

# **Campaign Professionals: party officials and the professionalisation of Australian political parties**

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I affirm that this thesis is my own original work, that it has not been submitted for any other degree, and that I have acknowledged all the assistance I received in preparing it and the sources it employs.

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Stephen Mills

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## Abstract

Australian political parties and election campaigns are often said to have become professionalised, yet the term lacks clear definition and the nature of professionalisation as a process of institutional change is poorly articulated. This thesis elaborates the nature, the timing and the drivers of the changes in Australian elections and political parties, principally through depth interviews with present and former officials of the two major Australian political parties, who occupy the important but long neglected third face in Katz and Mair's model of political parties. The interview data reveal the distinctive identity of party officials as 'campaign professionals', and provide a robust definition of professionalism in a party context: the officials are paid, they have high levels of technical competence, and they are devoted as partisans to the electoral interests of their client, the party. The interviews also provide new evidence about professionalisation as a process of institutional change. The national party officials are central to this process, creating a professional campaign model through centralising campaign authority in their own hands at the expense of state branches and, at times, of the party leaders; through taking responsibility for developing and implementing campaign strategies; and through acquiring the financial and other resources necessary to sustain this new style of campaigning. Over a three-phase process of professionalisation – identified as an emergent phase (from 1945 to 1972), an intensification phase (1973 – 2000) and a phase of diversification and deadlock (from 2001) – this model has come to dominate Australian party campaigning. Political parties are in some senses increasingly embattled, with radically declining party membership, a weakened linkage role, and increased electoral volatility. But in other respects as this thesis demonstrates, their campaigning capacities, with their campaign professionals as central agents, continue to become better resourced and they remain strongly entrenched and empowered in Australian elections.



## Introduction

In October 1945, Donald Cleland was appointed the first Federal Director of the newly-formed Liberal Party of Australia. A Perth lawyer and repeatedly unsuccessful election candidate for the conservative cause in Western Australia, Cleland had seen wartime service as an army quartermaster in North Africa and New Guinea; he had risen to the rank of Brigadier and been decorated. But he was a 'rather humourless cove' and in the by-election following the death of Prime Minister John Curtin had failed to win the support of the voters of Fremantle. Cleland's first task in his civilian role was to embark on a national tour to inspect the party's state branches, accompanied by the equally new Public Relations Officer Eric White. Their report back to the Federal Executive was sombrely realistic. Their national overview was challenged by the competing perspectives of 'six separate entities' in the state capitals, which 'vary in efficiency and in extent' and were not campaign ready. They observed: 'Taken overall, the organisation is weak and spasmodic as compared to the overall organisation of the anti-Liberal forces' (Starr, 1980: 89-90; Nelson, 1993; Martin, 1999: v2,p31).

In its focus on electoral preparedness, its comparison with their political rivals the Australian Labor Party (ALP), and its frustration with state divisions, the Cleland-White report foreshadowed many of the concerns that would preoccupy Liberal Party officials in the decades to come. Curtin's Labor Party had won a smashing victory at the previous federal election in 1943. Seeking to forge the diverse fragments of Australian conservatism into a single united Liberal Party, Opposition Leader Robert Menzies told potential adherents at the Canberra Conference in October 1944 that of course Labor's policy was 'repugnant to us'. But its 'unanimity and cohesion on the organisational side' was a decided political asset, he said; its journals were so effective that a Labor supporter in Bunbury would express the same point of view in almost the same words as one in Townsville. Addressing an audience familiar with war, Menzies argued:

When I consider the structure of the Australian Labor Party, and realise that the political warfare to which we have been committed for a long time ... is a struggle between political armies, I am driven to wonder how we could ever imagine that a concerted force, under one command and with one staff, is to be defeated by divided units under separate commands and with no general staff (Starr, 1980: 75).

For Menzies and many other anti-Labor figures at this time, organisational questions were more important to the revival of conservative electoral fortunes than questions of policy (Aimer, 1979; Hancock, 2000: 20-1). Indeed he placed organisational shortcomings at the top of the list of their 'defects':

First, we have no Federal organisation, which means that we have no Federal secretariat, and therefore no true nexus between the Federal Parliamentary Party and those who are to do the political work in the field (Starr, 1980: 75).

The delegates duly recommended 'the formation of a permanent secretariat at Canberra' (Starr, 1980: 79). Though the Head Office remained in Sydney for several years, Cleland's appointment as a paid professional administrator provided the party with its first national 'general staff'.

Beating Labor at its own game, then, appears to have been a key motivation for founding the Liberals' Head Office. So it is no small irony that the Labor campaign machine so respected by Cleland and Menzies was so much less well organised than they imagined. To be sure, Labor's national identity and common cause predated Federation, and its Federal Executive had operated since 1915. But before Curtin's victory in 1943, Labor had not been an electorally successful party at the national level, winning just three elections in the previous forty years (in 1910, 1914 and 1929). While the Liberals employed three full-time executives - Cleland and White were soon joined by a Senior Research Officer - national Labor's entire staff apparatus consisted of a single part-time honorary official. At 69 years of age, Daniel McNamara was certainly experienced: he had laboured in this role since 1925. But being Federal Secretary was not his most important job, and national politics was not his main focus: McNamara was a state party official and his full-time

paid job, which he had also held from 1925, was secretary of Labor's Victorian branch. McNamara was also an elected member of Victoria's Legislative Council (from 1917) and, for three short periods, had been a minister in Victorian Labor Governments (Strangio, 2012). This arrangement allowed national Labor the thrifty fiction of borrowing its administrator from the Victorians in exchange for a meagre honorarium, in the knowledge that his actual livelihoods were subsidised by the party members and taxpayers in that state. Nearly twenty years after the Federal Parliament had moved to the national capital, Labor's Head Office, such as it was, remained in Melbourne; Labor's federal business was essentially run out of McNamara's office there. If the Labor Party was the formidable campaigner Menzies described, it was not because of any apparent direction or resources emerging from its Head Office.

In setting up their Head Office then, the Liberal Party responded to Labor's perceived strengths; but doing so seems to have spurred Labor to lift its own game. In February 1945 – months *after* the Canberra Conference – Labor's Federal Executive issued a call to state branches and the Federal Parliamentary caucus for 'better coordination' at Federal elections. At its next meeting, in May, the Executive's minutes record a 'long discussion' about a proposal 'for a Federal Secretariat of the Party to be set up at Canberra as early as possible'. McNamara was directed to explore the idea and to work out the details, including how much this would cost the states to fund; but his inquiries stalled when he fell ill in early 1946 and he was forced to stand down as Federal Secretary. He died of tuberculosis in December 1947 (Weller & Lloyd, 1978: 281, 298; Cook, 1986: 347).

Perhaps what Menzies admired about Labor existed not within its Head Office but outside it, in the form of its long-standing commercial advertising agency Hansen-Rubensohn Pty Ltd. More than an advertiser, its principal Sim Rubensohn was also fundraiser, political strategist and confidant of party leaders at state and national level. 'We need to face up to the fact that the Labor Party has a clever set of advertising tradesmen at work in the centre', Menzies told his colleagues after losing to Labor again, under Prime Minister Ben Chifley, in the 1946 federal election. The Liberals promptly hired the 'tradesmen' away from Labor and put them to work in their campaign for the 1949 election. It was a successful recruitment. Rubensohn's radio advertising campaign – 'the longest and most lavishly funded political campaign ever seen in Australia' according to Murray Goot (2002) – played an important role in the Liberals' campaign which saw them defeat Labor and Menzies become Prime Minister. The central element of the campaign was a radio series of dramatised political satire, 'John Henry Austral', which ran twice-weekly on stations around the nation for some twenty months in the lead-up to the 1949 Election Day. Its exact cost is unknown, but an estimate of £800,000 still impressed commentators a dozen years later as an unprecedentedly large sum (Whittington, 1961; Mills, 1986: 87-95; Hancock, 2000: 90-4; Mills, 2012c). With an election win under his belt, Cleland stepped down from the Secretariat and returned to Papua New Guinea as Administrator; he was later recommended for a knighthood.

### **New Party Actors and a New Approach to Election Campaigning**

Cleland's appointment marked the departure point for a significant, but little-understood, transformation of party organisation in Australia. Into the traditional cast of party actors – party members and elected representatives – a new actor was introduced: a paid party official. Alongside the traditional stages for internal party activity – local branches and legislative chambers – a new stage was created: a central Head Office. In contrast to Labor's part-time state-based 'honorary secretary', the Liberals' innovation of a full-time paid party official in a well-resourced national Head Office became entrenched in the Liberal Party and was ultimately – though only after several false starts – adopted also by the ALP. Labor did not employ a Federal Secretary who was not also a state secretary until 1951; it was another twelve years, in 1963, before Labor employed its first full-time national secretary on the Cleland model. Over time these new party actors introduced a new form of party activity: the new approach to election campaigning, which the Liberals had pioneered in 1949. Labor was not able to match their effort until 1972. In the intervening decades, of course, the technologies of communications had been revolutionised, and new marketing tools emerged, most notably market research; demographic change enlarged and

transformed the voting population in significant respects. Yet with due allowance for these developments, the essential features of Labor's 1972 campaign resembled the Liberals' 1949 model. Both campaigns were built around Opposition Leaders whose powerful messages of change, supported by extensive and expensive electronic advertising, were organised and delivered by a centralised campaign organisation based in the parties' national Head Offices. (Astonishingly, the resilient Rubensohn was involved with them both.)

After Labor's win in 1972, this style of campaigning was progressively adopted and refined in both parties. But this did not happen on a smooth forward trajectory. The arrival of the party officials, with their novel approach to campaigning, disrupted established elements of the party structure. Not everyone accepted the basic idea, for example, that a party should try to win elections. In the wake of Labor's defeat in 1949, the powerful secretary of the Western Australian branch F. E. 'Joe' Chamberlain disparaged 'the tendency in certain quarters to measure our progress solely in terms of parliamentary seats':

This (labour) movement did not come into existence to provide safe seats in Parliament for any Tom, Dick or Harry who may be looking for a soft job. When it comes to a question of Labor principle versus political expediency, then expediency must be rejected. Far better to go into the political wilderness ... (Chamberlain, 1964).

Still in the wilderness after seven years, Chamberlain – by now the party's federal president – continued to insist there was 'much to be thankful for' in Labor's 1955 election loss:

If ... Labor has found its soul, and rediscovered its purpose, the mere fact of not winning an election is a very insignificant happening. It should be said with emphasis that the Labor Party did not come into existence merely to win seats in the parliament (Chamberlain, 1964).

Such outspokenness may be rare. But the adoption of the new campaign style was accompanied by a chorus of concern from within the parties. In 1972, 'stalwart' Labor Party members were 'aghast' at the 'soft-sell' involved in Labor's campaign marketing (Blewett, 1973). In the Queensland Liberal Party in the 1980s, a former party official bemoaned the arrival of 'filleted young men' into executive positions, downgrading member sovereignty in favour of 'top control' (C. Porter, 1981). As the new campaign style was adopted, party membership began – for whatever reason – a precipitate decline; Head Office adjusted by taking over or abandoning many of the powers, such as policy formation and candidate selection, formerly exercised by members through local branches. Grassroots canvassing performed by volunteer members was superseded by capital-intensive market research, direct mail and television advertising which linked Head Office directly to the electors. Meanwhile, the parties' federal structures were centralised at the national level, and state officials were co-opted into the new model. Parliamentary representatives too had to adjust to a pervasive campaign model which reached into pre-selections, policy making and even leadership selection. Moreover, paying for the new campaign model required funding levels that were quite beyond the traditional capacities of the parties; parties' financial reliance on membership subscriptions was supplanted by corporate donations and, from the 1980s, subsidies provided by the taxpayer.

