SWRK4005 - Social Policy Practice in Social Work
Course Outline

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Course Coordinator: Debbie Plath
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Consultation hours: Thursdays 11.00 – 1.00pm

Unit Weighting: 10 Units
Teaching Methods: Experience Based Learning
Workshops
Self Directed Learning
Student Projects

Brief Course Description
This course examines historical, social, cultural and political processes which influence the development of policy governing the provision of social and community services. Students will develop an understanding of government policy and legislation as it relates to the establishment and maintenance of services and will be expected to demonstrate skills in policy practice including the use of research to lobby for and inform policy change.

Contact Hours
Workshops for 3 Hours per Week for the Full Term

Learning Materials/Texts
A list of references and resources is provided in this course outline. Students are expected to locate and read additional relevant literature to supplement this material.

Course Outline Issued and Correct as at: Week 1, Semester 1 - 2008
CTS Download Date: 1st February, 2008
Course Objectives
Students will:

1. Explore the policy making process, how history informs current policy, the structure within which social policy is located, and how to participate in the policy making/changing process.

2. Be able to critically analyse social policy and understand how it is developed, shaped and implemented by a range of stakeholders.

3. Understand and engage in the political processes of policy development.

4. Understand how social workers practise in the domain of social services, policy development and influencing the political process in relation to shaping of social policy.

5. Use research to inform policy and policy change.

6. Develop skills and networks to enable effective social policy.

Course Content
Topics include:

1. Historical, social, cultural and political influences on social and community services.

2. Political processes of social policy development

3. Analysing social policy


5. Ways in which policy and services address inequality.

6. Social policy practice skills

7. Links between research and social policy development

8. Links between community work and social policy development

Assessment Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Items</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Assignment 1</td>
<td>Video + 1000 word paper - worth 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Assignment 2</td>
<td>2000 word paper – worth 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group task</td>
<td>Satisfactory/unsatisfactory result.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Students must successfully complete these assessment items to pass the course. Students will be given advice and assistance to meet the criteria for these tasks as published in the course outline.

Assumed Knowledge
Completed SWRK2001, SWRK2002, SWRK 2004, SWRK3001, SWRK3002, SWRK3003, SWRK3005 and SPSW3070

Callaghan Campus Timetable
SWRK4005
Social Policy Practice in Social Work
Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science
Semester 1 - 2008
Workshop: Thursdays 9:00 - 12:00 W202, W238, W243 Meet in W202
Plagiarism

University policy prohibits students plagiarising any material under any circumstances. A student plagiarises if he or she presents the thoughts or works of another as one's own. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it may include:

- copying or paraphrasing material from any source without due acknowledgment;
- using another’s ideas without due acknowledgment;
- working with others without permission and presenting the resulting work as though it was completed independently.

Plagiarism is not only related to written works, but also to material such as data, images, music, formulae, websites and computer programs.

Aiding another student to plagiarise is also a violation of the Plagiarism Policy and may invoke a penalty.

For further information on the University policy on plagiarism, please refer to the Policy on Student Academic Integrity at the following link -


The University has established a software plagiarism detection system called Turnitin. When you submit assessment items please be aware that for the purpose of assessing any assessment item the University may -

- Reproduce this assessment item and provide a copy to another member of the University; and/or
- Communicate a copy of this assessment item to a plagiarism checking service (which may then retain a copy of the item on its database for the purpose of future plagiarism checking).
- Submit the assessment item to other forms of plagiarism checking

Written Assessment Items

Students may be required to provide written assessment items in electronic form as well as hard copy.

Extension of Time for Assessment Items, Deferred Assessment and Special Consideration for Assessment Items or Formal Written Examinations

Students are required to submit assessment items by the due date, as advised in the Course Outline, unless the Course Coordinator approves an extension of time for submission of the item. University policy is that an assessment item submitted after the due date, without an approved extension, will be penalised.

