged, only to surface again in 1973.

Consideration of possible selections continued then between a triumvirate of the N.S.W. Corporation, D. & D., and S.P.A. The Department and Authority did manage to reach agreement on three priorities for selected centres: firstly somewhere on the north coast; secondly somewhere in the south west, probably Albury;

while not convinced at the need for a third priority, S.P.A. agreed with D. & D. to a third priority somewhere in the central west. The N.S.W. Corporation members also favoured three potential sites: Grafton and the Clarence River area on the north coast; Tamworth in the mid-west; and Wagga Wagga in the south west. Extensive feasibility studies were not undertaken by any of the triumvirate; the possibilities reflected personal perceptions and preferences, supported by preliminary investigations as time and resources permitted.

The three organisations involved cannot be criticised for failing to undertake comprehensive investigations for at that stage there was still no guarantee the selective approach would be approved. Day's strategy envisaged Cabinet eventually approving a change to the selective program, then the detailed analysis and site selection could be undertaken. On several occasions Day thought Fuller had reached the point of taking the final plunge. Cabinet minutes were prepared, only to see the Minister falter at the last minute. Frustration reigned in the Department.

This process of technical argument and political procrastination, involving expenditure of public resources, may well have gone on forever without hope of resolution. Eventually the political events of 1972 provided the solution. Sensing this changing political mood Day subtitled his address to the ANZAAS Congress in 1972: "Year of Decision?"

Before proceeding to consider the catalytic events of 1972 it is necessary to discuss the evolution of other policy initiatives.

Pat Hills and the N.S.W. Labor Opposition.

Pat Hills came to leadership of the N.S.W. Labor Party from a long background in both local and State Government. As the newly elected leader he determined to prepare fresh rural policies for the forthcoming State election, to be held at the latest by early 1971. To gain power the Party would have to win rural seats. Bathurst was still an attractive prospect as Labor had only recently lost it to the Country Party in May 1967.

A fortuitous meeting brought Hills into contact with an urban

and regional planner, Chris Cunningham, working at the time for S.P.A. Cunningham had been one of a number of Labor candidates for local government election in the City of Blue Mountains. Electricity was an election issue and Hills, with expertise in the field, was invited to speak. On meeting Cunningham, Hills learned of his academic work in planning and his special interest in regional issues. He suggested Cunningham invite other like-minded academics to form a small advisory Decentralisation Committee.

This Committee was not the only source of advice Hills received. In a more formal way the Labor Party was being advised by John Mant who was later to be influential on the thinking of Whitlam and Uren. Mant had joined the Labor Party in 1967 and was involved with John Dempsey in developing urban and regional policies for the State Party during the late 1960's.

As an informal group, personally advising Hills, Cunningham's Committee met in Hills' Parliamentary office. It quickly became obvious that the politician already had some form of policy in mind and was "picking their brains to justify his ideas."³⁷ One of the members, Professor Maurie Daly, felt that for the few months the group met Hills and his advisors were transacting conversations at two different levels. Hills was interested in the politics of policies, their ability to win seats for the Party. Some in the group were approaching decentralisation and regional development from a perspective altogether too theoretical, even vague.

Hills faced a similar problem to Fuller. Advisors were seeking to communicate, from a supposedly technically rational perception, with a politician with a different perception of rationality. If communication transactions do not work, why do politicians seek technical advice? Weller and Grattan³⁸ suggest several reasons. There may be lack of knowledge of the policy area. There may be lack of time to ponder the policy issues and develop initiatives. These authors quote Kissinger's insights that "high office teaches decision-making, not substance ... most officials leave office with the perceptions and insights with which they entered. They learn how to make decisions but not what decisions to make."³⁹ To these reasons can be added, from the experience of Fuller and

Hills, that politicians seek the advice of technical advisors to provide credibility for preconceived policy concepts.

The advice proffered by the Committee was similar to that given to Fuller by the N.S.W. Corporation, but Hills wanted more, he requested the nomination of sites. If D. & D. and S.P.A. were unable to devote resources for extensive feasibility studies, and the N.S.W. Corporation less so, Cunningham's group of voluntary advisors must have been almost devoid of resources. To have asked this group to nominate sites demonstrates that Hills was prepared to make public policy decisions on little more than personal perceptions of a few academics.