Amplified by media commentary, a murmur of internal disquiet has become a dominant narrative of discontent, especially within the ALP: party officials are 'faceless men' driven by 'focus groups' and 'negative' advertising; members of parliament are conviction-free vote-seekers who can win elections but cannot govern or lead. Retired Labor minister Lindsay Tanner exemplified this narrative by berating the party's class of 'cynical manipulators' and 'political professionals' who were 'extremely adept at the mechanics of politics but largely uninterested in its purpose'. Labor, he claims, has become 'an electoral machine' (Coorey, 2012). Beneath the inevitable simplifications, party concern is real. Following the 2010 Federal Election which produced a hung Parliament, the Liberal Party commissioned former Howard Government minister Peter Reith to conduct an internal review of the campaign effort. He found that the Federal Secretariat had for

many years been 'something of a fiefdom' and the national party as a whole had 'become principally a campaign unit. Party membership had been 'declining for decades', leading to a 'lack of volunteers on the ground' to assist in basic electioneering tasks (Reith, 2011: 23, 28). Labor's counterpart review, conducted by party elders Steve Bracks, Bob Carr and John Faulkner, identified similar problems: 'Modern campaign techniques introduced over the last 30 years have diminished and degraded the role members once played in political campaigning'; for the first time in living memory, important polling booths had been unstaffed or understaffed. The elders declared the ALP faced 'a crisis in membership', with membership declining in numbers and participation levels, while the party's focus on election campaigning had often come at the expense of resources dedicated to party-building activities (Bracks, Carr, & Faulkner, 2011: 9-13).

### **Research Questions and Significance**

These developments – wide ranging in their potential ramifications for citizens, for political parties, and for democratic practice as a whole - suggest a rich field for research. At a basic level, it is clearly necessary to establish the identity and characteristics of the party officials in their Head Offices – to retrieve a lost lineage of party officials stretching back nearly sixty years to Cleland, and in the ALP nearly a century to the first Federal Secretary in 1915. Who are these individuals? How did they come to occupy this role in the party: what was their skill-set and experience and how were they selected? While the equivalent data is readily available about parliamentarians, one searches the academic literature in vain for a consolidated data set of party officials.

Beyond these basic questions of identity, it is also necessary to explore the new campaign style these officials introduced: what constitutes this new approach to election campaigning, what roles do the party officials play in it, and how does it differ from previous campaign practice? Of particular importance, it is necessary to explore whether and how this new model has changed the way parties operate and the relationships among party actors. Political parties are often understood as bilateral structures that link citizens with the state by providing a democratic chain of participation, representation and accountability (K. Lawson & Merkl, 1988; Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000b; Dalton, Farrell, & McAllister, 2011). In this bilateral model, essential party work is thought of as being performed in forums of deliberation and participation such as the branch meeting, the party conference, the caucus room, the legislature. As such, the model has powerful normative connotations. Its apparent decline underpins the sense of despair, almost of existential crisis, expressed by the 2010 party reviews. Its bilateral structure leaves little theoretical justification for party officials and discounts party work performed in the national Head Office. Addressing this shortcoming requires a more complete framework of party structure, one that recognises the role of the party officials while also taking account of the apparent disintegration of accepted notions of democratically appropriate party structures. Such a framework can ask new questions about the relationships between party actors, ranging as they do from relationships of rivalry, trespass and to collaboration and emulation. *Within* the party, how do the officials relate to members, elected parliamentarians and state branches? Have indeed the 'professional' campaign techniques promoted by party officials triggered the contemporary party crisis by driving away members – or are they an adaptive response to membership decline? *Beyond* the party, who employs the non-party marketing consultants and what role do they play in campaign decision making? *Between* the parties, what similarities and differences can be observed between officials of the two major Australian parties? Can patterns of emulation and learning be observed?

This leads to a third set of questions. The normative standing of the bilateral linkage model relies, in part, on a glorification of the amateur, volunteer, status of the party members. Its flip side implicitly discounts the party officials because they are paid for their party work. Yet 'professionalism' and its cognates are ambiguous and highly contested terms. Could Cleland and McNamara, for example, be termed professional in the 1940s? Cleland was a salaried employee while McNamara, as a part-time honorary secretary, looks more the amateur. Moreover, Cleland was a professional lawyer who went on to become a professional soldier; he had requisite training and qualifications in both roles; McNamara lacked any such professional standing. At a time when

party organisation tended to be haphazard and mediocre, Cleland brought advanced skills of management acquired in military service and was supported by a trained staff; McNamara had no such resources. Yet McNamara had a life-long commitment to and experience in party affairs, and seems more like a political professional than Cleland, a neophyte and outsider. Perhaps neither of them was a professional. Unlike the traditional doctor or lawyer, neither was self-employed. Moreover, as partisans, both lacked the dispassionate independence of judgement that might be considered a hallmark of professional conduct. Perhaps there is even a trace of class consciousness in the discussion, with Menzies' description of Rubensohn's advertising agency as 'clever tradesmen', available for hire like a team of bricklayers; clearly, they could not be regarded as professional. Since the 1940s, the term has become more widely applied within political parties and election campaigns and, arguably, even more ambiguous. In using these terms to describe Australian party officials and election campaigns, a careful attempt at definitional clarity is required.

A final group of questions transfers these issues of identity and relationships into a dynamic process of change through time. It is clear parties and election campaigns have changed from the 1940s to the present day. How and why did such change occur? The question takes us to the heart of the structure-agency debate. Institutions like political parties and the system of rules and practices that build up around election campaigns endure for many decades and powerfully shape human behaviour. But these same institutions are also destabilised, disrupted and modified by the actions of the human actors within and around them. If we are to understand the transition from the Liberal Party of Cleland in the 1940s to the ALP of Young in the 1970s, and the continuing changes since then, we will need to explore a broad spectrum of potential drivers of what is apparently a complex process of change. Exogenous factors played a potentially critical role, creating new channels for campaign communication (television) and new tools of campaign strategy (market research); societal changes lifted education levels, changed work habits and domestic arrangements, breeding new attitudes and behaviours among voters. But endogenous factors also seem likely to have played a critical role. Parties win and lose office, attract and lose members, adopt and abandon policy positions, promote and overthrow leaders, learn and forget campaign skills. They contain changing power dynamics, ideological leanings, and resource levels. All these factors may have influenced their propensity to adopt or refine the new campaign approach. And parties may have influenced each other in this endeavour. Like armies, parties exist to compete and to prevail. Driven by a competitive logic, they spend much of their time observing their fiercest rivals so as to neutralise any advantage; in the process differences are homogenised and the rivals come to resemble each other. A further consideration in understanding this complex process is the tempo of change. While membership decline occurs slowly, over a long period of time, technological innovations may emerge quickly and unexpectedly, forcing sharp and rapid change.

In all this complex and multi-factored change occurring within institutions, how do we account for the role of human agents? At one level it is possible to see party officials as nothing more than the creatures and servants of the party organisation – employed and paid to do a job. At another level however party officials might be seen as altogether more influential actors, critically aware of the need to free up rigidities within their party organisations and to generate campaign change. Amid technological and demographic change, within parties replete with personal and political contests, locked in battle with a rival Head Office, the party officials may be highly influential agents in promoting campaign change.

### **Hypothesis and Research Design**

To address these questions, it is necessary to focus on the national party officials. Party officials occupy centre stage in this thesis. The research presented here – based on interviews with eight former National Secretaries of the Australian Labor Party and five former and incumbent Federal Directors of the Liberal Party, supported by relevant documentary research - was designed to understand the role national party officials in Australia's two major political parties played in election campaigning and, specifically, in the adoption and operation of the professional approach

to election campaigning. The research tests the hypothesis that the party officials were responsible both for operationalising the professional model during specific election campaigns and more generally for driving its adoption throughout the party organisation. With its core characteristics of centralisation, strategic resource allocation, specialised marketing and high cost, this new approach to election campaigning constitutes a '*professional campaign model*'. Its adoption constitutes the '*professionalisation*' of election campaigning. Driving this process, developing the skills to manage and refine the professional campaign model, marshalling resources for it, driving its wider adoption within their parties and enforcing its disciplines, the descendants of Cleland and McNamara in the national Head Offices were themselves transformed and became '*campaign professionals*'.

### **Thesis Structure**

The thesis is structured so as to provide an unfolding discussion of these issues. The foundation of the discussion, presented in Chapter One, lies in a review and evaluation of the extensive scholarly literature on those central, enduring, but ever-changing, institutions of representative democracies, political parties. This review also considers the extensive scholarly and other literature on changing campaign practices, including the efforts to model these changes as a transition from contests dominated by parties to contests between rival marketing campaigns. The chapter then moves to consider the contested notion of professionalisation. Thus traversing literature on political parties, campaigns and professionalisation, the chapter is able to propose a three-face two-level framework of party organisation within which to understand the distinctive character of the officials and to explore their role as campaign professionals. On this basis, Chapter Two discusses in more detail the methods employed to define, conduct and analyse the interviews with the party officials. The semi-structured elite interviews conducted for the thesis represent the first attempt to engage party officials in a comprehensive and comparative (cross-party and over time) empirical study. The chapter argues that the lens of historical institutionalism provides a valuable way of explaining, with a dense qualitative narrative, the process of change in Australian political parties. This narrative assumes significance not just for what it tells us about the professionalisation of Australian electoral politics but for its enlightening insights about the broader processes of institutional change.

Introducing the first of the research findings, Chapter Three explores the party officials' own understanding of campaign professionalism and the ways they have constructed identities as campaign professionals. This provides a working definition of professionalism built around economic, technical and ideological dimensions. Chapter Four builds on this definition to explore the tensions in the relationship between the party officials and their party organisation, focussing on their status as party members, their campaign experience within the party, the party's methods of selecting them as party officials, and their sometimes troubled relationships with the parliamentary leader. The next three chapters then describe the work performed by these campaign professionals in Head Office. Drawing extensively from the interviews, each chapter analyses a specific theme or 'imperative' that contributes to the professional campaign model:

- Chapter Five deals with the *centralising* imperative: in parties that were divided (as the three-face two-level framework suggests) on federal and functional lines, the national Head Office acquired authority for campaign management over state branches and parliamentary groups;
- Chapter Six deals with the *strategic* imperative: having secured authority over campaign management, the national Head Office developed and deployed effective campaign strategies in pursuit of their superordinate goal of electoral success. Defining campaign strategy as an understanding of the requirements for electoral success, the research outlines seven key tasks, identified in the interviews, which are performed by Head Office to formulate and implement a professional campaign strategy;
- The twin imperatives of centralisation and strategy were directly associated with a third: the campaign professional requires a cash flow sufficient to fund the operations of the capital-intensive professional campaign model. Chapter Seven deals with this *funding*



imperative, describing the officials' ceaseless and innovative efforts to develop a sustainable funding basis for the parties.

A final chapter draws conclusions from the foregoing, confirming the central role of the party officials in the professionalisation process and identifying the major phases and characteristics of that process. The tensions and conflicts generated within the parties by this process, understood through the three-face two-level framework of party organisation, provides some support for the 'cartel' theory of party development. The findings deal with campaign management, not with voter behaviour or other aspects of electoral participation: professional campaigns are conducted amid uncertainty about whether and why they succeed or fail. Yet it is suggested that parties and party officials will persist with the professional campaign approach. Unlike other research pointing to the decline of parties and linking this to the spread of professional campaigning, this research underlines the continuing centrality of parties and the success, in Australia, of party-centred professionalisation and of the party-based campaign professionals.