Any student:

1. who is applying for an extension of time for submission of an assessment item on the basis of medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment; or

2. whose attendance at or performance in an assessment item or formal written examination has been or will be affected by medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment;

must report the circumstances, with supporting documentation, to the appropriate officer following the instructions provided in the Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Procedure - Policy 000641.

Note: different procedures apply for minor and major assessment tasks.

Please go to the Policy at http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html, for further information, particularly for information on the options available to you.
Students should be aware of the following important deadlines:

- **Requests for Special Consideration** must be lodged no later than 3 working days after the due date of submission or examination.

- **Requests for Extensions of Time on Assessment Items** must be lodged no later than the due date of the item.

- **Requests for Rescheduling Exams** must be received in the Student Hub no later than ten working days prior to the first date of the examination period

Your application may not be accepted if it is received after the deadline. Students who are unable to meet the above deadlines due to extenuating circumstances should speak to their Program Officer in the first instance.

**Changing your Enrolment**

The last dates to withdraw without financial or academic penalty (called the HECS Census Dates) are:

For semester 1 courses: 31 March 2008

Students may withdraw from a course without academic penalty on or before the last day of semester. Any withdrawal from a course after the last day of semester will result in a fail grade.

Students cannot enrol in a new course after the second week of semester/trimester, except under exceptional circumstances. Any application to add a course after the second week of semester/trimester must be on the appropriate form, and should be discussed with staff in the Student Hubs.

To check or change your enrolment online, please refer to myHub - Self Service for Students

https://myhub.newcastle.edu.au

**Faculty Information**

**Student Hubs** are a one-stop shop for the delivery of student related services and are the first point of contact for students on campus.

The four Student Hubs are located at:

**Callaghan campus**

- Shortland Hub: Level 3, Shortland Union Building
- Hunter Hub: Student Services Centre, Hunter side of campus

**City Precinct**

- City Hub & Information Common: University House, ground floor in combination with an Information Common for the City Precinct

**Ourimbah campus**

- Ourimbah Hub: Administration Building

**Faculty websites**

**Faculty of Education and Arts**

http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/education-arts/
Contact details

Callaghan, City and Port Macquarie
Phone: 02 4921 5000
Email: EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au

The Dean of Students
Resolution Precinct
Phone: 02 4921 5806
Fax: 02 4921 7151
Email: resolutionprecinct@newcastle.edu.au

Various services are offered by the University Student Support Unit:

Alteration of this Course Outline

No change to this course outline will be permitted after the end of the second week of the term except in exceptional circumstances and with Head of School approval. Students will be notified in advance of any approved changes to this outline.

Web Address for Rules Governing Undergraduate Academic Awards

STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR CHRONIC ILLNESS

The University is committed to providing a range of support services for students with a disability or chronic illness.

If you have a disability or chronic illness which you feel may impact on your studies, please feel free to discuss your support needs with your lecturer or course coordinator.

Disability Support may also be provided by the Student Support Service (Disability). Students must be registered to receive this type of support. To register please contact the Disability Liaison Officer on 02 4921 5766, or via email at: student-disability@newcastle.edu.au

As some forms of support can take a few weeks to implement it is extremely important that you discuss your needs with your lecturer, course coordinator or Student Support Service staff at the beginning of each semester.

For more information related to confidentiality and documentation please visit the Student Support Service (Disability) website at: www.newcastle.edu.au/services/disability

Studentmail and Blackboard: Refer - www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/
This course uses the online Blackboard site and studentmail to contact students, so you are advised to keep your email accounts within the quota to ensure you receive essential messages. To receive an expedited response to queries, post questions on the Blackboard discussion forum if there is one, or if emailing staff directly use the course code in the subject line of your email. Students are advised to check their studentmail and the course Blackboard site on a weekly basis.

Student Representatives
Student Representatives are a major channel of communication between students and the School. Contact details of Student Representatives can be found on School websites.
Refer - 'Information for Student Representatives on Committees' available @

School of Humanities & Social Science
**Student Communication**
Students should discuss any course related matters with their Tutor, Lecturer, or Course Coordinator in the first instance and then the relevant Discipline or Program Convenor. If this proves unsatisfactory, they should then contact the Head of School if required. Contact details can be found on the School website.

