

# Chapter 11

## SOCIAL WELFARE

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# Chapter 11

## SOCIAL WELFARE

**The main objective of the Australian social welfare system is the alleviation of poverty. Support for families with children is also provided in accordance with the high value Australians have traditionally placed on family formation and child rearing.**

In pursuing these objectives, certain major principles have long been embodied in the system:

- the community as a whole accepts responsibility for the provision of income support to those individuals and families who are unable (or are not expected) to support themselves;
- payments are provided to such people as a right;
- payments are targeted towards particular categories of people in need (for example, to the aged, sole parents, the sick and unemployed) and, generally, according to people's means; and
- support for children is provided in recognition that, at any level of income, people with children have greater needs than do those without.

Historically, the Federal Government became responsible for income security at a time when the only people seen to be 'in need' were those unable, as a result of age, widowhood or handicap, to support themselves. The State Government's role has been one of child welfare, in areas of protection, neglect and care.

In the absence of a commonly accepted framework for describing and analysing 'social welfare' in its totality, two strands are promi-

nent. A large component of 'social welfare' consists of cash payments to people in need. Although perhaps not all-embracing nor definitive, the term income maintenance can be used to encompass all regular cash benefits paid to individuals.

An equally large, if not larger, component of 'social welfare' consists of a vast array of direct services provided by governments, and non-government agencies, often with some funding provided by government.

Together, income maintenance payments and direct services to individuals provide a 'social welfare' system which is a complex net of activities providing communal assistance to individuals that in one way or another involves almost all members of our society.

### 11.1 INCOME MAINTENANCE

**Income maintenance payments to individuals are mostly provided by the Federal Government. During 1989-90, \$20 137 million was expended in Australia on social security and welfare by the Commonwealth.**

In 1989-90, \$623 million was paid to Tasmanians in the form of pensions, benefits and allowances.

### 11.1.1 Pensions

The introduction of a pension for aged persons in 1909 began Australia's national provision of social security payments. Since then a number of other regular income payments have been introduced to meet specific cases of perceived need: for people incapacitated for work, for spouses of age or invalid pensioners, for sole

#### 11.1 DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SECURITY PENSIONS PAID, TASMANIA, 1989-90

| Pension type                   | Number of recipients at 30 June 1990 | Expenditure (\$m) |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Age (a)                        | 38 839                               | 230.8             |
| Invalid (a)                    | 12 532                               | 78.4              |
| Sole parents                   | 8 401                                | 77.5              |
| Widows (b)                     | 1 902                                | 13.6              |
| Sheltered employment allowance | 509                                  | 3.8               |
| Total                          | 62 183                               | 404.1             |

(a) Includes wife and carers' pension. (b) Widows' class A pension and supporting parents' benefit were abolished from March 1989 and replaced by sole parents' pension. Widows' class B pension is gradually being phased out. It ceased to be granted after 1 July 1987 except in very limited circumstances.

(Source: Department of Social Security Annual Report).

supporting parents. In addition, disability and service pensions have been provided for returned servicemen and women and their dependants.

#### 11.2 AGE PENSIONS, TASMANIA

| Year | Number at 30 June | Financial year expenditure (\$m) |
|------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1985 | 39 782            | 165.2                            |
| 1987 | 38 743            | 180.3                            |
| 1988 | 38 434            | 198.0                            |
| 1989 | 38 557            | 214.9                            |
| 1990 | 38 839            | 230.8                            |

(Source: Department of Social Security Annual Report).

### Age Pensions

Women aged 60 and over and men aged 65 and over are eligible for the age pension subject to income and assets conditions and residential qualifications.

During the financial year 1989-90, \$231 million was paid to aged people in Tasmania. At June 1989, 73 702 people aged 60 or over, of whom 53 per cent were age pensioners, comprised 16 per cent of the State's population.

By the year 2001 an estimated 82 600 persons or 22 per cent of Tasmanians will be aged 60 or over. At the same rate of pension claim, the number of pensioners will increase to an estimated 44 000.

#### 11.3 SERVICE PENSIONS, TASMANIA, JUNE 1990

| War service                        | Number of pensions |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1914-18 war                        | 64                 |
| 1939-45 war                        | 13 433             |
| Korea and Malaya                   | 256                |
| British Commonwealth Allied Forces | 1 985              |
| Special overseas service           | 692                |
| Miscellaneous                      | 207                |
| Total                              | 141                |
| Total                              | 16 778             |

(Source: Department of Veterans' Affairs Annual Report).

### Service Pensions

In addition to the Social Security age pension, the Department of Veterans' Affairs provides service pensions to male veterans aged 60 years and over and female veterans aged 55 and over. In 16 years the number of service pensions has

#### 11.4 SERVICE PENSIONERS, TASMANIA

| Year | Number at 30 June | Financial year expenditure (\$m) |
|------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1986 | 15 895            | 63.5                             |
| 1987 | 15 970            | 68.8                             |
| 1988 | 15 975            | 69.1                             |
| 1989 | 16 162            | 80.8                             |
| 1990 | 16 778            | 91.2                             |

(Source: Department of Veterans' Affairs Annual Report).

trebled. In that time the composition of the recipients has undergone considerable change due principally to a trebling in the number of World War II veterans reaching the age of eligibility.