## Chapter One

### Understanding Change in Political Parties and Election Campaigns

Political parties remain central to the operation of representative democracy in Australia. Parliaments are made up almost entirely of party representatives: having been recruited by parties and preselected by parties and elected under party banners, they debate in party language and vote on disciplined party lines. This is as true of the bicameral national parliament as it is of parliaments in the six states and two territories. Executive government is permeated by party: Prime Ministers, Premiers and Chief Ministers, their Cabinets and their ministers are drawn from party ranks and selected by party processes; they operate as elements of party; Oppositions seek government as party blocs. Partisanship imbues the policy debate and the legislative agenda at the state and national levels and colours the supra-national Council of Australian Governments. Election campaigns are saturated with partisan contest, whether at the national level with its media-oriented contest between party leaders or at the electorate level with its street-by-street struggle between local party representatives. Parties retain the allegiance and attract the support of most voters (McAllister, 2011). Parties were written into the Australian Constitution in 1977 and from 1984 have received public subsidies. It is true that important institutions of the Australian polity remain free from overt partisanship, notably the public service, the judiciary, the military, the media and the administration of elections; but party service acts as no bar to appointment to public posts up to and including vice-regal positions. Dean Jaensch's assertions as to the 'ubiquity, pervasiveness and centrality' of party in Australia (Jaensch, 1983, 1994) remain valid; they hold the key to understanding the national polity (Jaensch, 2006). Two political parties in particular exercise wide and enduring influence: every national government and most state governments since the Second World War have been formed by either the Australian Labor Party (ALP) or the Liberal Party of Australia in coalition with its junior partner the National (formerly Country) Party.

And yet, these critical Australian institutions have undergone radical change. Over the six post-war decades, parties have transformed from mass-membership organisations that provided meaningful opportunities for member participation at the grass-roots level, into hollowed-out structures managed from the national centre. Declining membership has weakened the parties' linkage role, while the rise of television and the more recent digital technologies have provided citizens with abundant alternative supplies of information and participation outside the parties. Parties remain essential to the mobilisation of electoral support yet this function, too, has transformed with the rise of marketing and communications technologies. Once reliant on engaged volunteers and class-based donors, parties now depend on public subsidies and corporate donors to meet their escalating campaign costs. They have also, since Cleland, become employers of professional staff who have built up well-resourced Head Offices and introduced a professional model of campaign management.

As noted in the Introduction, the advent of these campaign professionals represented a turning point in the transformation of political organisation in Australia. The transformation is explored through the research undertaken for this thesis. Before presenting the research, it is necessary to place it within the setting of the relevant international and Australian scholarship. Robert Michels' pioneering 1911 study of party oligarchy reached its centenary while the thesis was in preparation, underlining the venerable character of this area of scholarship. Theoretically rich, empirically strong, truly international in character while also respecting the particularities of local institutions and practices, this scholarship provides three areas of particular relevance for this research. This chapter evaluates them in turn by

- first, reviewing theories of change within parties and within election campaigns, and relating these to what we know about Australian parties and elections;

- second, reviewing the relatively neglected area of party scholarship that deals with the distinctive role and function of party officials, and relating this to the officials in the Head Offices of Australia's major political parties; and
- third, reviewing the contested term professionalisation and establishing its potential application to describing, explaining and measuring the transformation of parties and campaigns.

### **Changing Parties, Changing Campaigns**

Change within political parties – shifting organisational structures, personnel, functions and values – reflects a changing relationship between parties and the social environment in which they operate. The 'mass membership' party in the western European context, for example, has its distinctive apparatus of branches, conferences and other forums of deliberation and participation because it expresses and aggregates the political demands of a large homogenous group whose origins lie in deeply-rooted social cleavages (Michels, 1911 (trans. 1966); Duverger, 1951 (trans. 1964); Lipset & Rokkan, 1967: 1-65; Katz & Mair, 1995). The decision in 1891 of the Australian trade union movement to create a political party that would pursue their demands on behalf of the rural and industrial working class marked the emergence in Australia of such a party, with its distinctive membership base, programmatic clarity, socialist orientation and subscription funding (Freudenberg, 1991; McMullin, 1991). The formation in 1920 of the Country (later, National) Party by representatives of farming organisations (Ellis, 1958; Graham, 1966; Davey, 2010), and Menzies' assembly in 1944 of the Liberal Party as the self-appointed advocate for the 'forgotten people' of the broad middle class (Starr, 1980; Brett, 1992), represent efforts on the conservative side of Australian politics to create similar 'mass' party organisations. Katz and Mair suggest (1995: 12) that conservative parties were never as committed to the 'mass' party model as those on the left. Indeed, while the Liberal Party sought to build a broad membership base, to organise it in local branches across the nation, to formulate policy through party conferences and to fund its activities through member subscriptions (Hancock, 2000: 38-9, 44, 121), the Liberal membership base was not as socially distinctive as Labor's industrial base and, in any event, the Liberals continued to emphasise the independence of the parliamentary party under Menzies as its electorally successful leader, ahead of any representative accountability to members (Hancock 2000: 120, 157). Even so, the post-war years were a 'golden age' for Australian mass parties, a 30-year period of high party membership and party identification at the ballot box (Marsh, 2006: 5). Their deep roots in civil society provided mass membership parties with a strong normative and practical rationale to play a central role in the affairs of the polity (Katz & Mair, 1995).

By the late 1960s however the long cycle of post-war economic prosperity had ameliorated social conditions (Katz and Mair 1995: 12) and eroded class distinctions on which party loyalties had been based (Kirchheimer 1966: 190); new non-party avenues for political engagement emerged through television (Mendelsohn & Crespi, 1970; Seymour-Ure, 1974) and social movements (Marsh, 2006: 6; Lawson & Merkl, 1988). Party membership began a steady steep decline (I. Ward, 1991; Jaensch, 2006: 28-30; Johns, 2006; Cavalier, 2010) in line with that occurring in European parties (van Biezen, Mair, & Poguntke, 2012); voter loyalties also declined (McAllister, 2011: 50-4). This emergence of 'parties without partisans' (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000b) did not herald the disappearance of political parties, but it did require them, in Australia as in Western Europe, to redefine their relationship with civil society. In particular, they found it necessary to find new sources of electoral support outside their long-established class (or in some Western European cases, denominational) base in the electorate. Shedding ideological baggage in order to win new sources of voting support from the population at large, they transformed themselves, in Otto Kirchheimer's influential analysis, into 'catch-all' parties (Kirchheimer, 1966; M. H. Williams, 2009). Among its many implications, the catch-all party adopts a changed party structure, with member participation replaced by elite-driven or centrally-controlled organisational structures (Kirchheimer 1996: 190-1). To carry out the new catch-all electoral strategy, party bureaucrats were replaced by a new type of party official, identified by Angelo Panebianco as the 'electoral professionals' (Panebianco, 1988). As their gravitational centre shifts away from their declining member base to the broader electorate, catch-all parties require electoral-professionals skilled in

polling, mass media and policy analysis to link with the electorate via 'television and interest groups' (1988: 264-6, 312 fn12). The basis on which these partisan-free parties will operate is not clear. For Panebianco, a legitimisation crisis looms as the new form of party destroys the collective identities of the old cleavage structures creating conditions of turbulence and ungovernability (1988: 272). Mancini, too, speaks of the party of the future as 'a feeble apparatus made up of bureaucrats ... whose main job is to coordinate the contributions of professionals coming from outside the political realm to win election campaigns' (1999: 242-3). Certainly, as Katz and Mair remind us (1995: 6), the mass membership party derived much of its legitimacy and normative strength from nineteenth-century patterns of social organisation and concepts of democratic governance which will not persist into post-industrial conditions.

These developments have had profound implications for the conduct by parties of election campaigns. Australian election campaign practices have been extensively documented (Goot, 2007) though coverage of Federal election campaigns prior to the 1970s was sporadic (Overacker, 1952; Mayer & Rydon, 1954; Rawson & Holtzinger, 1958; Rawson, 1961; Overacker, 1968). In 1972, Henry Mayer at the University of Sydney expressed surprise that 'no academics' were intending to survey the forthcoming campaign. His edited collection of contributions by an eclectic set of academics, political practitioners, activists and journalists (Mayer, 1973) provided a template for an almost unbroken stream of campaign documentation and analysis by academics both international (Butler, 1974; Penniman, 1977, 1979, 1983) and Australian (McAllister & Warhurst, 1988; Clive Bean, McAllister, & Warhurst, 1990; Clive Bean, Simms, Bennett, & Warhurst, 1997; Simms & Warhurst, 2000; Warhurst & Simms, 2002; Simms & Warhurst, 2005; Simms, 2009c; Simms & Wanna, 2012). These collections provide valuable source material, though their static compartmentalised structure limits their analytic value. Also from 1972, journalists too began to produce informative 'insider' accounts of election campaigns (notably including Oakes & Solomon, 1973; Oakes & Solomon, 1974; Oakes, 1976; Haupt & Grattan, 1983; P. Williams, 1997; Marr & Wilkinson, 2004; Jackman, 2008). The episodic, campaign-specific, constraints of all these accounts have been transcended by studies taking a thematic approach – for example, on techniques of dealing with the news media (Tiffen, 1989: Ch6), on the emergence of polling and advertising consultants (Braund, 1978; Mills, 1986), on television advertising (S. Young, 2002, 2003, 2004), on campaign financing (C. A. Hughes, 1963; S. Young & Tham, 2006; Tham, 2010), on 'virtual' digital and internet-enabled campaigning (Gibson & Ward, 2002; Chen, Gibson, & Geiselhart, 2006: ch4), and on electoral law (Orr, Williams, & Mercurio, 2003; Orr, 2010). Valuable further evidence on changing campaign practices are provided in party-specific studies (Crisp, 1955; West, 1965; Parkin, 1983; McMullin, 1991; Henderson, 1998; Hancock, 2000; Parkin & Warhurst, 2000; Faulker & MacIntyre, 2001; Hancock, 2006, 2007) and in systemic studies of Australian parties and elections (Jupp, 1964, 1982; Jaensch, 1983; C. A. Hughes, 1992; Jaensch, 1994).

Overacker's (1952: Ch10) account of the 1946 election campaign provides a suitable benchmark for tracing the transformation of Australian campaign activities along the lines suggested by Kirchheimer and Panebianco. In this campaign – the first attempt by the newly formed Liberal Party, with Cleland as Federal Director, to unseat Chifley's Labor Government – most campaign activity consisted of face-to-face campaigning and broad-brush propaganda rather than targeted communications to specific voter groups. In 1946 there were public meetings, paid newspaper advertising, and leaflets, handbills and posters; radio broadcasting had 'come into its own' however and 'party managers and news correspondents' already believed public meetings were less well attended as a result (Overacker, 1952: 272; Duthie, 1984; Martin, 1999: v2, 50-8; Mills, 2012a: 144). Polls on voting intentions were sporadically published in newspapers; it was not until the late 1960s that parties started conducting their own market research (Mills, 1999; Hancock, 2000: 68). There were no television broadcasts of campaign events until 1958 – relatively late by British or American standards (Rawson, 1961: Ch8; I. Ward, 1999; Hancock, 2000: 256; Griffen-Foley, 2003: 68-80). Advertising in 1946 was mostly printed in newspapers, distributed as handbills, displayed as posters or, where campaign budgets permitted, sent by mail. In 1946, Menzies and Chifley did not debate each other – the first televised leaders' debate took place in 1984 (Senior, 2008). Parties were not preoccupied with 'marginal seats' in 1946; that term was

not in use until 1951 (see chapter 6). In the absence of market research, the 'marginal' status of any seat was knowable only through the imperfect means of voting statistics; that now familiar tool of Australian campaign analysis, the Mackerras pendulum, was not developed until 1972 (Mackerras, 1972).