**Essential Online Information for Students**
Information on Class and Exam Timetables, Tutorial Online Registration, Learning Support, Campus Maps, Careers information, Counselling, the Health Service and a range of free Student Support Services is available @ [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/currentstudents/index.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/currentstudents/index.html)

**Mandatory Program Component**
This course is a mandatory program component of the Bachelor of Social Work. Refer - [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000647.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000647.html) (section 2).

**Essential Criteria in Assessment**
This course contains compulsory components or assessment items that must be satisfactorily completed in order for a student to receive a pass mark or better for the course. These essential elements are described in the CTS and listed above under “assessment items”. Details on the assessment items are provided below in this course outline.

**Group Work**
The assessment in this course involves group work. For information on university policy on group work refer to: [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000650.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000650.html)

All group assessment tasks in this course are graded as satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Groups that do not obtain a satisfactory result will be required to submit additional work as directed by the course coordinator.

The ability to work effectively in small groups and teams is an important aspect of professional social work practice. Small group assessment tasks are thus a fundamental component of your learning throughout the Bachelor of Social Work program.

Some class time will be set aside for small groups to work on the allocated group tasks. Groups may, however, need to organise additional group meeting times outside of class times. A group discussion board will also be established for each small group on the online Blackboard site.

Groups are expected to work cooperatively in deciding how to approach the task and how work will be distributed and managed between group members. Group members are to take responsibility for developing strategies for managing group processes and addressing any conflict that may arise in the group. The Lecturer and course coordinator will be available to discuss any concerns in relation to the content or processes entailed in the group task.

Details on the requirements for the group task are provided below in this course outline.
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT PRESENTATION AND SUBMISSION DETAILS

Students are required to submit assessment items by the due date. Late assignments will be subject to the penalties described below.

Hard copy submission:

- **Type your assignments:** All work must be typewritten in 11 or 12 point black font. Leave a wide margin for marker’s comments, use 1.5 or double spacing, and include page numbers.
- **Word length:** The word limit of all assessment items should be strictly followed – 10% above or below is acceptable, otherwise penalties may apply.
- **Proof read your work** because spelling, grammatical and referencing mistakes will be penalised.
- **Staple the pages** of your assignment together (do not use pins or paper clips).
- **University Assessment Item Coversheet:** All assignments must be submitted with the University coversheet available at: [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/forms/](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/forms/)
- **By arrangement with the relevant lecturer, assignments may be submitted at any Student Hub located at:**
  - Level 3, Shortland Union, Callaghan
  - Level 2, Student Services Centre, Callaghan
  - Ground Floor, University House, City
  - Opposite Café Central, Ourimbah
- **Date-stamping assignments:** All students must date-stamp their own assignments using the machine provided at each Student Hub. If mailing an assignment, this should be address to the relevant School. Mailed assignments are accepted from the date posted, confirmed by a Post Office date-stamp; they are also date-stamped upon receipt by Schools.
- **Do not fax or email assignments:** Only hard copies of assignments will be considered for assessment. Inability to physically submit a hard copy of an assignment by the deadline due to other commitments or distance from campus is an unacceptable excuse.
- **Keep a copy of all assignments:** It is the student’s responsibility to produce a copy of their work if the assignment goes astray after submission. Students are advised to keep updated back-ups in electronic and hard copy formats.

**Online copy submission to Turnitin**

In addition to hard copy submission, students are required to submit an electronic version of the following assignments to Turnitin via the course Blackboard website available @ [www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/](http://www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/)

- Individual Assignment 1
- Individual Assignment 2

Prior to final submission, all students have the opportunity to submit one draft of their assignment to Turnitin to self-check their referencing. Assignments will not be marked until both hard copy and online versions have been submitted. Marks may be deducted for late submission of either version.