### **Invalid and Disability Pensions**

An invalid pension is payable to people over 16 years of age who are permanently incapacitated for work (to the extent of at least 85 per cent), or are permanently blind. At 30 June 1990, 12 532 persons were receiving this pension.

#### **11.5 INVALID AND DISABILITY PENSIONS, TASMANIA**

| Year | <i>Invalid pension (a)</i> |   |
|------|----------------------------|---|
|      | <i>Number at 30 June</i>   | <i>Financial year expenditure (\$m)</i> |
| 1985 | 9 820                      | 44.0                                    |
| 1987 | 10 904                     | 53.9                                    |
| 1988 | 11 347                     | 62.5                                    |
| 1989 | 11 930                     | 73.7                                    |
| 1990 | 12 532                     | 78.4                                    |

  

| Year | <i>Disability pension (b)</i> |   |
|------|-------------------------------|---|
|      | <i>Number at 30 June</i>      | <i>Financial year expenditure (\$m)</i> |
| 1985 | 16 743                        | 38.8                                    |
| 1987 | 15 337                        | 31.8                                    |
| 1988 | 15 121                        | 35.2                                    |
| 1989 | 15 164                        | 54.6                                    |
| 1990 | 15 771                        | 61.6                                    |

(a) Includes spouse carer pensioners from 1983. (b) Includes wives and widows.

(Source: *Departments of Social Security and Veterans' Affairs Annual Reports*).

In addition to the invalid pension provided through the Department of Social Security, the Department of Veterans' Affairs provides a similar pension to veterans as compensation for incapacity accepted as war-service related. At 30 June 1990, 15 771 disability pensions were being paid and expenditure for the year amounted to \$61.6 million.

An allowance equal to the invalid pension can be paid to people who work in approved sheltered employment services, if they are otherwise eligible for the invalid pension. During 1989-90, \$3.8 million were paid as sheltered employment allowances and at 30 June, 509 persons were receiving the allowance.

### **Widows' Class B Pension**

A widows' class B pension is basically payable to a woman aged 50 years and over with no children at 1 July 1987 who is or subsequently becomes a widow.

Widows' class B pension is gradually being phased out. It ceased to be granted after 1 July 1987 except in very limited circumstances.

At 30 June 1990 there were 1902 widow class B pensioners.

### **Sole Parents' Pension**

A sole parents' pension is payable to a person (with at least one qualifying child) who is:

- an unmarried parent;
- a separated husband or wife or a separated de facto husband or wife;
- a parent whose spouse or de facto spouse has been imprisoned for at least 14 days;
- a person left caring for a child and unable to live with his/her spouse in the matrimonial home because of the spouse's illness or infirmity which is likely to continue indefinitely, and prevents the spouse from caring for the child;
- a person whose de facto spouse has died;
- a widow or a widower; or
- a divorced person.

It is not payable where the person is living in a de facto or marriage-like relationship.

At 30 June 1989 there were 7941 sole parent pensioners.

### **11.1.2 Unemployment and Sickness Benefits**

#### ***Unemployment Benefit and Job Search Allowance***

With rising unemployment during the 1970s and 80s, the number of people receiving benefits has risen considerably, from 12 929 in June 1981 to 17 839 during 1989-90.

As at 1 July 1991, Unemployment Benefit in general was replaced by Job Search Allowance/Newstart Allowance. Job Search Allowance is paid to people aged 16-64 (male), 16-59

### 11.6 UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS, TASMANIA (a)

| Year | Number of recipients at 30 June | Financial year expenditure (\$m) |
|------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1979 | 10 420                          | 28.6                             |
| 1981 | 12 929                          | 34.7                             |
| 1983 | 20 355                          | 78.3                             |
| 1985 | 18 870                          | 96.9                             |
| 1987 | 18 880                          | 109.5                            |
| 1988 | 18 281                          | 118.2                            |
| 1989 | 17 463                          | 122.9                            |

(a) Includes job search allowance from 1988.

(Source: Department of Social Security Annual Report).

(female) and Newstart is paid to clients aged 16-64 (male) and 18-59 (female), who have been registered as 'unemployed' for over 12 months. This new arrangement is designed to encourage a shift of the long-term unemployed from welfare dependency either to employment or programs to enhance their employability.

A similar scheme, for 16 and 17 year olds, was introduced on 1 January 1988, the intention being to encourage unemployed 16 and 17 year olds to take up training and employment opportunities rather than become dependent on a long-term unemployment benefit and to remove any financial incentive to leave school early.

### Sickness Benefits

A sickness benefit is paid to people who have been temporarily incapacitated for work because of sickness or accident and who have suffered a loss of income as a result of the incapacity or

### 11.7 SICKNESS BENEFITS, TASMANIA

| Year | Number of recipients at 30 June | Financial year expenditure (\$m) |
|------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1983 | 3 750                           | 4.6                              |
| 1985 | 1 025                           | 5.5                              |
| 1987 | 1 209                           | 7.5                              |
| 1988 | 1 285                           | 8.4                              |
| 1989 | 1 312                           | 9.4                              |
| 1990 | 1 358                           | 10.2                             |

(Source: Department of Social Security Annual Report).

who, but for the incapacity would qualify for the unemployment benefit. At June 1990, 1358 benefits were being paid. An assets test on unemployment, sickness and special benefits for recipients aged 25 and over applied from December 1986 based on the pensions assets test threshold.