In this transformation, two developments appear to have been particularly salient. Plasser and Plasser (2002: 1) refer to them as the 'marketing revolution' and the 'media revolution' of campaigning. In the first, opinion research methodologies have been progressively improved by commercial marketing practitioners, from Gallup-style door-to-door surveys of the 1940s, telephone polling in the 1970s, computer-assisted phone polling in the 1980s, and on-line panels of the present day. At the same time, these quantitative measures of apparently rational opinion have been supplemented by qualitative measures of affect and attitude through discursive 'focus group' research. These developments have been closely monitored by political parties and eagerly adapted to campaign use. The plebiscitary idealism of media-sponsored 'public opinion' polls has been eclipsed by a more proprietary, party-driven, approach to 'market research' conducted on a confidential basis. Improved statistical analysis of voting and polling data by computerised systems has also revolutionised the parties' knowledge of voter preferences and improved their capacity to segment the electorate by geographical, socio-economic and attitudinal classifications. This scientific knowledge has allowed parties to objectify and domesticate public opinion (Ginsberg, 1986; Igo, 2007) while also serving to disempower grass roots, parochial sources of political knowledge and encouraging a 'secretive hierarchical culture' among party leaders at the centre (Wring, 2005: 175; J. K. Smith, 2009). In the second of Plasser and Plasser's revolutions, the media revolution, repeated waves of technological innovation have transformed the way campaign organisations communicate with the electorate. The dominance of the printing press was challenged by the emergence of radio which in turn was eclipsed by television, first by large single-channel network broadcasters and then by multiple-channel cable and satellite vehicles. Television became not only a vehicle for mass distribution of campaign messages but also a major - perhaps the major - arena in which campaigning takes place. The arrival of 'new media' on on-line and digital platforms continues to open new avenues of campaign communications (Foot & Schneider, 2006; Australian Centre for Public Communication, 2008). At the same time, personal communications have been continually revolutionised with fixed line telephone, mobile telephony, emails, instant messaging and social media. Taken together, these twin revolutions have given parties the ability to 'track' changes in voter attitudes and to choose appropriate communications channels to 'target' specific campaign messages to selected segments of the electorate (Mills, 1986).

Scholars in the US and Europe have developed a number of models that seek to provide synoptic interpretations of these sweeping campaign changes. The models claim to integrate key characteristics of campaign change and to place them within the larger processes of societal modernisation and technological change occurring through western societies. Typically the models conceptualise change as a three-stage process. Farrell and Webb select eight campaign characteristics (campaign preparations, use of media, campaign organisation, agencies/consultants, sources of feedback, campaign events, targeting of voters and campaign communication) and trace their change through three phases which they simply named stage one, stage two and stage three (Farrell & Webb, 2000: 104). Norris also selects eight, somewhat different, campaign characteristics (campaign organisation, preparations, central coordination, feedback, media, campaign events, costs and electorate) and shows them passing through three phases which she labels premodern, modern and postmodern (Norris, 2000: 138). Gibson and Römmele select four campaign dimensions (tools, mode/style, orientation to voter and internal power distribution) and show them passing through three phases: premodern campaigns, modern campaigns and professional campaigns (Gibson & Rommele, 2001: 34). Other three-phase change models are presented by Blumler and Kavanagh (1999) simply as ages one, two and three, and by Farrell, Kolodny and Medvic (2001) as Newspaper Age, Television Age and Digital Age. Plasser and Plasser have aggregated and synthesised many of these models into a single matrix, based on Norris' headings (Plasser & Plasser, 2002: 6).

Such models serve useful heuristic purposes, drawing together a diverse set of variables into a coherent narrative of change (Farrell and Webb 2000: 106, Plasser and Plasser 2002: 4). Taken together, these models present campaign practice as having originally been party-dominated and decentralised. In this original state, parties embody societal cleavages and attract long-lasting voter identification and loyalties; their campaigns rely on top-down propaganda through party press, posters, public meetings, mass rallies and canvassing, and are informed by impressionistic 'feel' for the electorate rather than objective feedback. Labour intensive, low-budget and short-term, this original style of campaigning makes only minimal use of external agencies or consultants; the 'politicians' are firmly in charge. All the models agree a decisive change occurs with the arrival of television. In this middle phase, campaigning becomes more centralised and nationalised, and more capital intensive, with salaried party campaign managers and their external specialist consultants focussed on attracting network TV news coverage with press conferences, sound-bites and candidate debates – and on designing and buying television advertising spots. TV news broadcasts penetrated a section of the electorate which hitherto had been less exposed to political communications, a critical element of catch-all appeals (Blumler and Kavanagh 1999: 212). Opinion polling provides campaigns with increasing amounts of data about the electorate. Campaigns move into a third phase in which broadcast channels multiply, proliferate and fragment. Operating in decentralised fashion but with central scrutiny, campaigns engage even more consultants to manage increased polling and to disseminate segmented targeted campaign communications such as computer-assisted telephone calling, direct mail and interactive cable TV. Campaign costs continue to spiral upwards. It is an age of 'communications abundance' in which politicians perceive the media as a hydra-headed beast with many mouths clamouring constantly to be fed (Blumler & Kavanagh, 1999). Efforts to reconnect with voters through targeted campaigns need constant reinforcement since voter loyalties cannot be assumed (Gibson and Römmele 2001: 33). The 'basic trends' of the three-stage models thus describe 'a gradual shift from electioneering as essentially a localist, largely amateur, part-time affair directed at party loyalists to the permanent campaign of today that is personified by a focus on slick presentation, the prominent role of campaign consultants and an emphasis on marketing of image and campaign issues' (Farrell, Kolodny, & Medvic, 2001).

For all the narrative strength of such generalised accounts, these models are limited in their capacity to explain campaign change. This arises in part because, as suggested above, the models all employ different sets of campaign characteristics with which to measure change. No doubt as a consequence, they also differ in naming the change process. For Plasser and Plasser, it is simply a set of 'changing campaign practices'; for Norris, a process of campaign 'evolution'; for Farrell it is the 'professionalisation of election campaigning' and for Gibson and Römmele, the 'rise of the professional campaign'. These labels remain undefined. The models also attribute a powerfully deterministic role to television, whose arrival appears as the (literally) central event around which they are organised. Yet the significant impact of radio (Ward 1999: 327-8) is discounted and consigned to the premodern era, while the more recent and arguably even more disruptive transformations wrought by the advent of 'new media' are classified under the flexible heading of 'postmodern', a third stage beyond which no further development is conceptualised. Preoccupied with the communications aspects of televised campaigns, the models also discount the emerging importance of market research in shaping those communications. In all these respects the models carry assumptions, largely unexamined, about causation. Observed changes are presented as driven by exogenous system-level changes (such the advent of television or the demographic changes leading to declining partisan allegiances) leaving little room for endogenous or sub-systemic explanations. Critically, political parties and party officials are discounted as agents of change; professionalising activities that party officials might reasonably be expected to perform – such as developing campaign strategies, gathering intelligence and raising funds - are neglected. The decline of party is presented as an observed fact rather than a phenomenon specific to the US; the survival of party in the European (and Australian) context is overlooked. Only Gibson and Römmele (2001: 34) reject the portrayal of parties as 'victims of professionalisation' and search instead for evidence of inter-party variation in the professionalisation process which would suggest a role for party agency.

Another influential model of campaign change, which also employs a three-phase structure, avoids many of these procedural problems: Jennifer Lees-Marshment's political marketing model (Lees-Marshment, 2001, 2009, 2011). Political marketing conceptualises the electorate as a marketplace, voters as consumers and party policies and leadership as products (Lees-Marshment, 2001: 1; O'Shaughnessy, 2001: 1048; Wring, 2002). Three stages of campaign practice are presented, based on the extent to which the party has adopted a 'market orientation' (Lees-Marshment 2001: 28-9). In the first phase, a Product-Oriented Party (POP) has no market orientation, determining its electoral strategy entirely from its own skills and beliefs without regard to voter preferences, and persisting regardless of whether it achieves membership or electoral success. A Sales-Oriented Party (SOP) focuses on selling its arguments to voters, using technologies of persuasion such as advertising; it 'does not change its behaviour to suit what people want, but tries to make people want what it offers' (Lees-Marshment 2001: 29). The Market-Oriented Party (MOP) fully embraces market orientation, in that it 'designs its behaviour to provide voter satisfaction' (Lees-Marshment 2001: 30). A MOP focuses all its operations – product design as well as campaign communications – on satisfying the preferences of consumers as identified by market intelligence; it does not seek to change those preferences. Combining theoretical description with practitioner prescription, the MOP concept has been criticised on both empirical and conceptual grounds (Lees-Marshment, 2006; Ormrod, 2006). Comparative studies outside the United Kingdom have refined the model (Lilleker & Lees-Marshment, 2005; Lees-Marshment, Rudd, & Stromback, 2011); Australia, for many years something of a *terra incognita* in political marketing scholarship, is now attracting some attention (O'Cass, 2001; A. Hughes & Dann, 2010; Mills, 2012b).

Lees-Marshment's concept of change avoids the trap of technological determinism apparent in the other three-phase models by granting parties an adaptive learning capacity – in this case, the capacity to learn marketing techniques, to adopt a market orientation and indeed to progress and regress along the spectrum of market orientation. Equally, inter-party variation is permitted depending on endogenous circumstances. For example, parties may adopt a market orientation in opposition, but once elected to government may abandon the practice due to the perceived need to make tough decisions (Lilleker & Lees-Marshment, 2005: 212-3). Thus the political marketing model places primary emphasis on the strategic activities of parties, politicians and campaign advisers in their efforts to maintain or expand their market share. Pippa Norris (2000: 148) explicitly rejects this approach, reasserting her conceptualisation of the third-stage postmodern campaign which places 'greater emphasis on the ways that technological and socioeconomic developments are altering the context of political communications ... to which all actors (parties, campaign professionals and journalists) are being forced to respond'.

Here then is a critical area of uncertainty and dispute: who or what is driving campaign change? The challenge is to define a model of institutional change which accommodates systemic, party and individual level drivers, respecting the autonomy and structuring force of parties as institutions while simultaneously recognising them as artefacts of human activity and arenas for human agency, choice and conflict. Literature on organisational change (van der Ven & Poole, 1995) provides some assistance in identifying *evolutionary*, *dialectic* and *teleological* models of change; institutional scholars identify *single-actor design*, *conflict design* and *learning* models (March & Olsen, 2006: 11); while a recent party scholar describes a *period effect* and *generation effect* (Hellmann, 2011). As ideal-types, such models are intended to provide exclusive and distinctive accounts of change. Empirically however it seems likely that political parties actually experience change from combinations of drivers: at different times deliberately planning their goals, adapting to changes in the external environment, learning or borrowing new skills, and competing against external rivals while also experiencing internal division and factional contest. Systemic processes of technological change and societal modernisation create conditions for a changing relationship with civil society, to which the parties purposively and iteratively respond by adopting catch-all electoral strategies and by engaging electoral-professionals to implement them. Tenscher and Mykkanen (2012) provide a neat summary: 'Faced with some fundamental changes in the socio-cultural, political and media environment, political parties have initiated a number of

substantial transformations both in their organisational structures and their communicative strategies’.

Amid this narrative of change, certain features of continuity must be noted. Lipset and Rokkan found it ‘amazing’ in 1967 that so many of the western European parties which had emerged with mass suffrage had survived in ‘frozen’ form through the First World War, a global recession, the onslaught of fascism, a second world war and a series of profound post-war social and cultural changes into their time (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967: 50-1). They would surely be impressed that the party system in Australia has remained institutionally frozen for another four decades into the twenty-first century. Voters in the 2010 election faced essentially the same Labor–Coalition choice as Overacker observed their grandparents facing in 1946. Indeed, since 1908, only the ALP and the Coalition (if one traces the Liberal Party back to its Nationalist and United Australia Party antecedents) have formed national governments. The tumultuous ALP splits of 1916, 1931 and 1955, the occasional outbreak of tensions between the Coalition parties, and the comet-like appearance in the Senate of minor parties such as the Democratic Labor Party, the Australian Democrats and the Greens, have not altered the essentially two-party character of Australia’s party system (Jupp, 1964; Loveday, Martin, & Parker, 1977; Jaensch, 1994; Strangio & Dyrenfurth, 2009). Campaigns remain intensely partisan contests between incumbents and oppositions conducted with zero-sum, winner-take-all intensity (Tiffen, 1989: 128).