Not to be daunted by the task, at least some on this Committee discussed potential sites, concluding that the north coast was where most people wanted to live. They suggested the Clarence River area as first priority, although unsurprisingly, they "never really got down to the real issues of how to develop the north coast"⁴⁰; Albury-Wodonga and Wagga Wagga were both contemplated in the south west, with the latter being given second priority. Bathurst-Orange was nominated as a possible third priority.

Despite the recommendations for a north coast site Hills requested a report on Bathurst-Orange as a growth centre. Cunningham personally prepared this report late in 1970 before departing for Britain to work with a new town development corporation.

Hills presented a "Plan for State regions" in his rural policy speech delivered in Bathurst on 27 January 1971. In it he proposed Bathurst-Orange as the first region to be developed. The speech did not provide any details of the proposed development of Bathurst-Orange; that was left to the local candidate, Michael Connolly, a few days later. He was to state that the proposal would run " ... along the lines suggested in a comprehensive plan by Mr. C. J. Cunningham".⁴¹ The rushed report Cunningham had prepared on his group's possible third priority, was suddenly given the status of a comprehensive plan for development of the State's first regional development.

The most significant aspect of Cunningham's plan was a proposed new city between Bathurst and Orange. Either his cursory analysis

was ingenious or it transfixed the perceptions of all who followed, for each analysis of the growth centre which was to come, supposedly undertaken comprehensively with adequate resources, prescribed a new city in the same area.

Hills' proposals were decisive and specific but he failed to win either the Bathurst seat or the election. He was subsequently deposed as leader by Neville Wran and the 'Plan for State regions' and Cunningham's proposals for Bathurst-Orange went with him.

A Federal Labor Policy of Urban Affairs.

On 13 November 1972 Gough Whitlam presented the "men and women of Australia" with a wide range of policy initiatives, embodying all the concepts which had unfolded over the previous six years of his leadership.⁴² Responsible for the physical writing of the speech, Freudenberg reflected later that it " ... was simply one of organising a mass of material worked over for years past into a coherent framework".⁴³ A great many Labor politicians had been involved in the long development of the ideas, particularly Tom Uren on urban and regional issues, but "to the extent that Whitlam had done or initiated so much of the work himself, and to the extent that the platform now embraced a great many of his ideas, formulae and priorities, the policy speech was a highly personal document".⁴⁴

Much has been written on the rise to power of Whitlam and the Labor Party. Some specifically related to urban and regional affairs.⁴⁵ This section will emphasise only those aspects which relate to formulation of policy and were to impinge on Bathurst-Orange, particularly the roles of Whitlam, Uren and Pat Troy.

Personal interests emerge.

In his maiden speech to Parliament, on 19 March 1953, Whitlam raised many of the issues which were to be in his Policy Speech two decades later: "Commonwealth-State relations, Constitutional reform, electoral equality, housing, schools, hospitals and above all the problems of the new suburbs, of which his own electorate of Werriwa (in the western suburbs of Sydney) was the prime

example."⁴⁶ That the intervening years had not changed Whitlam's perceptions and insights concurs with Kissinger's observations.

The significant difference between the two speeches, nearly twenty years apart, was Whitlam's power to initiate action. In 1953, as a newly-elected parliamentarian, he sought to impress his colleagues with his knowledge and eloquence, with little prospect that anything would be actually done about them. Perhaps as a naive politician he may have entertained notions that immediate action would emanate from his speech, but if he did, as Howard cogently points out, politics and parliament are not necessarily the place for principles and high ideals.⁴⁷ By 1972 his position of power had changed; he could now seriously contemplate action.

To imply that Whitlam had spent the intervening years indolently waiting for the opportunity to implement twenty-year-old ideas is incorrect. Whitlam travelled throughout Australia constantly finding that his earlier perceptions were reinforced. Problems he observed in his electorate were apparent elsewhere, in both urban and rural areas.