### 11.1.3 Allowances for Families

#### Family Allowances

In 1976 child endowment, along with tax rebates for dependent children, was replaced by a family allowance, usually payable to the mother.

### 11.8 FAMILY ALLOWANCE, TASMANIA

| Year (a) | Number of dependents | Number of families & approved institutions | Financial year expenditure (\$m) |
|----------|----------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| 1983     | 122 729              | 61 820                                     | 39.1                             |
| 1985     | 123 079              | 62 734                                     | 42.8                             |
| 1987     | 116 937              | 60 637                                     | 39.5                             |
| 1988     | 111 038              | 57 021                                     | 39.3                             |
| 1989     | 110 000              | 56 508                                     | 38.2                             |
| 1990     | 109 329              | 56 124                                     | 53.6                             |

(a) To 30 June.

(Source: Department of Social Security Annual Report).

People who have the custody, care and control of one or more children under 16, or one or more full-time students aged 16 to 24 inclusive, who are wholly or substantially dependent on them, may receive the Family Allowance. Payments for students aged 18-24 were withdrawn from November 1985 (other than for those in needy families). An income test applies to Family Allowance payments for children under 18.

The number of families and approved institutions receiving Family Allowance has decreased since 1985, while expenditure has increased. In 1986, 62 734 families and institutions received Family Allowance while in 1990, this figure dropped to 56 124.

### Child Disability Allowance

A disabled child is one who:

- has a physical, intellectual or psychiatric disability;
- because of their disability needs care and attention that is substantially more than that required by a child of the same age without a disability; and
- is likely to need that care and attention for an extended period.

Child Disability Allowance was formerly known as Handicapped Child's Allowance.

At 30 June 1990 there were 1550 recipients of the Child Disability Allowance, a 64 per cent increase from the 1985 figure of 996. The 1990 financial year expenditure on Child Disability Allowance (\$2.7 million) has almost trebled since 1985.

### Double Orphan's Pension

A guardian or an institution may be paid a double orphan's pension for a child under 16, or a dependent full-time student aged 16 to 24 inclusive, whose parents are dead. The pension is also payable if one parent is dead and the whereabouts of the other parent are not known or the other parent is serving a sentence of imprisonment of 10 years or more or is an inmate of a mental hospital and will require care and treatment in that or a similar hospital for an indefinite period. It is also payable in respect of refugee children in certain circumstances.

The number of recipients of the Double Orphans Pension has decreased significantly over the past five years. At 30 June 1985, there

were 110 recipients, while the 1990 figure was only 33, a drop of 70 per cent.

### Family Allowance Supplement

Certain low income families are eligible for a family allowance supplement, an income-tested, non-taxable supplement payable for each child under 16 years or dependent full-time students aged 16 to 24 inclusive.

The allowance is generally paid to the person receiving Family Allowance for the child (normally the mother). Family Allowance Supplement was formerly known as Family Income Supplement.

At 30 June 1990, there were 6140 recipients of Family Allowance Supplement. This is a substantial increase from 1985, however since 1988, there has only been a slight increase of 371.

### 11.1.4 Other Benefits and Allowances

The social security system provides a number of other allowances additional to the main benefit provided, the most significant of which are the special benefit, funeral benefits, and fringe benefits for pensioners.

#### Special Benefit

A special benefit may be paid to people who are not eligible for a pension, unemployment or sickness benefit but who are unable to earn a sufficient livelihood for themselves and their dependants.

The benefit is designed to meet cases of special need and payments may be made immediately in an emergency.

#### 11.9 FAMILY ALLOWANCE SUPPLEMENT, TASMANIA

| Year | At 30 June, number of |          | Financial year expenditure (\$m) |
|------|-----------------------|----------|----------------------------------|
|      | Recipients            | Children |                                  |
| 1985 | 1 309                 | 3 607    | 2.1                              |
| 1987 | 1 498                 | 4 102    | 2.8                              |
| 1988 | 5 769                 | 14 122   | 8.9                              |
| 1989 | 5 962                 | 15 009   | 14.8                             |
| 1990 | 6 140                 | 15 352   | 17.0                             |

(Source: Department of Social Security Annual Report).

#### 11.10 SPECIAL BENEFITS AND FUNERAL BENEFITS, TASMANIA, 1989-90

| Benefit     | Number of benefits granted | Expenditure (\$'000) |
|-------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Special     | 6 600                      | 8 600                |
| Funeral (a) | 740                        | 30                   |

(a) Funeral benefit was abolished from 31 Dec 1989 & was replaced by new bereavement measures.

(Source: Department of Social Security Annual Report).

### Funeral Benefit

The number of Funeral Benefits granted has decreased from 1021 in 1988-89 to 740 in 1989-90.

### Fringe Benefits

The majority of pensioners, beneficiaries of sheltered employment, rehabilitation and supporting parent allowances are entitled to a range of non-cash benefits including concessions on pharmaceuticals, free hearing-aid services, telephone and postal concessions, concessions on some rail and bus travel, council rates, driver's licences, car registration fees, power charges and land taxes.

In addition, the State Department of Community Services provides a number of supplementary allowances to people who are in receipt of pensions or benefits and who satisfy a means criterion.