### **Party Officials: from ‘Back-room Boys’ to Campaign Professionals**

A striking feature of this party literature is its relative neglect of the party official. Lipset and Rokkan observed in the 1960s that party scholarship was much better informed about the social base of political parties and about their participation in public decision-making than about their ‘internal management and ... organisational functioning’ (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967: 51). For Panebianco in the 1980s, ‘bureaucracy is surely the most neglected theme in studies on parties’ (Panebianco, 1988: 221). Despite many advances since those observations were made, party literature continues to display the same neglect of the party official. Webb and Kolodny argued in 2006 that party employees were ‘one of the most under-researched fields’ in the study of political parties. As a result, they said, ‘relatively little’ is known of these paid employees who run the day to day operations of the parties, notwithstanding that their importance was likely to be ‘greater now than ever before’ (Webb & Kolodny, 2006).<sup>1</sup> Even at the level of journalism and political commentary, party officials have tended to inspire only episodic attention as shadowy players at election time.

The reasons for this neglect are numerous. Panebianco (1988: 210) observed that parties are reticent about their organisational make-up; or, as the long-serving director of the British Conservative Party Lord Fraser of Kilmorack put it, in relation to the party’s policy research unit: ‘The correct place for back-room boys is in the back room’ (Ramsden, 1980). As voluntary associations, Australian parties operate with little legislative or judicial scrutiny of their internal affairs and have sought with some success to protect this privacy even as regulation of their external activities increases (Somes, 1996; Gauja, 2006, 2008). Few in numbers, party officials have tended to be lumped in with larger and more visible groups of party actors – for example, as part of the ‘extra-parliamentary’ wing (for example, West, 1965; Parkin & Warhurst, 1983; Jaensch, 1994). Yet locating officials alongside members surely serves to blur distinctions rather

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<sup>1</sup> A detailed illustration of scholarly oversight of party officials in Australia – more generously, of scholarly focus on issues of accountability and representation at the expense of organisation and administration – is provided in Jaensch’s respected survey of the Australian party system (1994:123, Figure 5.1). Two charts purport to show the ‘party structure’ of the ALP and Liberal Party. The ALP chart includes several representative entities such as Young Labor and the Federal Labor Women’s Organisation but does not include the party’s Head Office and identifies the secretary only as part of the ‘federal executive’; the ‘federal campaign committee’ is named without mentioning the secretary as campaign director. (The terminology is also out of date in using ‘federal’ nomenclature which had been switched to ‘national’ in the 1970s). The Liberal chart displays the same blind spot. The Secretariat is identified but is represented as not having a role in the campaign committee; the Federal Director / campaign director is not identified at all. Nor does the Staff Planning Committee appear.



than clarify them; it also runs counter to Michel's 'iron law' which draws a hard line between members and the party elite (Katz & Mair, 1993: 185).

As for the party officials themselves, they may see their role – perhaps even their identity – as requiring minimal disclosure about their activities, particularly while they hold office. Only a tiny proportion of party officials have published memoirs (C. Porter, 1981; Richardson, 1994; Chamberlain, 1998) or campaign analysis (Rawlinson, 1983; Litchfield, 1984; Neat, 1987; Robb, 1996a; Hogg, 2002, 2003). Since 1993, national party officials have addressed the National Press Club after each election campaign and have participated in the academic post-election symposia. These initially provided valuable insights (Robb, 1993 (1 April); Hogg, 1993 (24 March)), but over time have become subordinated to the party's preferred campaign narrative and have not infrequently been delegated to colleagues (Hallaj, 2012; Loughnane, 2012).

Aside from these practical obstacles, normative issues have served to impede research into party officials. Panebianco (1988: 210) blamed the 'generally negative connotation' of the word bureaucracy – a traditional antipathy which dates back at least to Robert Michels, who identified officials as part of the 'oligarchy' which he argued inevitably arises in organisations to subvert the democratic structures and rhetoric of even mass membership parties such as the German Social Democratic Party (Michels, 1911 (trans. 1966)). Duverger likewise located the 'permanent officials' of western European parties within an 'inner circle' of party oligarchs (Duverger, 1951 (trans. 1964): 151-5). In this sense, the party organisation can be regarded with 'some distaste', disparaged as an instrumental and self-interested 'machine' because it is seen to be working not for the party's overarching cause but for its own survival (Loveday, et al., 1977: 466; Parkin & Warhurst, 1983: 16-26). As noted earlier, with the normative strength of the political party in a representative democracy understood in a dyadic 'linkage' role uniting the grassroots with the highest offices of state, it is not easy to accommodate let alone justify a third element like a party organisation.

Whatever its cause, this scholarly neglect has served to mask what is in fact a quite distinctive character of party officials within political parties, including Australia's. Party officials are party members, but their status as party employees sets them apart from 'rank and file' party members, amateur enthusiasts and volunteers. At the same time, while officials occupy prominent or even oligarchic positions within the party's leadership apparatus, they do not share the obligations of public representation and accountability borne by the parliamentary wing. Questions of ideology and policy that may be core to their party's identity and aspirations may be incidental to their own work, which consists of specialised administrative functions performed in their own central Head Office location. Party members and elected representatives express themselves, in full and in the open; party officials tend to work silently and out of the spotlight. Party officials may act on behalf of the party membership and the party's elected parliamentarians, but directly answer to neither.

It was not until the 1940s, and it was not in Europe but the United States, that a framework of party analysis was elaborated that could accommodate this distinctive character of party officials. V O Key's institutionalist classic *Politics, Parties and Pressure Groups* moved beyond the linear 'elite-grassroots' dichotomy by presenting a tripartite framework of party analysis: three distinct groups of party actors were identified. Describing the US Republican and Democratic parties, Key recognised the 'party-in-the-electorate' (that is, those voters who support the party's candidates at election time) and the 'party-in-government' (that is, the party's elected representatives in legislatures). Each of these groups is separate and distinct from each other and from the third element, which he termed the 'party organisation', that is, 'the group of more or less continuous if not professional party workers'. The distinctive character of each group lay largely in their different activities or functions – that is, their distinctive contributions to the achievement of the party's goals. The function of the party organisation was to gain power – specifically, control over the government – which required campaigning and vote winning. So while in a strict theoretical sense party workers should be regarded as the instruments of the party membership, Key noted, 'in actual behaviour' they constitute 'something of a lodge of their own' (Key, 1964: 181-2, 335-49).

Key made a further important advance. Having located this distinctive 'lodge', he recognised that the party organisation actually consisted of two sub-groups. There were 'congresses' or 'policy forming organs': elected representative bodies such as the committees and conventions involved in national, senatorial, congressional, state and even county level campaigns. There were also 'bureaucracies' or 'administrative or executive machinery'. In Michelsian tones Key noted, but dismissed as 'largely fiction', the suggestion that the representative congresses and conventions controlled the party; it was the highly autonomous bureaucratic elements that in fact constituted an 'inner core' or 'a party within the party' (Key 1964: 337). At the heart of this bureaucracy was the 'kingpin' - the chairman of the national committee, like Republican Mark Hanna and Democrat James Farley, who made this role one of power and prestige. Key went on to identify three distinctive characteristics about kingpins. First, the chairman's chief responsibility is managing the presidential campaign and as such he is a 'technician, a specialist in campaign management and machine tending'. Second, he exercises his power 'only so long as he enjoys the confidence of the presidential nominee'. Third, electoral outcomes matter: while the chairman of the losing candidate worries about how to keep his job, the winner gets to dispense government patronage (Key 1964: 341-5).

Key's tripartite framework proved to be of enduring influence in the study of political parties not only in the United States (Sorauf, 1968; Aldrich, 2006) but in Australia (I. Ward, 1991), Europe of the 1990s (Katz and Mair 1993) and advanced industrial democracies in general (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000a); indeed it 'helps structure our thinking about political parties in all democracies' (Aldrich, 2006). In the context of this thesis, Key's description of party 'kingpins' - devoting their specialist campaign expertise, in a competitive environment, to electoral success, amid an uneasy relationship with the 'party in office' represented by the presidential nominee - provides a particularly relevant foundation for understanding the campaign professional. Yet figures such as Hanna and Farley, and the wards and precincts of their parties, remain some considerable distance from their contemporary descendants. Electoral reforms in the United States reduced the powers and prerogatives of those very kingpins, shifting responsibility for election campaign management out of the hands of parties into those of candidates and their external consultants (Agranoff, 1972; Broder, 1972; Ranney, 1978; Sabato, 1981; Polsby, 1983). By contrast in Europe - and in Australia - the decline of the 'mass' party did not mean the decline of party itself; the task of formulating and implementing 'catch-all' electoral strategies remained with the party and, indeed, with the electoral-professionals within it.

The tripartite party structure, and the distinct role of party officials within it, was further elaborated by Katz and Mair in their 1993 study of party organisation in western Europe (Katz & Mair, 1993). Rejecting any perspective that regards parties as unitary actors or as purely dichotomous structures, Katz and Mair identified - though oddly without reference to Key - what they termed the three 'faces' of parties. The 'party in public office' consists of 'those who have themselves been successful in elections' while the 'party on the ground' includes not just those formally enrolled as party members but activists, donors and loyal voters. The third or organisational element appears under new terminology as the 'Party Central Office', generally located in the national capital and consisting of the national executive structure and the central party staff or secretariat (Katz and Mair 1993: 185, 187-9). Like Key, then, Katz and Mair see the third 'face' of the party as distinctive - in function, location, accountability and resources - and as heterogeneous. But their analysis takes the tripartite analysis a major step further by suggesting that the three 'faces' are also engaged in a competitive internal struggle. Political parties in this analysis are arenas for internal conflict as much as they are vehicles for attaining collective goals. 'Each face entails a different set of resources, constraints, opportunities and patterns of motivation that bear on party leaders within it', they asserted; these differences gave rise to conflicts among party leaders 'on the basis of which organisational change could be understood' (Katz and Mair 1993: 184-5).

Katz and Mair's framework provides a tool for exploring and understanding conflicts within and transformations of Australia's political parties and their campaign practice. Presented schematically (Table 1), the three faces of the parties are arranged vertically, with the 'party central office' occupying the intermediate role between the 'party on the ground' and the 'party in public office'.

This vertical arrangement must be expanded horizontally to take account of the federal structure of the Australian parties, in which the national party structure replicates the state units (Jaensch 1994: 120-1). This gives rise to a three-face, two-level framework for understanding the organisation of Australia's major political parties, and the role of the party officials within in.

The framework is useful on several levels. First, it takes the party officials out of the back-room and allows examination of them, *in isolation from* the other party faces. This ensures the distinct characteristics and functions of the party central office are not lost within broader classifications such as the parliamentary/extra-parliamentary dichotomy, the 'oligarchy' (Michels, 1911 (trans. 1966)) or the 'machine' (Parkin & Warhurst, 1983). At the risk of stating the obvious, locating Australian campaign professionals within the party central office makes it clear that they are not located elsewhere. They are not, for example, located alongside the party leader as part of that leader's retinue of advisers, or alongside a leadership candidate, as may occur in Britain or Canada. Nor are they located outside the party, in the commercial marketplace or media industry as a campaign consultant as in the United States.

**Table 1: Structure of Major Australian Parties: Three Faces (Katz & Mair 1993) and Two Levels**

	<b>State Level</b>	<b>National Level</b>
<b>Party in Public Office</b>	Parliamentarians (Premier/ Opposition Leader, ministers/shadow ministers, party room)  Staff (ministerial and electorate)  Candidates	Parliamentarians (Prime Minister/ Opposition Leader, ministers/shadow ministers, party room)  Staff (ministerial and electorate)  Candidates
<b>Party Central Office</b>	State secretary/ state director  Other Head Office officials  Representative organs (state Executive, state conferences)  External consultants	National Secretary/ Federal Director  Other Head Office officials  Representative organs (National Executive, Federal Executive, National Conferences)  External consultants
<b>Party on the Ground</b>	Members/ Activists/ Voters Donors Affiliated organisations	Activists/ Voters Donors

Second, the framework allows examination of the conflict *between* each of the faces which, according to Katz and Mair, provide the basis for understanding organisational change within the party as a whole. In the Australian parties there is a rich mix of issues to explore. In 'mass' parties, for example, it could be expected that a large and active membership would provide the party on the ground with significant influence. Membership decline conversely may change the character of membership; there seems no reason to doubt that the description of European parties by van Biezen, Mair and Poguntke applies equally well to Australia. They argue that, in the absence of a mass membership, the remnant few party members include those who have or seek a political career; these remaining members might reasonably be seen 'not as constituting part of civil society, with which party membership has traditionally been associated, but rather as

constituting the outer ring of an extended political class'. Adopting the three-face framework, they suggest that membership of this type 'might have more in common with the party in central office and even the party in public office, than with the party on the ground' (van Biezen, et al., 2012: 15-6).