He recalls that in the course of his travels he became aware of two particular issues in rural areas: the drift of young people to the metropolitan cities, and what seemed to him to be an unco-ordinated provision of government services. He contemplated the possibility of grouping all government services at one location, just as he had observed with the returned services and football clubs. He found that simply grouping services together would only be a partial solution; he would still need to increase the local power to make decisions. From talking to country people he became increasingly concerned "with the absurd centralisation of power at the State level."⁴⁸ With very few exceptions decisions had to be made in the metropolitan headquarters of departments. These concerns were later to express themselves in policies providing for the distribution of population among regional centres to "allow for the decentralisation of power and the regionalisation of decision-making."⁴⁹

Concentration of power was not just the relationship between rural and metropolitan areas. Even within Sydney there was a

concentration of power within the central business district, where the senior public servants worked. "Education and health services were concentrated in the eastern and northern suburbs; where the senior public servants lived".⁵⁰ It is not clear whether Whitlam had any evidence to support this perception, or whether he was just manifesting a supposition that all senior public servants lived in the upper class areas of Sydney. Whatever, he was motivated to correct what for him was an inequitable distribution.

Whitlam continued to reinforce his penchant for public correction of what he perceived to be problems. Based partly on his own experience of home purchase he judged that land development was unco-ordinated and too costly. It seemed to him "too many people operated separate components - surveyors, engineers, architects, builders, estate agents - all making their own profit."⁵¹ He had seen examples of development companies combining all the separate activities as a package deal to consumers. To him it was appropriate for government to be similarly involved. Whitlam's conception of public involvement in the housing market went far beyond the existing Federal Government's provision of war service homes.

All these perceptions reinforced his opinion that government should be involved in urban and regional affairs, and for Whitlam that meant a combination of the Federal Government and regional councils, for he was already on record as saying that he saw little purpose in retaining State Governments.⁵²

Solutions looking for problems?

Listening to politicians explain their reasons for action invites some scepticism as to the extent to which the identification of problems is predetermined by solutions they already entertain. In exercising the art of judgement in policy and action Vickers suggests three types of judgement are involved: reality judgements, value judgements and action judgements. The first relate to the appreciation of observed facts. The second to evaluative judgements of those observed facts. "The action judgement is involved in answering any questions of the form, 'What shall I do about it?' when 'it' has been defined by judgements of reality and

value."⁵³ Implied is a sequence of observation, evaluation and then action. It might be argued that Whitlam, with already formed action judgements, travelled the country observing reality only as it supported proposed action. His evaluation of the problems observed having been biased by his predisposition towards government initiated remedial action. Planners trained in rational approaches stress observation and evaluation in that order. Politicians may follow the same path initially, but observations are not evaluated impartially. The value of observed facts lies in their potential for political action, because of the politician's need to be seen as a person of action in order to win office. Weller and Grattan describe the exigencies of political life, with politicians, particularly ministers, becoming burdened with administration⁵⁴ such that the busier a politician becomes, the less attention is likely to be paid to observation and its interpretation. Action becomes paramount with facts appreciated such that they support existing views and policies.

The extent of any bias, or Whitlam's abilities in the art of judgement, would need to be the subject of separate study. The important point here is that, according to Whitlam, it had been his appreciation of social problems and distribution of power which motivated his action; or at least provided substance to a predisposition to act. Like Hughes in N.S.W., Whitlam was motivated, at least in part, by his perception of real life problems rather than abstract theories of regional development. These perceptions were linked to his political will to do something about them.

Strategies emerge.

Also like Hughes, Whitlam's ideas were forming before he had the power to do anything about them although he did acknowledge that "... principles are not worth a great deal on their own in politics, you have to be in a position to put them into practice."⁵⁵ On his election as party leader in February 1967 he set himself a six year timetable to gain the power needed.