## 11.2 DIRECT SERVICES

**While it is the Federal Government that provides almost all income maintenance payments, and a large proportion of the finance needed to fund some State Government programs, it is the State Department of Community Services, together with Non-Government Agencies (NGAs) that provide the personalised help to people in need.**

Services provided by the Department include disability and community support services and individual, children and family services.

### 11.11 CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES PROGRAM EXPENDITURE, 1990-91 (\$'000)

|                                      |               |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Community support                    | 4.473         |
| Accommodation assistance             | 5.873         |
| Child protection and family violence | 1.026         |
| Alternative care                     | 3.206         |
| Program management                   | 3.382         |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>17.960</b> |

(Source: Department of Community Services Annual Report).

### 11.2.1 Child Welfare

Child welfare is primarily focussed on neglected or orphaned children and children brought to notice through the courts.

#### Children Under Supervision

The *Child Welfare Act 1960* provides that children who are found guilty of offences and those who are found to have been neglected may be placed under the supervision of a Child Welfare Officer for up to three years. The principal purpose of the order is to provide advice, guidance, counselling and practical help for the child. The order also requires the child to comply with the reasonable directions of the Officer.

#### Wards of the State

Wards of the State are under legal guardianship of the Director. At 30 June 1991, there were 374 children under guardianship.

A child may become a Ward of the State in a number of ways. A parent may apply to the Minister to have his or her child admitted as a Ward. This practice is most common in the case of babies who are offered for adoption but who are not suitable for immediate placement.

A Children's Court may declare a child to be a Ward of the State after finding that the child is neglected, or after finding the child guilty of a certain class of offence, such as assault or burglary and stealing.

The Child Welfare Act also provides for a parent to submit a plea at a Children's Court that their own child is beyond their control.

Once a child has become a Ward of the State, the Director of the Department of Community Services becomes his or her legal guardian to the exclusion of all others, including the parents. Through the staff of the Department, and with the help of individuals and groups in the community, the Director may exercise this responsibility for guardianship in a variety of ways.

In many cases it is considered to be in the best interests of a child to provide care by supplementing, rather than substituting for, the care offered by natural parents.

Even when it is necessary to remove the child from his or her normal home, the over-riding aim is to assist both the child and parents so that they can re-establish a normal family relationship.

## Foster Care

Fostering is required when children are unable to return to live with their natural parents for long periods of time, or when they are separated from their families for shorter periods of time while their ongoing needs are assessed.

In both these cases, alternative care is provided for children and young people in an environment that closely resembles a normal family. Families who provide this care are recruited and assessed by the Department of Community Services.

As at 30 June 1991, 187 families were approved to offer long-term care for children, and 118 approved to provide short-term care.

While living with foster parents, the foster child is still aware of his or her true identity and in many cases retains periodical contact with his or her natural parents and relations.

In recent years there has been an increased emphasis on children retaining personal contact with their natural families. It has been found that Foster Parents are able to work effectively with natural parents for the benefit of the child.

## Children's Homes

Approved Children's Homes are run by charitable bodies across Tasmania to provide short and long-term care for up to 84 children in cottage and hostel-type environments. These homes accommodate children on the application of their parents or at the request of the Department.

In the 12 month period to 30 June 1991, 94 children were cared for in Approved Children's Homes. Of these children, 42 per cent were Wards of the State and 58 per cent were privately placed by their parents. The Depart-

ment meets the cost of Wards in placement and provides financial assistance to 81 per cent of children privately placed.

## Independent Living

Twenty-five per cent of all Wards aged 15 and over choose to live independently. The Department provides a range of support and financial assistance services to assist these young persons.

## Family Group Homes

The Department of Community Services has 17 Family Group Homes distributed throughout the State; all are run by families. This enables children to live in a family atmosphere rather than an institution. Children are cared for here for a short time before they either return to their families or an alternative long-term home is arranged for them, such as with Foster Parents. While each Family Group Home may care for up to six children, the average number in a home at one time is usually four.

In 1990-91, 343 individual children were placed in Family Group Homes for an average length of stay of six weeks.

As at 30 June 1991, 40 children were being cared for in Family Group Homes.

## Adoption

While other forms of alternative care and accommodation are short or even long term, adoption is a permanent alternative to substitute care. When a child is adopted he or she becomes a permanent member of a new family with the same rights and legal status as if he or she were born into that family. Adoption should be seen as a service for children rather than a way of providing childless couples with children and this is reflected in the new Adoption Bill.

## Adoption Legislation

In 1990-91 61 children were adopted, compared with 71 in 1989-90. Of these, 15 were adopted through the Catholic Private Adoption Agency (CPAA).

For the 12 month period to 30 June 1991, five wards of the State were adopted by families with whom they had been fostered.

Thirty-four children (21 local children and 13 from overseas) were placed with a potential adoptive family during the year. These children

### 11.12 COMPARISON OF CHILDREN PLACED FOR ADOPTION IN 1988-89, 1989-90 & 1990-91

|         | Country of Origin |          | Total |
|---------|-------------------|----------|-------|
|         | Australia         | Overseas |       |
| 1988-89 | 13                | 17       | 30    |
| 1989-90 | 19                | 12       | 31    |
| 1990-91 | 21                | 13       | 34    |

(Source: Department of Community Services Annual Report).