**Penalties for Late Assignments**

Assignments submitted after the due date, without an approved extension of time will be penalised by the **reduction of 5% of the possible maximum mark** for the assessment item for each day or part day that the item is late. Weekends count as one day in determining the penalty. Assessment items submitted **more than ten days** after the due date will be awarded **zero marks**.


Special Circumstances

Students wishing to apply for Special Circumstances or Extension of Time should apply online. Refer - ‘Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items - Procedure 000641’ available @ http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html

No Assignment Re-submission

Students who have failed an assignment are not permitted to revise and resubmit it in this course. However, students are always welcome to contact their Tutor, Lecturer or Course Coordinator to make a consultation time to receive individual feedback on their assignments.

Re-marks & Moderations

A student may only request a re-mark of an assessment item before the final result - in the course to which the assessment item contributes - has been posted. If a final result in the course has been posted, the student must apply under ‘Procedures for Appeal Against a Final Result’.

Refer - http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/forms/

Students concerned at the mark given for an assessment item should first discuss the matter with the Course Coordinator. If subsequently requesting a re-mark, students should be aware that as a result of a re-mark the original mark may be increased or reduced. The case for a re-mark should be outlined in writing and submitted to the Course Coordinator, who determines whether a re-mark should be granted, taking into consideration all of the following:

1. whether the student had discussed the matter with the Course Coordinator
2. the case put forward by the student for a re-mark
3. the weighting of the assessment item and its potential impact on the student’s final mark or grade
4. the time required to undertake the re-mark
5. the number of original markers, that is,
   a) whether there was a single marker, or
   b) if there was more than one marker whether there was agreement or disagreement on the marks awarded.

A re-mark may also be initiated at the request of the Course Coordinator, the Head of School, the School Assessment Committee, the Faculty Progress and Appeals Committee or the Pro Vice-Chancellor. Re-marks may be undertaken by:

1. the original marker; or
2. an alternate internal marker; or
3. an alternate external marker (usually as a consequence of a grievance procedure).

Moderation may be applied when there is a major discrepancy (or perceived discrepancy) between:

1. the content of the course as against the content or nature of the assessment item(s)
2. the content or nature of the assessment item(s) as against those set out in the Course Outline
3. the marks given by a particular examiner and those given by another in the same course
4. the results in a particular course and the results in other courses undertaken by the same students.

For further detail on this University policy refer - ‘Re-marks and Moderations - Procedure 000769’ available @ http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000769.html

Return of Assignments

Students can collect assignments from a nominated Student Hub during office hours. Students will be informed during class which Hub to go to and the earliest date that assignments will be available for collection. Students must present their student identification card to collect their assignment.

Preferred Referencing Style

In this course, it is recommended that you use the use the Harvard in-text referencing system (similar to the APA system) for referencing sources of information used in assignments. Inadequate or incorrect reference to the work of others may be viewed as plagiarism and result in reduced marks or failure.

An in-text citation names the author of the source, gives the date of publication, and for a direct quote includes a page number, in parentheses. At the end of the paper, a list of references provides publication information about the source; the list is alphabetised by authors’ last names (or by titles for works without authors). For further information on referencing and general study skills refer - ‘Infoskills’ available @ www.newcastle.edu.au/services/library/tutorials/infoskills/index.html

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<tr>
<th>Grading guide</th>
<th>Fail (FF)</th>
<th>Pass (P)</th>
<th>Credit (C)</th>
<th>Distinction (D)</th>
<th>High Distinction (HD)</th>
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<tr>
<td>49% or less</td>
<td>An unacceptable effort, including non-completion. The student has not understood the basic principles of the subject matter and/or has been unable to express their understanding in a comprehensible way. Deficient in terms of answering the question, research, referencing and correct presentation (spelling, grammar etc). May include extensive plagiarism.</td>
<td>The work demonstrates a reasonable attempt to answer the question, shows some grasp of the basic principles of the subject matter and a basic knowledge of the required readings, is comprehensible, accurate and adequately referenced.</td>
<td>The work demonstrates a clear understanding of the question, a capacity to integrate research into the discussion, and a critical appreciation of a range of different theoretical perspectives. A deficiency in any of the above may be compensated by evidence of independent thought. The work is coherent and accurate.</td>
<td>Evidence of substantial additional reading and/or research, and evidence of the ability to generalise from the theoretical content to develop an argument in an informed and original manner. The work is well organised, clearly expressed and shows a capacity for critical analysis.</td>
<td>All of the above, plus a thorough understanding of the subject matter based on substantial additional reading and/or research. The work shows a high level of independent thought, presents informed insightful discussion of the topic, particularly the theoretical issues involved, and demonstrates a well-developed capacity for critical analysis.</td>
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ASSESSMENT TASKS