"He hoped to get on top of the A.L.P.'s internal problems and divisions in 1967, deal with the problem of new and updated policy for the party in 1968 and 1969, and then set about winning over the electorate."⁵⁶

In formulating new policies Whitlam had a grand vision for Australia, " ... a more equal Australia, a more tolerant Australia, a more independent Australia ..." to be " ... anchored upon programmes of contemporary relevance ...".⁵⁷ According to his speech writer, the mark of Whitlam and Whitlamism has been noted for its contemporary relevance.⁵⁸

What does contemporary relevance imply? Were his policies subject to prevailing whims of fashion, buffeted by changing perceptions, pressures and ideas? Were his programs little more than 'knee-jerk' reactions to perceived problems? Some would regard contemporary relevance to be a damaging indictment. To the extent that Whitlam's political will for action was directed towards current problems as he perceived them, the implication is valid. But it also acknowledges Whitlam's need to gain electoral support for his up-to-date policies. It is the question of theoretical versus political rationality again. He needed to form and present policies which the electorate would understand, identify with, and give the Labor Party a mandate to implement. As such, he needed contemporary relevance, and urban and regional issues came within that ambit.

Urban and regional policies were important not only because of Whitlam's personal interest, or as an element in some grand vision. They were thought to be the sort of modern policies likely to attract the articulate middle class of young professionals, judged to be swinging voters. Fuller had to deal with negative electoral implications of his regional policy. Whitlam, on the other hand, was forming his policies because he perceived the electorate would engross them and he needed their votes if he was to gain power.

All these perceptions and ideas for policies were not of themselves policies. Freudenberg has noted that these "were all matters on which Labor policy was vague or silent. The task was not to alter policy but to create one".⁵⁹ Whitlam referred

to many of the issues in public and parliamentary speeches but they were unco-ordinated. It took the introduction of two further strategists for these perceptions, ideas, and political aims to be translated into policy prescriptions.

One of Whitlam's staff, Race Matthews, had been an initial link between some of the early ideas and policy. He made contact with urban concern groups, recognising their political, intellectual and organisational potential. Ideas were passed along to him " ... to be raised in federal Parliament or be used in speeches and party discussions."⁶⁰ Later it was Pat Troy of the Australian National University, a colleague of Neutze, who "sold the notion to Race Matthews that all these issues were interconnected and interrelated as part of an urban policy."⁶¹

Troy's involvement brought unity to what had been to then disparate issues. His own perceptions came from his academic work in the Urban Research Unit at A.N.U., and interest in urban development - particularly the comprehensive development of Canberra by a government agency, the National Capital Development Commission. He was also interested in the ways in which politics and government had influenced the growth and shape of cities; how urban growth affected economic and social welfare and the administration of all kinds of public servants; and how ordinary city dwellers, in their various political capacities, might have some say in the nature and direction of future growth.⁶² Troy's contribution to the Federal policy was as influential as Day's was in New South Wales.

Troy provided academic credibility, information and ideas to be incorporated in speeches. He was largely responsible for the content of the "Walter Burley Griffin Memorial Lecture", delivered by Whitlam in Canberra on 25 September 1968. This was a landmark in the emerging urban and regional policy, as for the first time it was presented to the public for scrutiny. The lecture presented a case for comprehensive co-ordination and development of the nation's metropolitan cities and regional centres through a department of urban affairs. Whitlam's lecture might be considered the federal equivalent of Hughes' blueprint presented to the N.S.W. Parliament seven years earlier.

Whitlam took every opportunity to present his views: addressing conferences, articles in professional journals, Fabian pamphlets, leading articles in newspapers; the latter concentrating on *The Australian* and *The Financial Review*, being the papers most likely to be read by the articulate middle class he was aiming at. He was still the main politician speaking on urban and regional issues. Interestingly, Uren, who was later to become so knowledgeable on the issues, suggested that Whitlam only " ... mouthed the policies, he didn't really understand them."⁶³

With no reason to conclude that Uren was pillorying Whitlam, an interesting issue is raised: how far can and should a political leader be expected to understand the material he may be presenting? As a barrister Whitlam probably felt well able to review a brief, provided by others, and present it eloquently and with conviction. But to suggest that he did not understand the issues denies Whitlam knowledge in an area in which he had long been interested. If Uren was referring to technical details of policy, his comment may be valid. It might well have been that Whitlam did not understand some of the academic and technical contributions; but was it necessary that he did? Politicians and advisors are both involved in forming policies. It may be the politician who presents the case for public scrutiny, as occurred with Whitlam. The experience in N.S.W. demonstrated that it may be the advisor who presents the case, as occurred with Day. If Whitlam was being accused of failing to understand every academic and technical nuance, Day might have been equally accused for a lack of appreciation of political elements in the case he was presenting. Public policy-making involves the inter-related input of both political and technical elements. An overemphasis of the former may reduce credibility in the policy. To emphasise only the latter may relegate the policy to political oblivion. Uren was criticising Whitlam for something which is the very essence of public policy-making: a linking of technical knowledge with political action.