**11.13 CHILDREN ADOPTED IN 1990-91  
BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN OF THE CHILD  
AND RELATIONSHIP OF ADOPTERS TO  
THE CHILD.**

| Country of origin | Relative/   |              | Total |
|-------------------|-------------|--------------|-------|
|                   | Step parent | Non-relative |       |
| Australia         | 20          | 25           | 45    |
| Overseas          | -           | 16           | 16    |
| Total             | 20          | 41           | 61    |

(Source: Department of Community Services).

are not included in the 61 children whose adoption was legally finalised during the year.

As a direct result of the decline over recent years in allocations of children from approved overseas adoption programs, the Department's Intercountry Adoption Register was closed in July 1990. This is regarded as a temporary measure and the situation is being kept under review.

At 30 June 1991, 63 couples were on the Department's waiting list for overseas children. There are 16 couples awaiting allocation of a locally-born child.

**Residential and Community Youth Services**

The Juvenile Custodial Corrective Services Sub-program has been set up to provide custodial care for young offenders while at the same time enabling them to achieve socially responsible behaviour within the family and community.

Ashley Home at Deloraine is the sole custodial institution for young offenders in Tasmania. By providing a safe, humane and responsive

**11.14 ASHLEY HOME ADMISSIONS AND  
DISCHARGES**

|                                    | Male | Female | Total |
|------------------------------------|------|--------|-------|
| On hand 30 June 1990               | 9    | 1      | 10    |
| Received during year               | 84   | 20     | 104   |
| Total provided service during year | 93   | 21     | 114   |
| Discharged during year             | 76   | 21     | 97    |
| Remaining at 30 June 1991          | 17   | -      | 17    |

(Source: Department of Community Services).

environment while respecting the individual dignity of the internees, Ashley Home aims to achieve the objectives of the Sub-program.

Residential care and supervision is provided for boys and girls who have committed offences and for whom community-based services prove to be inadequate. In general, the age range is from 12 to 17 years, although this year it was necessary to care for one 10 year old girl. Accommodation is available for up to 30 young people.

Young people are admitted to Ashley only when there is no suitable alternative. Ashley is not viewed as a substitute for home and family life, nor as suitable long-term accommodation. It does aim to provide a measure of support and re-direction for its residents, and staff work with probation officers to help residents re-enter the community.

Most residents of Ashley have committed offences, and as a result are subject to orders under the Child Welfare Act. However, in 1990-91 seven residents had committed no offence and were housed at Ashley because of the absence of any other residential facility for seriously disturbed young people.

As Tasmania's adult prison system is not equipped to segregate young offenders from the rest of the prison population, seven young people were transferred from prison to Ashley for periods of remand or sentence during the year. While this is not an ideal situation, and there is some reluctance to place prisoners with much younger children, such transfers occur only after careful consideration for the welfare of those involved.

**Educational and Vocational Activities**

Ashley includes a special school which is staffed by the Department of Education and the Arts. One of the two teaching positions was removed during 1990-91.

Residents study at a very wide range of academic levels including Higher School Certificate subjects plus basic literacy and numeracy.

A number of residents have attended training and education facilities such as Skillshare, Glenara and Community Colleges to complete long-term certificated courses.

Selected residents approaching independent living have been accommodated in the Indepen-

dent Living flat on the poverty. While living semi-independently, skills are nurtured which prepare them to be self-supporting in the community. Involvement in community service projects and activities by residents continued with positive results. The Apex Hut and a reserve area in Deloraine are fully maintained by residents and staff.

### *Closure of Institutions*

The residential institutional functions currently provided by Ashley Home were previously undertaken by a number of Departmental institutions under the Child Welfare Act. These were Weeroona Girls Training Centre in Latrobe (closed 1979), West Winds Home at Woodbridge (closed 1983) and Wybra Hall (closed 1988). These institutions were closed as improved community-based services were developed to provide more appropriate services.

### *Children in Child Care*

There were 4991 places in registered child care facilities throughout Tasmania as at 30 June 1991. A registered facility can be a child care centre, a program in a given location such as a play centre or an individual carer as in family day care. The number of child care places available in the different categories as at 30 June 1991 were:

- Family Day Care (1481 places)
- Play Centres (657 places)
- Centre-Based Long Day Care (1425 places)
- Occasional Care (413 places)
- Outside School Hours Care (1015 places)

### *Outside School Hour Care*

In accordance with the joint approval procedures under the 30 000 place National Child Care Strategy, the Minister approved 330 new Outside School Hours Care places at nine locations throughout the State.

The following places were operational as at 30 June 1991:

- Midway Point (60 places)
- Claremont (30 places)
- Kingston (30 places)

- Zeehan (30 places)
- Burnie (30 places)
- Hobart (30 places)

### *Vacation Care*

In October 1990, the Department assumed management for this program from the Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation, with the aim of redeveloping the Vacation Care Program as a complementary service to Outside School Hours Care. New funding and operational guide-lines have been developed outlining the objectives of the program, the funding arrangements, the approval processes, the role and responsibilities of management committees and other general information.

During the year, the Department continued its commitment to other child care services by providing \$346 thousand in funding to Early Childhood Services in 71 child care services. These are generally small grants to assist community groups offering a range of child care services. Almost half of this funding was allocated to Neighbourhood Houses to assist with costs associated with back-up child care. This service enables parents—mainly women—to participate in Neighbourhood House activities.