In Australian parties, as Table 1 shows, membership of both the ALP and the Liberal Party operates through the state not national level. Membership decline therefore is likely to weaken the state units of the party, and trigger a contest for influence between the central office and the party in public office revolving around the development of new campaign strategies not reliant on volunteer work by members. Katz and Mair describe such a struggle, and suggest the party in public office is successfully acquiring new resources and staff and thus asserting control over the party central office. As a result, the central office 'may indeed lose its centrality', remaining useful but not indispensable since 'most of the services it provides can be secured through alternative means' (1993: 198-9, 205). This intriguing proposition has not yet been tested in Australia.

Beyond these important questions of resources, the relationship between the central office and the party in public office may hinge on organisational practices. In particular, practices of selection and accountability - who appoints whom? - seem quite central. If party officials are selected or appointed from within the party central office - for example, by the national executive or party president, as is the case in Australian parties - they are likely to have considerable autonomy from the party in public office. This may underpin their influential role in recruiting candidates for public office - either by taking on the preselection role surrendered by the diminished party on the ground, or by administering the 'list' system of selection for upper house candidates (McAllister, 1992: 211). They may even exercise influence in selections and replacements of parliamentary leaders - though this has yet to be acknowledged in studies of this subject (Bynander & 't Hart, 2007). On the other hand if party leaders play a role in the selection of party officials, then accountability and responsiveness is like to follow. Key's 'kingpins', for example, always required the confidence of the party's presidential nominee. In Britain, likewise, the Chairman of the Conservative Party is typically appointed by the party leader from among the ranks of the party in public office, where they hold cabinet or shadow cabinet rank; in the British Labour Party, too, Prime Ministers have significant influence in the selection of the General Secretary (see for example Blair, 2010: 82). In Canada, the primaries-based election method means party officials are responsible to parliamentary leaders and candidates (Thorburn, 1991: 136-7; Carty, Cross, & Young, 2000: Ch9). The distinctiveness or otherwise of Australian practice can be elucidated by reference to the three-face framework.

Third, in addition to opening up these important questions about the relationships *between* the three faces, the framework also allows a close focus on the struggles *within* each face, including at different levels. The party in central office at the national level is likely to have different interests and relationships from its counterparts at the state levels, which will themselves differ in size, influence and resources. Moreover, each central office is to be understood as a heterogeneous arena of contest between the paid party officials and the representative organs such as the national executive. Key (1964: 337) suggests that the party officials form an inner core, with 'largely fictional' accountability to the executive. Katz and Mair (1993: 189) likewise suggest that the central party bureaucracy 'should be' the servant of the national executive but in reality may have sufficient resources to support a more assertive role; in some cases they may indeed constitute the true central office, with the national executive reduced to a 'purely nominal or ceremonial role'. The analysis can be extended to include the external consultants who bring to the central office their commercial skills in market research, advertising and media management. A relevant question is who engages these consultants: are they engaged by the party in public office or, as in Australia, by the party central office? And do the national and state offices share the same consultants or do they engage different ones? Within the party on the ground, too, there is evidence of important change taking place. Membership decline creates opportunities for other elements of that face - notably voters and external donors - to assume greater salience within the party organisation. This indeed characterises the transition to a 'catch-all' party. As part of this transition, the party's quest for a new relationship with civil society beyond its diminished

membership or class base is likely to become caught up in the struggle for control between the party central office and the party in office. If the party in central office is able credibly to identify and execute a 'catch-all' electoral strategy it is likely to exert continuing influence in the affairs of the party as a whole.

### **Understanding Change as Professionalisation**

On this robust bedrock of party scholarship, it is possible now to erect a discussion about the much more fragile concepts of professionals, professionalism and professionalisation. The study of professionals has become 'involved, distracted and perplexed' by matters of definition, in part because professionals have themselves 'energetically propagated' their claims to this sought-after status, and self-ascribed special types of knowledge, ethics and ideals (Burrage, Jarausch, & Siegrist, 1990). Scholars and journalists have increasingly embraced these terms to describe the changing character of party activity in representative democracies. But all too frequently they have done so without regard to the broader party scholarship, and indeed without pausing to define the terms or to establish whether and how they might properly be applied to the party context. The terms are widespread but their application 'haphazard' (Grossman, 2009), having been attached to individuals and activities including elected politicians (Jones, 2008), marketing consultants (Medvic, 2006; Grossman, 2009), broadcast journalists (Golding & Elliott, 1979: 176-92), political communications (Negrine, Mancini, Holtz-Bacha, & Papatthanassopoulos, 2007), political advocacy (Blumler and Kavanagh 1999: 209), as well as party officials (Fisher & Webb, 2003; Webb & Fisher, 2003). Not without reason, have Lilleker and Negrine (2002) posed the questions, in relation to professionalisation in political campaigns: 'Of What? Since When? By Whom?'

Part of the confusion has arisen from the understandable but ultimately futile efforts to define political professionalism by reference to itemised characteristics of 'traditional' or established professions such as medicine and the law. Differences between these traditional professions and the work of a 'campaign professional' are quickly apparent. Entry to the medical and legal professions, and conduct within them, is based on mastery of a body of knowledge assessed and certified by peers. This level of competence underpins the capacity of professionals to self-employ, to set appropriate fees for their services, and to organise in autonomous colleges or societies. The professional arrangements also provide individual clients, and society at large, with some notional guarantee of adequate performance (Nimmo, 1970; Scammell, 1997: 5; Marquand, 2004). In the context of political parties, no such body of knowledge exists; no peer assessment exists; there are few barriers to entry; they are not necessarily self-employed and are often subject to supervision by line managers (Webb and Fisher 2003: 11). There are no professional colleges or societies; the International Association of Political Consultants, founded in 1968, is a paid membership body which sets no standards and exercises no disciplinary control over the profession. Scammell (1993: 9, 16) dismisses the idea that those within the campaign 'war room' are professionals; they are craft practitioners informed less by the social science research than by personal experience and 'political folk wisdom'.

The fallacy of this line of inquiry is that it assumes professionalism in the political sphere emerged only as a recent derivative from those other occupational activities. Professionalism in fact has a long history as an organising concept for political activity. Michels (1911 [trans 1966]: 29) noted calls for official training and examination of would-be party leaders in order to create 'a class of professional politicians, of approved and registered experts in political life. Where Michels emphasised technical expertise, Weber's classic 1919 discussion of the 'profession and vocation' of politics highlighted economic and vocational aspects of professionalism. After political rulers themselves, Weber described the earliest 'professional politicians' as those who enter the service of those rulers and who 'made the procurement of the prince's policies into a way of earning their material living on the one hand and, on the other, into an ideal content for their own lives':

There are two ways of making a vocation or profession out of politics. Either one lives 'for' politics or one lives 'from' politics. The antithesis is by no means an exclusive one. Generally one does both. Anyone who lives 'for' politics 'makes this his life' in an inward

sense. ... The person who lives 'from' politics is one who strives to make it into an enduring source of income (Weber, 1919: 316-8).

Using Weber one can identify professionalism as inherent within democratic practice. While citizens in a representative democracy are 'part-time' or 'occasional' politicians (Weber, 1919: 317), contributing their votes and voices only sporadically, democracy also requires some individuals to make a more full-time commitment – not least, those whom the citizens elect to public office. Supporting those elected officials are individuals committed to their service: enthusiastic volunteers living 'for' politics as well as people with technical know-how striving to live 'from' politics. Among this latter group one can locate party officials, whose experience and skills in campaigning helps the governor achieve power and implement policies. Their involvement in politics will be intensive and protracted; their contribution will be characterised less by volunteer enthusiasm than by pragmatic calculation; and their service will be rewarded by payment. Panebianco transported Weber's professional politician from the 'mass' party era into the 'catch-all' party (Mancini, 1999: 233-4); 'electoral professionals' provide the party with the technical skill-sets needed to implement the electoral strategies of the new era of polling and mass media. Mancini (1999: 237-40) also contends that 'professionalism in campaigning' is constituted by the technical expertise of 'professionals' skilled in political consulting, polling and media production. Later still, Webb and Fisher assert that the 'heart' of the notion of professionalism is 'expertise' and 'special competence'; a key criteria of professionalism in their survey of British Labour Party staff is their high level of education and training (Webb & Fisher, 2003). In a long scholarly tradition, therefore, professionalism has been identified in politics through some combination of full-time commitment and specialised expertise. This is the sense in which the term was used in 1961 by the journalist Don Whittington, when he described the 'highly paid, highly skilled team of professional political experts' working in the Liberal Party's national Head Office following that party's 'switch to professionalism' (Whittington, 1961).

Importantly however, this combination of technical and economic characteristics does not imply a lack of personal commitment to the political cause. Indeed, Weber emphasised that 'generally', professionals live both 'from' and 'for' politics, with economic and vocational motivations co-existing. Reliance on the economic and technical aspects as the defining characteristics of professionalism is thus inadequate. Professionalism also implies some element of altruistic behaviour. Specifically, professionals are devoted to the interests of their clients. A doctor or lawyer uses their technical expertise to advance those interests. To do otherwise – to harm their clients or to profit themselves – cannot be regarded as a professional; client service must override personal self-interest. In the political context, political professionals apply their skills to promote the higher cause in which they are engaged – the service of their political client. This principle overrides self-interest and is not corrupted by the competitive political environment in which it operates. Campaign professionals do not believe they can do 'what we can get away with' (Scammell 1997: 6). Surveying political consultants in the United States, Grossman has found evidence they share a 'professional ideology' based around serving the interests of their clients, who are candidates for elected office. They define their 'purpose' as 'to help candidates win' and they will not, for example, make a recommendation that was in their own financial interests but not in the interests of the client (Grossman 2009: 98).

The foregoing discussion suggests meaningful definitions of the terms professionalism and professionalisation in the political context. Yet they remain deeply contested and ambiguous terms in the party literature. In their survey of professionalism among British Labour Party employees, Webb and Fisher felt the need to differentiate an 'ideal' sense of the word from a 'soft' or 'less rigorous' or 'everyday' usage (Webb & Fisher, 2003; Webb & Kolodny, 2006: 340). Negrine responded forcefully, rejecting 'complex and contested language of professionalism' as 'essentially irrelevant' as a description of the organisational changes underway in political parties (Negrine, 2005). Lilleker and Negrine went further, suggesting the terms be abandoned in favour of more specific descriptors such as specialisation and centralisation (Lilleker & Negrine, 2002). The literature is further complicated by the definitional chasm separating American scholars, who regard professionalism as largely occurring outside the parties and empowering non-party

consultants in their stead (Sabato, 1981; Johnson, 2001; Medvic, 2003, 2006; Grossman, 2009), from those operating in electoral systems where parties themselves have undergone a professionalisation process (Webb, 1992; Webb & Fisher, 2003; Wring, 2005; Negrine, et al., 2007). Professionalisation should remain a systemically-neutral term; thus the spread of US-style consultants into Western Europe seems more properly an 'Americanisation' of campaign practice or 'convergence on a US-style model' (Farrell, et al., 2001).