The ideas which had developed to that time were presented to the electorate during the October 1969 federal election. Whitlam did not win but the swing to Labor convinced him of the appeal of his urban and regional ideas, as part of his overall policies.

Enter: Tom Uren.

In the subsequent 'shadow cabinet' reshuffle Tom Uren was appointed as spokesman for urban and regional affairs. With this appointment the strategies took on a new dimension as Uren came to the position with a different ideological point of view to Whitlam, being closely associated with the left-wing of the Labor Party. This was not a problem for Uren who considered himself a complement to his leader but it is more likely to provide the key to the reasons for his earlier criticisms. Even if the differences had been great it would have been strategically unwise to have opposed Whitlam. No minister, or "shadow" minister, is likely to discard the support of such a power base. Part of Fuller's difficulties arose from the lack of support for decentralisation by his Liberal partners and the State Premier. The Liberal Party was only superficially interested in decentralisation and left the Country Party to carry out "most of the actual political work".⁶⁴

Like Whitlam, Uren represented an electorate in the western suburbs of Sydney and was concerned about perceived social problems. He was not a grand visionary, nor did he come with abstract concepts or theories. Uren was concerned for people, especially those adversely affected by the decisions of others. He was interested in pragmatically solving people's problems, solutions in the material world. For Uren "people overcome problems, not grand plans."⁶⁵

Uren immediately began talking to people. He saw himself to be "the political instrument that really lived and worked ..." with the ideas emerging in the party.⁶⁶ By talking to individuals and groups with expertise in the field he felt he grew to understand urban issues; so much so that he came to be acknowledged as better informed on urban issues than anyone else in Federal Parliament.

There was a ready response by Uren to the continued involvement of Troy. He had known Troy's father as a "great trade union leader and felt he had a strong personal and ideological affinity with the son."⁶⁷ Uren sought the advice of Troy and his colleagues, Neutze and Harrison, at the Urban Research Unit.

He also sought advice from John (later Sir John) Overall the head of Canberra's successful National Capital Development Commission. Troy's participation increased as he began writing directly for Uren.

Speeches were a fundamental part of the strategy. In almost every case a speech incorporating a new idea was first given in Sydney, then reworked and delivered on other occasions throughout the country. Sydney would have had obvious attractions for Whitlam and Uren: it was the largest metropolitan city, many of the perceived urban problems were manifest there, and it was the electoral base of both politicians. As speeches were delivered reactions were carefully monitored and adjustments made.

This approach was more than a simplistic production of populist policies without substance. It had many of the marks of Friedmann's transactive planning approach.⁶⁸ Uren was drawing on Troy's knowledge and technical expertise, integrating it with his own growing personal understanding. Troy was responding by contributing what Friedmann calls processed knowledge: concepts, theory, analysis, new perspectives, systematic search procedures. It was more than the client, Uren, consulting the planner, Troy; it was a process of mutual learning.

Uren was also a transactive link between "urban concern groups" and the forming policy. He attended meetings and conferences, talking, listening, arguing, discussing, sharing ideas, and most of all, learning. His approach was that of dialogue.

No one group was the sole source of Uren's ideas or provided the final policy, nor was one side of the political spectrum. Some members of the Australian Institute of Urban Studies felt they had been responsible for Labor's policy. There is an element of wishful thinking in this claim. The Institute, formed in the late 1960's, sought to bring together the "best brains" to research and debate urban problems. In a series of task force studies it dealt with the cost of producing urban land, and strategies for new cities in Australia. Both these issues were of interest to Uren, as was the general work of the Institute, so he participated in some of its discussions. That the final

Labor policy reflected many of the matters expressed by the Institute is insufficient justification to claim that it "wrote the platform".⁶⁹ It is more an evidence of just how widely held was the accepted wisdom of the time. Rather than groups influencing Uren, it may well have been that it was Uren, with his eclectic transactive approach, who was responsible for disseminating his "accepted wisdom" among groups, and it had been this which prevailed.