### **11.2.2 Family Assistance**

The Department for Community Welfare has developed a comprehensive program of assistance to individuals and families. The assistance available ranges from cash payments in emergency situations to help with specific items such as spectacles and homemaker schemes.

#### *Emergency Relief Grants to Community Agencies*

The State Government holds the view that provision of assistance in this area is a Commonwealth Government responsibility. To a large extent the need for emergency relief arises because of the inadequate levels of pensions and benefits or because of failures within the Social Security system. The provision of emergency relief is often seen as a form of income supplement.

The State Government has a limited responsibility to provide assistance in cases of family crisis or where the well-being of children is threatened because of the lack of financial assistance.

In 1990-91, the Department funded a pilot program through the Hobart City Mission which aims to reduce dependency on the use of emergency relief. Through the provision of support, budget counselling and efficient referral to specialist services, dependency on emergency relief should be reduced.

Other forms of financial assistance were provided by the Department. A Cabinet decision increased Heating Allowances by \$5.00 to \$56.00 per annum and were provided to 9500 households throughout the year. Eligibility for funeral benefits was tightened with \$96 000 provided towards the cost of 97 funerals.

Emergency relief grants to community agencies in 1990-91 totalled \$117 000.

### ***Family Support***

Family support services provide parent education, organise self-help groups and provide home management services.

Funding under the Family Support Grants Program was increased from \$580 thousand in 1989-90 to \$620 thousand in 1990-91. This allowed for indexation to be passed on to services.

During 1990-91, emphasis was placed on developing additional supports for management and workers. A part-time training officer was appointed and is currently producing an induction manual and developing programs to address the identified training needs of staff and management committees of community organisations.

## **11.2.3 Community Programs**

### ***Youth Homelessness***

In addition to services funded under SAAP, a pilot project to address youth homelessness has been established. The project, sponsored by the Burnie, Launceston and Hobart City Councils, employs a Youth Services Manager and Youth Case Manager in each region. The project targets both chronically homeless youth and those identified as being at risk of becoming homeless. Assistance is provided to ensure that young people are able to obtain access to the full range of services they may need. The project also aims to maximise co-ordination between Government and non-government agencies, at a policy and service delivery level.

The project is stimulating improved case management practices between agencies. A pri-

mary carer is appointed and coordinates all the services the young person may require, such as accommodation, income support, drug and alcohol abuse therapy and professional counselling. The young person is involved in making decisions about addressing his/her problems and is encouraged to understand the different roles that each agency will play.

### ***Disability Services***

The trend towards disabled people living at home rather than in special institutions has increased the demand for community support services as disabled people strive for a better quality of life.

The Family Respite Care service is a HACC (Home and Community Care) funded statewide service, providing respite care for families caring for a disabled person. The service enables families caring for a person with a disability to receive support in two ways. A carer may come into their homes to help care for the person with a disability or a host family may have the person with a disability in their home. This enables both the disabled person and their families to have a break.

The service was initiated and developed within the Disability Services Unit, over a two and a half year period, and in April 1989, was transferred to autonomous regionally based community management bodies.

### ***Women's Shelters***

Women's Shelters have as their primary purpose the provision of shelter and support services to women and children who have been subjected to domestic violence or who are rendered homeless through some personal or social crisis. Most shelters are not designed to provide accommodation to women and children requiring intensive, sustained specialised services and in cases where it is necessary to provide longer term accommodation and more intensive support, funding is made available to specific purpose refuges. Annie Kenney and Karinya for example accommodate single young women only and Caroline House provides for women with alcohol and drug related difficulties.

Most shelters have not been established to provide longer term support although most are forced into this role because of the increasing difficulty faced by women with children in locating alternative accommodation. The Housing Department continues to provide valuable assistance to both the Launceston and Hobart

Women's Shelters in making special provision for women and children accommodated in refuges who seek public housing. Women moving out of the shelter in need of financial assistance may apply to the Family Assistance Scheme.

Shelters vary in respect of the mode of management employed and the intensity and breadth of services provided to users. Some shelters employ a style of management which involves the users of the shelter in its everyday operations, for example cooking, cleaning, shopping. Staff are free to engage in the primary functions of the shelter, for example the provision of support and information to women in crisis.

Other shelters have adopted a less participatory style of operation and have as their primary focus the provision of accommodation to women and children in crisis. All shelters are required as a condition of funding to provide services which are accessible on a 24 hour, seven day a week basis. Some shelters provide a field work service to women who have left the shelter but who require continued support and visitation to prevent their return to the shelter.

### ***The Crisis Intervention Unit***

The Crisis Intervention Unit provides one of the Department's specialist services. It is aimed at providing protection, support and assistance to victims of family violence and referring them to the agencies that provide long-term help. The Crisis Intervention staff provide support by visiting the homes of clients, usually women, as soon as possible after an assault has taken place, offering support and advice. To ensure the safety of the women and children involved, transport is often provided to a shelter or some other form of emergency accommodation.

The women and children involved are supported and assisted in seeking legal advice and additional support services to prevent further violence. A large part of the Unit's work involves referrals to lawyers for legal advice and representation in making applications for Restraint Orders. Crisis workers will accompany clients to see lawyers, to go to Court and to see the police in order to proceed with assault charges.