There seems little merit in abandoning the term. With Weberian roots, it has become deeply entrenched in the literature. Unlike the more narrow words suggested as replacements, professionalism captures a broad set of interrelated processes of organisational and attitudinal change. Equally, qualifications - such as 'soft' professionalism or 'quasi' professional - seem only to add further layers of ambiguity. Yet Lilleker and Negrine (2002) are surely justified in demanding that those who use the terms identify what is being professionalised, over what time period and by whom. This thesis will attempt to do so. It will propose a definition of professionalism based on the experience of Australian party officials who have been at the heart of the process of change over several decades. It will be argued that rather than some impersonal process of exogenous change, professionalisation has been driven by these human agents within the parties. At one level, it will be shown that 'professionalisation' occurs where part-time volunteers are replaced by salaried employees with specialist skills. But beyond this mere change of personnel, professionalisation will be defined as a cultural transformation, in which the party officials adopt and implement a strategic approach to the conduct of election campaigns.

The military etymology of the words *campaign strategy*, with their implied metaphor of politics as warfare, provides a useful blueprint for any form of effective mass social action (Pitney, 2000; Stockwell, 2005). Strategy has been a major concern of business scholars and practitioners (M. Porter, 1979; Mintzberg, 1998; Quinn, 1998; M. Porter, 2008), public sector management (Moore, 1995) and social movements (Ganz, 2010). Yet there have been few attempts to critically assess the topic in relation to electoral contests (Barber, 2005). Margaret Scammell observed fifteen years ago that campaign literature has tended to focus on 'what' is done in a campaign. Much less attention has been paid to 'why' it is done, even though campaigners operate on the basis of views of the electorate, ideas about persuasion and the winning of elections, which fundamentally shape their exploitation of the communication technologies (Scammell, 1997). Understanding campaign strategy requires further research on how campaigners develop their views of the electorate and their ideas about electoral success - areas which remain largely uncharted in the campaign literature. To the extent that strategic concerns have been addressed in campaign literature, it has been in relation to an aspect of strategy not addressed by Scammell: resource allocation. Campaigns are understood to require 'maximising votes through rational allocations of time, money and personnel' (Nimmo, 1970: 34) or bringing about 'a better or more efficient - and more reflective - organisation of resources and skills in order to achieve desired objectives' (Negrine, 2007: 29). Taking a lead from private sector literature on the resource-based view (RBV) of strategic management, resources have been defined broadly to cover 'the tangible and intangible assets firms use to conceive of and implement their strategies' (Barney & Arikan, 2006). In applying the RBV to competition among political parties, Richard Lynch and his colleagues (Lynch, Baines, & Egan, 2006) considered three classes of resources as relevant: *human resources* (including the party's leadership, but also its supporters and its policy-developers); *intellectual resources* (essentially the party's policies) and its *organisational and communications skills*. They further distinguish between *long-term resources* such as leadership, policies and campaigning skills, which may take years for the party to develop, and *short-term resources* such as volunteer activities, media messages and a campaign plan, which are likely to be acquired and deployed in the intense but brief time frame of an election campaign. Taken together, Lynch et al argue these resources underpin, and can help explain, why some parties are able to secure a sustained competitive advantage over other parties, as measured by electoral success and government incumbency. Similarly, Polsby and Wildavsky (1984: 53), assert that certain resources - those disproportionately available to one or other of the contending parties - play a significant role in the strategic environment of presidential elections. They list incumbency, organisational skill, policy knowledge, reputation, speechmaking skills, wealth and stamina as among the relevant campaign

resources. A significant weakness of the RBV argument is that this broad definition overlooks what this thesis argues is, in the eyes of the Australian campaign professional, a campaign resource of the highest priority, namely money (Mills, 2012b). Lynch et al do not include money or financial resources in their analysis, arguing (2006: 81-2) that the resources that truly deliver superior performance are imperfectly mobile. The thesis seeks to address the gap identified by Scammell, since the development and implementation of campaign strategies – including but not limited to resource allocation – are critical to our understanding of the professional campaign model and of the role of the campaign professional.

Several of the themes canvassed in this chapter – causation and party agency, changing campaign techniques, and definitions of professionalisation – have been integrated by Gibson and Römmele (2001) in their CAMPROF index. Promoting a ‘party-centred’ theory of professionalised campaigning and rejecting the notion of parties as passive ‘victims’ of broader social forces, Gibson and Römmele seek to ‘put parties into the explanatory picture’ (2001: 40). CAMPROF seeks to measure varying levels of professionalisation across parties using a mix of exogenous and endogenous variables. Qualitative studies have long suggested the importance of party-specific variables: the British Conservative Party, for example, professionalised faster than its Labour rival (Kavanagh, 1995; Wring, 2005). But CAMPROF is the first attempt to quantify professionalisation, and was validated in relation to parties contesting the 2005 German federal elections (Gibson & Römmele, 2009) and, in modified form, the 2006 Swedish election (Stromback, 2009). More recently, CAMPROF has been further modified and applied to parties in Austria, Finland, Germany and Sweden for the 2009 European parliamentary elections (Tenscher, Mykkanen, & Moring, 2012) and, on a longitudinal and two-level basis, in Finland and Germany in national and European elections from 2004 to 2011 (Tenscher & Mykkanen, 2012). The authors stress the exploratory nature of this quantitative approach, but confirm the party-specific and campaign-specific character of the professionalisation process including the significance of election defeat in explaining why parties professionalise. Further work is required to establish the applicability of the CAMPROF index outside the Western European context. At face value, for example, Gibson and Römmele’s hypothesis (2001: 36) that professionalisation is most likely to take place in large vote-maximising catch-all parties seems applicable to the ALP and Liberal Party. Likewise, in identifying professionalisation as most likely to occur in ‘a well-funded, mainstream, right-wing party with significant resources and a centralised internal power structure that has recently suffered a heavy electoral defeat and/or a loss of governing status’ they accurately describe the Liberal Party in the 1940s and 1970s. That hypothesis however was specifically disputed in recent research (Tenscher, et al., 2012: 159). The corollary – that left-wing or socialist parties structured around internal democracy would resist the centralising, marketising and capital intensity of campaign professionalism – might also describe the ALP’s reluctant, patchy and poorly-resourced adoption of new campaign practices in the early and mid-1960s. It would not of course explain the rapid changes that occurred in the ALP from 1969. Altogether, however, such speculation is untested. ‘The hunt for good explanatory variables continues’ (Tenscher, et al., 2012: 159).

## **Discussion**

Political parties, then, remain central to the operation of Australian representative democracy, though their organisational arrangements as well as their campaigning practices have changed radically. While these changes have been documented and modelled, critical questions and disputes persist about causation. In exploring these issues, party officials – too often neglected in party scholarship – emerge as influential and distinctive agents shaping the behaviour and structure of parties. Amid a frequently confused debate about professionalisation of parties and campaigns, it is the party officials who, living both ‘from’ and ‘for’ politics, appear to possess the technical skills and the commitment to client service which are characteristic of professionalism in the political context. If the process of change in party and campaign can be understood as one of professionalisation, then it is time to pay attention to the identity and role of the professionals.

To advance this inquiry, a framework has been proposed, adapted from the ‘three faces’ model of V O Key and Katz & Mair, which takes party officials out of the ‘back-room’ of party scholarship



and places them at the centre of this change process where they rightly belong. This framework allows analysis of the distinctive character of national party officials within a federal party structure, and of their relationships with the other faces and other levels of that structure. This framework is erected on a broad base of scholarly literature. This thesis will test its validity in relation to the study of party officials in Australia.

At the risk of an overly simple metaphor, we must determine if parties are corks bobbing on an ocean of change, or ships ploughing through the waves under their own steam, occasionally shifting course and even jettisoning some cargo, but remaining under the command of captains and crews to reach their chosen destinations. If this nautical metaphor is apt, then causation can perhaps be best understood by interviewing the ships' captains about their role, backgrounds, skills, methods of appointment, and operating procedures. This approach is described and further justified in the next chapter.

## Chapter Two

### Research Design and Methodology: Elite, Qualitative and Institutional

'I see a lot of academic research, on election campaigns that I've been very personally involved with, that have put forward all sorts of theories and hypotheses, and none of the (researchers) have spoken to me.'

'I don't think I gave anything too much away.'

'In politics, the thing that you do is you characterise yourself as inheriting a wrecked, destroyed, burnt-out hulk that you heroically (transformed) ... or that you inherited the termite-riddled *African Queen* that you pulled through the swamp.'

**F**ourteen individuals occupied the post of ALP Federal Secretary or National Secretary over nearly a century from 1915 to 2010. Eight individuals occupied the post of Liberal Party Federal Director over the nearly seventy years from 1945. Of these twenty-two Head Office leaders, more than half were by good fortune alive at the time of the research. These thirteen individuals – eight from the ALP and five Liberals - form the principal subjects of this research (Tables 2 and 3, next page).

These thirteen individuals constitute what political scientists refer to as an elite. The term does not, in this context, denote high socio-economic status or social privilege. Rather, political elites are those with 'close proximity to power or policymaking', such as elected representatives, senior public servants, organisational executives and decision makers in general (Lilleker, 2003: 207; Burnham, Gilland, Grant, & Layton-Henry, 2008: Ch9). They are considered as experts who possess 'specific interpretive knowledge ("know-why") as well as procedural knowledge ("know-how")' (Littig, 2009); their expertise can help answer a given research question (Brians, Willnat, Manheim, & Rich, 2011: Ch21). The national Secretaries and Directors of the two major Australian parties thus derive 'elite' status from their influence and their expertise. Selecting this elite as a subject for research presents one significant design strength. While many elite studies must select a representative sample from a larger group of potential subjects, the focus on the National Secretaries and Federal Directors presents no sampling problems: the study covers the universal set of party officials to have occupied these posts in the two parties. This approach was validated by the complete participation rate. Every living official was invited to participate, and everyone invited to participate agreed to do so. The study therefore covers party officials dating back to the 1960s, holding office through decades of profound change and engaged in campaigning in all fifteen Federal elections since 1974. Even so, there are inevitable gaps: no Liberal officials from before 1974 and no Labor officials before 1963 have survived, and both officials from the important 1969 and 1972 campaigns have died.

This research design complemented the three-face two-level framework of party structure outlined in chapter One. Research into party elites has tended, since Michels, to blur the distinction between Head Office and other elements of the party. This study by contrast is designed to explicate the distinctive character of Head Office, so as to trace its interactions with the other party 'faces' and interrogate its role in the professionalisation process. It follows that the research design deals with the production rather than the consumption of electoral politics, and with the campaigning stage rather than with electoral outcomes. The research does not focus on voters (for example by exploring voting behaviour or citizen participation in electoral deliberation and choice) or on candidates (exploring problems of democratic leadership, follower-building or goal-setting) but on the 'campaign directors' in the national Head Office. Their claims to 'direct' or 'manage' complex and dynamic campaigns is a large one, as it suggests they can influence the actions and behaviours of large numbers of candidates and millions of voters; it implies that campaigns are

best understood as exercises in strategic planning. In evaluating this claim, the relevant question is not so much about its validity – whether the professional campaign model ‘succeeds’ in changing voter behaviour or delivers electoral success – than about the extent to which parties and party officials *believe* it is valid.

**Table 2: Federal/National Secretaries of the Australian Labor Party: Life Dates and Terms in Office**

<b>ALP</b>	<b>Life dates</b>	<b>Term in office</b>
<b>Arch Stewart</b>	1867-1925	1915-25
<b>Daniel McNamara</b>	1876-1947	1925-46
<b>Patrick Kennelly</b>	1900-1981	1946-54
<b>Jack Schmella</b>	1908-1960	1954-60
<b>F E Chamberlain</b>	1900-1984	1961-63
<b>Cyril Wyndham</b>	1930-2012*	1963-69
<b>Mick Young</b>	1936-1996	1969-72
<b>David Combe</b>	1943-	1973-81
<b>Bob McMullan</b>	1947-	1981-88
<b>Bob Hogg</b>	1937-	1988-93
<b>Gary Gray</b>	1958-	1993-2000
<b>Geoff Walsh</b>	1953-	2000-03
<b>Tim Gartrell</b>	1971-	2003-08
<b>Karl Bitar</b>	1971-	2008-11**

\* Cyril Wyndham died in July 2012. \*\* George Wright was appointed ALP National Secretary in April 2011 and does not form part of the research for this thesis.