Growth Centres and Albury-Wodonga.

Troy recalls that "along the way growth centres were picked up".⁷⁰ Whitlam and Uren began talking about new cities in both the metropolitan and rural areas. They were included because they fitted into Labor's perceptions. Regional growth centres would facilitate decentralisation of service and administrative functions of government. They would also provide a structure for devolution of power from metropolitan cities. If one of these growth centres was chosen somewhere between Sydney and Melbourne it would have an added benefit of helping to justify upgrading transport links between Australia's two principal cities.

Just as Fuller had done, growth centres were adopted because the concept was perceived to provide a suitable means of achieving the policy ends. There was no deductive reasoning from a theory of growth poles; they were a borrowed prescriptive program.

Whitlam eventually proposed a new city between Canberra and Melbourne. He chose Albury-Wodonga, contrary to his advisors who favoured Wagga Wagga. Whitlam maintained that he had been interested in Albury-Wodonga for some time which he regarded was on the biggest railway, biggest road, and biggest river in Australia. He considered N.S.W. Governments had, over many years, tried to build up Wagga Wagga to the detriment of Albury and he saw selection as an opportunity to redress the imbalance. In reality these may have been incidental to the selection; nothing more than retrospective justification. Some of his advisors maintained the real attraction of Albury-Wodonga was in its ability to confront constitutional issues. Without elaborating the legal details, Whitlam and the Labor Party had long entertained notions of reforming the Australian Constitution, particularly Section 92 which was considered to be a stumbling block to Labor

dreams of democratic socialism.⁷¹ The selection of Albury-Wodonga, two cities straddling State borders, would challenge the perceived inflexibility of the Constitution. The importance here is not whether these constitutional challenges would have eventuated, but that selection of a growth centre was made for essentially political reasons.

The public nomination of Albury-Wodonga brought Labor's proposals out of the abstract. Here was a real live centre being told it would be the subject of government action. Two further cities were contemplated for the eastern coast of Australia: one between Sydney and Brisbane, the other between Brisbane and Townsville. These were alluded to as possibilities but nomination was not publicly made.

A formal urban and regional policy.

At the 1971 Conference of the Labor Party an urban and regional policy was adopted and included in the platform for the forthcoming election. This comprehensive policy of action included provision for a powerful Department of Housing, Urban Affairs and Regional Development. The rapport that had developed between Uren and Troy was such that there were no doubts that Troy should head the new department once Labor came to power.

Learning and formulation had come to an end, now was the time to sell the formal policy to the electorate before the election.

Before proceeding to the catalytic effects of the 1972 federal election, it is necessary to introduce a further strategist. During 1971 John Mant, a N.S.W. member of the Labor Party, became more directly associated with Uren, also as an advisor. With a background of law practice in Sydney he had undertaken a planning course at Sydney University. He had been interested in planning but the course only increased his criticism for what he felt was a lack of concern for the administrative and management mechanisms of planning.⁷² Most planning, at least at the State level, seemed to emphasise physical planning in an attitude of "draw first - think later, rather than the reverse".⁷³ He was "not really interested in simple-minded physical planning or convinced of new cities as a panacea".⁷⁴ To Mant any solutions to metropolitan growth problems involved fundamental issues in

Australian society, such as the role of immigration as a source of that growth. In his opinion federal governments had for too long fostered extensive immigration programs but left State governments to cope with the large increases in population. He was not convinced that physical prescriptions, no matter how comprehensive or co-ordinated, would provide anything but cosmetic relief. Attention was needed to the effects on cities of national economic and social policies. Mant's comprehensiveness traversed all functions of government which affected life in cities.

Contrary to his doubts about planmaking he joined the National Capital Development Commission in 1971, partly to learn something of the Commission's operations, but more importantly it meant he would be closer to the upsurge of action he confidently predicted would follow the anticipated Labor win in 1972. During this time Mant wrote of urban and regional issues on Uren's behalf, particularly a fortnightly column in a Sydney metropolitan daily.

The stage has now been set for the drama of 1972.

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