The Crisis Intervention Unit administers the Domestic Violence Prevention Program. Access to a telephone is seen as an important means of obtaining assistance in case of further violence and enforcing Restraint Orders. The program

enables the Unit to pay telephone installation costs for families being threatened with violence. This fund was also used to improve household security (i.e. to purchase and install security fixtures) where the perpetrator was breaking into the house in order to further assault the partner. The cost of motel accommodation can also be paid under this program, where government funded shelters are full or inappropriate. A total of \$27 523 in financial assistance was spent during 1990-91.

### ***Neighbourhood Houses***

The aim of Neighbourhood Houses is to provide resources for individuals and families close to the people who need them, i.e. in the neighbourhood.

Community groups who have broad local community support and interest to develop a Neighbourhood House are eligible for assistance by the Government for developmental costs and for ongoing operational costs. The Neighbourhood Houses are managed by representatives of local communities.

Neighbourhood Houses provide a wide range of community services including recreational activities, child care, fitness classes, life skills classes, adult education, volunteer services, meeting facilities, community newsletters, effective parenting courses, food co-operatives and ante-natal clinics. The mix of these and other activities depends upon the specific interests and needs of the community operating the Neighbourhood House. Free back-up child care is available to allow parents and care-givers the opportunity to participate in activities.

Neighbourhood Houses are located in isolated areas, such as Savage River, Rosebery, Zeehan, St Helens, Geeveston and Dunalley, as well as in urban areas.

There are 29 Neighbourhood Houses funded around the State; expenditure in 1990-91 was \$476 500. In June 1991, the Department ran a one week census to collect information about current users, levels of participation and the nature of activity. The total number of individuals presenting at 21 neighbourhood centres during the census week was 1544. The average number of individuals presenting at each neighbourhood centre was approximately 73. This figure may be extrapolated to provide an estimated attendance, over the 40 weeks of operation each year, of 61 760.

The majority of users were women between the ages of 20 and 39 and approximately one-third had under-school-age children.

The Neighbourhood Houses Grants Program subsidises the operating costs of houses by making a contribution towards rental, power, telephone and administrative costs, and a contribution to the salary of a part-time coordinator.

### 11.3 NON-GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**It has long been recognised that many welfare services are effectively and efficiently provided by the many voluntary welfare agencies which operate throughout the State.**

The non-government sector can usually respond swiftly to emerging community needs and can also provide significant voluntary support to funded services.

In an environment of increasing levels of need, and increasing scrutiny of the spending of the welfare dollar, it is important to ensure that funded programs complement rather than duplicate existing services.

Early Support for Parents (ESP) is one example of a scheme operating under TasCOSS.

ESP is a voluntary scheme in which trained volunteers offer practical and emotional support to families in their own homes. It is accessible to all families in the community with dependent children.

ESP offers practical and emotional support to families whose capacity to function is limited by stress from within, or external to, the family. Such support aims to help alleviate stress and reduce the likelihood of a crisis situation occurring whilst at the same time re-affirming the role and value of parenting. ESP encourages parents to feel that it is alright to ask for and receive help and support in times of stress. They have a team of trained volunteers ready to help when and where they can.

In addition to receiving government grants, voluntary agencies rely heavily on voluntary labour and donations from the public to provide assistance to needy families. Services provided include shelter for the homeless, provision of

household items, food parcels, clothing and toys for families in need, as well as counselling and support services. Many organisations also provide long-term accommodation in hostels and homes for invalid and elderly people.

#### 11.3.1 Tasmanian Council of Social Services (TasCOSS)

The Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc. is an independent non-government organisation representing a wide range of non-government social welfare agencies.

TasCOSS as part of the national COSS network acts in an advocacy role to the government. Each year TasCOSS submits an Annual Budget Priorities Paper for Tasmania.

TasCOSS as part of the national network is able to have input into Federal Government policy, most recently the Federal/State Funding Agreements (for example New Federalism), also the Medicare debate, unemployment as an ongoing issue for this state as well as other critical social policies.

The objectives of the council are:

- to act as the coordinating body within Tasmania for non-government welfare organisations;
- to promote and uphold the rights of disadvantaged members of the community by supporting non-government welfare organisations working to prevent or relieve injustice, poverty, disability or sickness;
- to inform the public of the causes and the effects of poverty, injustice, disability and sickness and all related matters;
- to provide representation and advice to non-government welfare organisations;
- to liaise and co-operate with Federal, State and Local Governments, government departments, statutory authorities and other organisations as necessary to further the objectives of the Council; and
- to co-operate with ACOSS and other national and international organisations promoting the interests and objectives of non-government welfare organisations.

### 11.3.2 Religious Agencies

As well as their usual worship and pastoral roles, the churches continue to provide an active social welfare service for the community and to provide input to a range of contemporary social, welfare and health issues such as child poverty and homelessness, and the AIDS situation. In Tasmania, major welfare assistance is provided by the Salvation Army, Anglican Church (Anglicare, ITeC, the Link), the Catholic Church (Centacare, Willson Training Centre), the city missions and the St Vincent de Paul Society. A number of innovative social welfare and training programs have been started in recent years.