Group Task

This is a ‘social policy watch’ activity. The purpose is to gather, critique, and present information about a particular social policy area.

Part 1 – preparation: During the weeks preceding the presentation the group should collect and discuss information from:
- Media materials (both print and broadcast) – websites can be used to source these reports. Cartoons are also a great source of commentary on policy and politics.
- Political party and government materials – websites, media releases, press statements, interviews, etc.
- Advocacy and consumer groups – press statements, interviews, websites.
- Academic sources – journal articles on the policy area, social policy texts, research on policy and related practice areas.

Part 2 – presentation: Using the information collected, prepare a presentation that will assist other students’ learning about this social policy area. Your presentation should be as creative as possible with a learning focus and should include:
- Key points about the historical, social, cultural and political context of this policy
- The way in which media and other sources of information have impacted this policy area
- Implications of current policy for social work practice.

Part 3 – summary / handout: Prepare a handout with an overview of the key points and supporting information in your presentation. This should be used as an additional learning reference for others. The handout should include helpful websites and be appropriately referenced.

Group composition

Groups and social policy areas will be discussed and determined during Week 1 or 2.

Criteria for assessment

- Demonstrated understanding of the social policy area you have chosen
- Capacity to gather and critique information about social policy
- Ability to consider social policy in the context of social work practice
- Demonstrated ability to present in a clear, concise and engaging manner using creative learning methods
- Demonstrated capacity to present summary and handout documents in a cohesive, clear and informed manner.
- Demonstrated capacity to draw on and appropriately reference relevant literature and source material to support presentations and discussion.

Due Date: Presentations will be held on 15, 22 & 29 May 2008 (Weeks 11, 12 & 13).

There will be 2 presentations each week. During the second half of the final day presentations will be discussed and feedback given.

Grading: Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory

Length: Presentation – 30 minutes

Questions and discussion after presentation – 15 minutes

Summary / Handout – 1 page
Individual Assignment 1

This assignment requires you to develop a video about a Government policy affecting social and community services that you could upload onto youtube.com (it is not a requirement to upload but you may wish to do that as well as submit the video to the lecturer). The purpose of the video is to raise awareness about the policy, its impact on the community, and to encourage action to redress the social and community impacts of the policy.

You will need to draw on a range of original sources including:
- Political party and government materials – websites, media releases, press statements, interviews, etc.
- Advocacy and consumer groups – press statements, interviews, websites.
- Media materials (both print and broadcast) – websites can be used to source these reports. Cartoons are also a great source of commentary on policy and politics.
- Academic sources – journal articles on the policy area, social policy texts, research on policy and related practice areas.

Part 1 – the video: The video should contain key messages (no more than seven) for the viewer. It should include:
- A catchphrase that captures the essence of your key messages
- The context and nature of the policy
- The intention of the policy
- Implications of the policy in terms of social justice
- Ways in which viewers can influence changes in this policy area.

Choose a creative way of presenting the video that will catch the attention of the viewer and encourage them to act.

Part 2 – overview: Prepare an overview of the video. It should include:
- Reasons for selecting the particular policy area
- How the key messages were determined and what informed them
- The intention of the overall message.

You should include websites and other sources and appropriately reference the document.

Submission method:
The way in which the videos will be submitted to the lecturer will be discussed prior to the due date.