#### *Anglicare*

Anglicare is the Church caring for homeless young people and families in this State, training the unemployed, providing a financial service to those in debt, preparing people for marriage, mediating family conflicts and counselling for change.

In 1983 there was no financial counselling service operating within Tasmania. Anglicare Financial Counselling Service (AFCS) now handles in excess of 1000 clients per year. AFCS finds that most problems are involved with arranging extension for power, telephone and rent accounts. Those clients who required extensive counselling usually were suffering severe financial problems as a result of loss of employment, in addition to family problems, sickness or marital break-up.

Youthcare runs the Outreach House and the Shelter. The North-West Housing Outreach in Devonport operates the Stewart Street Family Accommodation, Charles Street Youth Units, Archer Street Flats and 'Limani' (for long-term single person accommodation).

Stress within the family unit escalated in the 1980s, although the divorce rate has fallen (largely due to an increase in the numbers of de facto relationships). In an effort to reduce these problems developing within the community, Anglicare has a Marriage Education Programme operating statewide in conjunction with accommodation services available in Devonport. It has also developed the 'Hassles' Family Mediation Service to help cope with the increasing demand for its services.

ITeC and the Job Club are Anglicare agencies which aid the unemployed in today's society.

ITeC, or Information Technology, educates the long-term unemployed in the use of computers. The Job Club was set up by seven unemployed people in the Burnie Parish, five of these have now managed to find employment.

#### *Centacare*

Centacare is the Catholic Church's 'weapon' in the fight against the lowering of welfare standards within Australia, specifically Tasmania. Centacare uses its resources in a variety of ways to aid society by providing assistance for the needs of married couples, families and individuals; the needs of children; the needs of lone parents; the Willson Training Centre; migrant welfare work; the school support program and emergency accommodation.

Centacare is one of the two marriage counselling agencies in Tasmania which are approved by the Attorney-General's Department. Counsellors operate in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie in accordance with the National Association of Catholic Family Agencies.

Childcare workers provide day-time programs with educational and play components. Parents have the opportunity to gain assistance in other areas such as medical, housing and legal issues whilst their children are otherwise involved.

Services to Lone Parents include a weekly personal growth-parenting group, the Mustard Seed-Lasar program. The Lasar stands for Lifeskills and support and Relationships. Courses cover such topics as communication, self esteem building, resolving conflicts, child behaviour and management and health issues. Another program is the PRAM (Pregnancy and Motherhood) program, designed for the under 21 year old mother. It provides information about prenatal care, labour and delivery and parenting skills.

Centacare is a registered adoption Agency and as such is actively involved in recruiting parents for the children to be adopted. Birth parents are involved in the selection of the adoptive parents whom they wish to parent the child and ongoing information on the child's development within the adoptive family is available to birth parents on an annual basis. Another part of the adoption service involves adoption search, which is the linking of parties separated by adoption.

The Endeavour Programme is designed for disadvantaged parents and involves a residential

parenting program that includes fun activities for parents and children as well as structured sessions for the parents on personal development and child behaviour. This is a new project that is attracting attention throughout Australia for its innovative approach to parent education.

The Family Life Education Program is based on the principle that parents are the first educators of their children. Information nights are offered in schools throughout Tasmania by invitation from the Principals. Parents attend with their children so that they are involved in the sessions which cover sexuality and relationships.

Fertility Counselling and family planning is another service offered by Centacare which specialises in natural methods of family planning and health promotion. This service is popular with people who seek natural rather than artificial methods of regulating their general health and family planning.

The Catholic Refugee Support Group (CRSG) was established during 1989. CRSG's chief task is to coordinate the Catholic efforts for resettlement of refugees in the Tasmanian community. Close liaison is maintained with the Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs and with the relative parishes.

The School Support Program has operated during this year in 28 Catholic schools which are predominantly primary schools. The aim of the program is to provide a professional service of social work and general support which will assist in enhancing the well-being of the Catholic School system and help develop the potential of all within the system.

Emergency Accommodation Services aid those families who are temporarily homeless as a result of crises and helps them to move towards more independent living. Two centres which are in operation are St Joseph's Centre, Tarooma (occupancy in 1990-91 was 163 persons) and Barton Lodge, Mowbray (occupancy rate in the same year was 192 persons). These operate in conjunction with the Independent Family Accommodation and Support Service which offers accommodation in both Lenah Valley and Hobart. Thirty-three individuals were in residence during the year.

#### *The Willson Training Centre*

The Willson Training Centre began operations in July 1981. The Centre is sponsored by

Centacare Family Services and attracts funding from the Department of Employment, Education and Training through the Skillshare program.

It provides training for those people of all ages who are defined by the Commonwealth Employment Service as being long-term unemployed, or face difficulties in finding employment. Initially four courses were operated in Food preparation, Bakery skills, Horticulture, and Concrete moulding. Seven courses are now available. These are: Cooks Assistant, Bakery Skills, Food and Beverage service, Sales and Marketing, Office Skills, Trades Assistant, and Commercial Cleaning.

An Open Access Service is available for job search training, resume preparation, training in typing, word processor operation and computer operation. The Centre also provides assistance in literacy and numeracy. The Centre has attracted over 3000 participants since commencement and has the enviable record of having placed over 1800 into employment, subsequent to their training.

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