Criteria for assessment
- Demonstrated ability to capture the intent and impact of policy creatively and through key messages
- Demonstrated capacity to assess a policy initiative from a social justice perspective
- Demonstrated ability to present audio visual and written information in a cohesive, clear, informed and engaging manner.
- Demonstrated capacity to present a document in a cohesive, clear and informed manner.
- Demonstrated capacity to draw on and appropriately reference relevant literature and source material to support presentations and discussion.

Due Date: Thursday 27th March 2008 (week 6)
Length: Video duration: 5-7 minutes
          Overview and background of key messages: 1,000 words (plus list of references/ sources)
Value: 50%
Individual Assignment 2

For this assignment you are a member of a panel of expert advisers on a particular social policy area for the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) National Social Policy Committee (NSPC).

The purpose of the Panel of Expert Advisers will be to assist the AASW in responding swiftly and competently to policy issues as they arise in various policy forums and media… this mechanism will raise the public profile of the AASW and increase its ability to respond in a timely manner to social policy issues and debates … (AASW, NSPC Call for Expressions of Interest for Expert Advisers, 2007)

You can choose the policy area you will focus on. Some of the areas identified by the AASW NSPC include (but are not limited to): child protection, family policy, welfare recipients, ethnic and culturally diverse communities, domestic violence, mental health, aged care, disability, indigenous affairs, housing affordability and homelessness.

Your task is to prepare a draft Position Paper for the AASW on the social policy area you have chosen. The audience for your paper is the AASW Board and members. The paper would in turn be used to inform briefings papers, interviews, media releases, and other AASW planning and responses to social policy issues.

You will need to draw on a range of original sources including:

- Political party and government materials – websites, media releases, press statements, interviews, etc.
- Advocacy and consumer groups – press statements, interviews, websites.
- Media materials (both print and broadcast) – websites can be used to source these reports. Cartoons are also a great source of commentary on policy and politics.
- Academic sources – journal articles on the policy area, social policy texts, research on policy and related practice areas.

Your Position Paper should include:

Part 1 – background & overview:
- Historical, political, social and cultural context of the policy area.
- Relevant legislation, regulations, policy, issues, trends, and community involvement in policy development.
- Actual or potential impacts on the community from a social justice perspective.
- Potential impacts on social workers and their practice at an agency level (both within the agency responsible for implementation and in other agencies).

Part 2 – position & strategies:
- A range of suggested reforms or changes to policy and related practices to address some or all of the issues identified in the paper.
- Strategies the AASW could use to influence reform and change in this field. This should not be restricted to letters and papers submitted to media, other agencies and Governments. Consideration should be given to a mixed range of creative strategies that you consider would increase the impact of the AASW on social policy issues and debates, and ways in which social workers and the community could be engaged in processes to adopt these strategies.

Criteria for assessment
- Demonstrated capacity to outline and analyse social policy in context.
- Demonstrated capacity to analyse social policy in terms of the issue, aims, target, values, philosophy, actions, and stakeholder perspectives.
- Demonstrated capacity to assess a policy from a social justice perspective.
- Demonstrated capacity to consider a range of strategies to impact policy reform and change.
- Demonstrated capacity to present a paper in a cohesive, clear and informed manner.
- Demonstrated capacity to draw on and appropriately reference relevant literature and source material to support discussion.

Due Date: Thursday 5th June 2008 (week 14)
Length: 2,000 words (Part 1 & 2: 1,000 words each)
Value: 50%
REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

This list is provided as a starting point. You are expected to locate literature and policy material relevant to your chosen areas for the three assessment tasks.


**Journals** (examples)
*Australian Social Work*
*Just Policy*
*Social Policy Research Centre Newsletter*
*The Australian Journal of Social Issues*

**Websites** (examples)
Australian Association of Social Workers  http://www.aasw.asn.au
Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS)  http://www.acoss.org.au
Australian Policy Online  http://www.apo.org.au
Social Policy Research Centre  http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au