**Table 3: Federal Directors of the Liberal Party: Life Dates and Terms in Office**

<b>Liberal</b>	<b>Life dates</b>	<b>Term in office</b>
<b>Don Cleland</b>	1901-1975	1945-51
<b>Robert Willoughby</b>	1908-1993	1951-69
<b>Bede Hartcher</b>	1918-1977	1969-74
<b>Tim Pascoe</b>	1939-	1974
<b>Tony Eggleton</b>	1932-	1974-91
<b>Andrew Robb</b>	1951-	1991-97
<b>Lynton Crosby</b>	1956-	1997-2003
<b>Brian Loughnane</b>	1957-	2003-

The research design also enables comparative analysis. While many elite studies focus on a cohort of individuals in a single period of time in a single institution, the elite studied in this project constitute a *sequence* of office holders, in two rival organisations. By examining the sequences of office holders in the two major party organisations we can illuminate change - for example, the professionalisation of election campaigning - through time and across two organisations. If professionalisation were found to impact on the parties in the same way and over the same time, we might conclude they were responding to similar exogenous circumstances. Alternatively,

building on the party-centred theory of professionalisation, inter-party variation of timing and impact might suggest endogenous factors – such as the circumstances, structures and adaptive practices of each party – were shaping the change process.

The exclusion of minor parties perhaps opens this project to Henry Mayer's critique of 'big party chauvinism' (Mayer, 1980). Yet the ALP and Liberal Party are Australia's only truly national parties, having demonstrably adopted and pursued catch-all electoral strategies. They typically contest every federal and state election and have done so since inception; they are the only parties which have formed national government since the Second World War; they have an uninterrupted succession of national party officials, stretching over many decades. Minor parties such as the Democratic Labor Party, Australian Democrats, and Greens have existed for shorter periods of time, have largely been successful in Senate not House of Representatives elections, have not formed government, and have typically not had strong national organisational structures and employees. The National Party does have a long organisational history and has regularly formed government at the state level. But at the national level it remains a sectional party playing the junior role in a coalition dominated by the Liberals; its federal directorship, moreover, dates back only to 1968 (Davey, 2010: 407).

A final design consideration must be noted. The researcher is a former political journalist and ministerial staff member, and had become acquainted with, had written about, and had worked alongside several of the party officials studied in this research.<sup>2</sup> These relationships had the potential to impact on the research in unpredictable ways – for example by facilitating or hampering access to the officials, or by making them more or less confident in the credibility of this project. A neutral stance towards respondents, at all stages of the research and analysis, was therefore more than usually necessary. In the event this requirement dovetailed with, and decisively reinforced, this project's ambition for cross-party comparative research. Marian Simms notes the 'incredibly politicised' character of the study of Australian political parties, which she attributes in part to the many 'poachers turned gamekeepers' – that is, political practitioners who turned to academic writing about their party (Simms, 2009b: 186-7, 190). Far from adding to the existing predominance of Labor Party research, this researcher has been animated as a former practitioner by a belief that there was merit in applying the experience of a 'gamekeeper' to a genuinely comparative project. The subject matter of campaign professionalisation, with its impact transcending party boundaries, seems particularly well suited to that ambition.

### **Research Method: Semi-Structured Interviews**

The most appropriate research technique for this task is the semi-structured interview using open-ended questions (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002; Burnham, et al., 2008; Pierce, 2008; Brians, et al., 2011). In a party discourse dominated by the parliamentary wing and filtered through news media, the voices of party officials, it was believed, would offer new and distinctive research perspectives on questions of party structure and change. Elite interviews allow the researcher to penetrate 'behind closed doors' (Lilleker, 2003: 208), to gain 'insight into the mind' of a political actor (Harrison & Deicke, 2001), and to concentrate upon 'distinctive features of situations and events and upon the beliefs and personal experiences of individuals' (Vromen, 2010: 258).

Political scientists have long been aware of the potential pitfalls of closed-end questioning of elites: comparing a study of working men that used open-ended questions with a study of French and German elites that used closed-end questions, Bernard Brown noted that the former treated the views of bricklayers as if they were opinions of an elite, while the latter interviewed elites and treated them like bricklayers (cited in Aberbach, Chesney, & Rockman, 1975). Closed-end

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<sup>2</sup> As a journalist in the Parliamentary Press Gallery in 1978-83 and 1991-3, the researcher had contact with Eggleton, Robb, Combe and Gray. Researching *The New Machine Men* (Mills, 1986) involved interviews with Eggleton, McMullan, Hogg and the late Mick Young about various aspects of campaigning. As adviser (speechwriter) for Labor Prime Minister Bob Hawke from 1986-1991 (Mills, 1993b), the author worked alongside Hogg as Hawke's political adviser, McMullan as National Secretary, and Walsh as Hawke's press secretary; for good measure, Walsh had earlier been a colleague at *The Age* newspaper.

questions imply researchers know in advance the direction or content of elite concerns and can reduce those concerns to a small number of discrete variables (Vromen, 2010: 257). Elites however tend to hold strong views and can articulate them clearly; they may be less willing to cooperate with a closed-end approach (Aberbach, et al., 1975: 7). Open-ended questions in a semi-structured framework by contrast grant elite respondents 'latitude to articulate fully their responses' and permit them to 'organise their answers within their own frameworks' (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002). Care must be taken however to ensure that flexibility and discursiveness does not veer into irrelevance or trivia. The researcher must identify in advance the priority questions and areas of interest that must be traversed in the interview and needs to prevent 'control' of the interview passing to the respondent (Burnham, et al., 2008: 240-1). At a more pragmatic level, the interviewer needs flexibility to cope with the inevitable contingencies of the elite interview process: time is limited and subject to interruption and distraction.

Elite interviews constitute a robust and well-established method for researching election campaigns, political marketing and party change in the United States and Britain (Devine, 2002: 200). Scammell conducted 'well over a hundred' formal and informal interviews, mostly unstructured, with politicians, campaign managers, press officers, advertisers, pollsters and journalists (Scammell, 1995). Webb and Fisher interviewed employees of the British Labour Party as part of their study of that party's professionalisation (Webb & Fisher, 2003). O'Reilly also conducted 'a large number of original interviews with politicians and individuals working in politics' in the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States, including 'ex-Prime Ministers, sitting and former ministers, senior party officials, political apparatchiks, policy advisers and academics' (O'Reilly, 2007). Lees-Marshment has conducted '100 interviews with practitioners and advisors' for her latest political marketing study (Lees-Marshment, 2011). An innovative 'focus group' style of research involving the 'campaign managers' of presidential elections in the United States has been conducted at Harvard University since 1972 (see for example Institute of Politics, 2008), offering what the convenor described as 'glimpses of the planning, calculation, contrivance, miscalculation and mischance that determined what the electorate saw' (E. R. May & Fraser, 1973: 1). In Australian political science, significant interview-based projects have explored the work and role of ministers (Weller & Grattan, 1981), journalists (Tiffen, 1989) and ministerial advisers (Walter, 1986; Maley, 2000). But scholars of parties and elections have rarely used interviews as a research tool, and national party officials have never been the subject of systematic research.<sup>3</sup>

After the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Sydney granted approval for the proposed research in August 2009, the research design was operationalised in the first instance by sending a letter to twelve current and former party officials in December 2009. Address details had been assembled from public sources, in the case of the two incumbent party officials at the time of the letters (Bitar and Loughnane) and the three Members of Parliament (Robb, McMullan and Gray), and from personal contacts for those in private roles or retirement. The letter invited their involvement in the research project by agreeing to a two-hour interview 'about their Head Office role', explaining that the project sought to describe Head Office changes 'across time, across party officials and across parties' with a principal theme of evolving professionalism in election campaigning. A thirteenth letter was sent in December 2010 to Cyril Wyndham, the oldest participant, following the happy discovery in the course of interviews that he was living in quiet retirement. All respondents agreed to be interviewed, though most required follow-up prompts. Interviews were conducted in the order in which respondents agreed and appropriate arrangements could be made. The first interviews were conducted in February 2010 and all but one were completed by March 2011. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the final interviews were with the two most recent party officials; the Bitar interview was not conducted until after he had resigned his post. Venues were chosen to suit the practical convenience of the respondent (Appendix Three, Table 1).

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<sup>3</sup> The US-style focus group did inspire a conference of NSW campaign managers after the 1988 state election (Public Policy Forum, 1989).

Respondents were understood to be familiar, from their experience as campaign managers, with interview techniques and capable of deflecting or ignoring questions as they saw fit. They were also assumed to be wary of questions dealing with confidential party matters. Efforts were made to put them at ease on both counts by assuring them, at the outset, that the interview was not intended to deal with 'nuts and bolts' of specific campaign events or to elicit confidential party information, but rather to focus on their personal career experience and the nature of their role in the party Head Office. Open-ended questions dealt with the respondents' unique personal knowledge and experience or their subjective perspective. For example respondents were invited to describe their role as National Secretary/Federal Director, to summarise their major achievements, or to explain if they regarded themselves as professional. Some questions were somewhat closed in nature, seeking factual information about the respondent's career. For example, respondents were asked to state 'when and why' they joined their political party, to describe their early campaign experience or to recall 'how and by whom' they were selected into Head Office. Even here it is apparent that questions were amenable to narrative and subjective responses. Throughout, the approach was designed to allow respondents' the flexibility to structure their answer as they saw fit while also maximising the potential for comparison of responses. Thus within these semi-structured exchanges, care was taken to ensure that all interviews covered the same set of core questions. To this end an interview outline was developed and used for all interviews to guide questioning. Organised in three sections, the outline dealt with the interviewee's personal political background, party experience including in Head Office and campaign experience (Appendix Four). Core questions all fell in the first two sections and most interview time was spent on these two sections; only in rare interviews were all questions on the outline explicitly raised.

Interviews were conducted on an 'on the record' basis and digitally recorded. It was a high priority of the research to capture quotations attributable to named individuals. Undertakings were provided before the interviews, and repeated in a project update sent in April 2011, that participants could review any such quotations prior to publication with a view to requiring part or parts of them to be considered non-attributable. To this end, interview transcripts were sent to respondents on two occasions. A raw transcript was sent shortly after each interview; in September 2012 respondents were sent another copy with the proposed quotations highlighted, with the request they review and confirm the excerpts as attributable to them. All but one of them responded affirmatively, with some seeking minor non-substantive clarifications. The willingness of party officials to be interviewed, and their sustained involvement throughout the project, suggests they saw the research as a worthwhile and legitimate exercise - or at least saw value in shaping it through participation. As Loughnane put it:

I see a lot of academic research on election campaigns that I've been very personally involved with, that have put forward all sorts of theories and hypotheses, and none of the (academic researchers) have spoken to me.

### **Research Method: Documentary Sources**

Interviews must not be relied upon as the single source for a research project (Lilleker, 2003; Burnham, 2008: 232). Claims made in interviews need to be tested and contextualised by triangulation against other data. At one level, this can be done by recourse to other sources of verbatim speech by the officials themselves: speeches; oral history (Pascoe, 2010); contemporary newspaper reports and profiles; post-campaign narratives by journalists (Williams, 1997) and academics (O'Reilly, 2007); and other published sources (Cameron, 1990; Botsman, 2011). The late Mick Young provided an invaluable account of his role in the 1972 election campaign in a speech to a Fabian Society conference in 1985 (M. Young, 1986). More generally, the thesis draws on documentary records to complement the interview data in two ways: by providing context for the statements and activities reported in the interviews, and by extending the narrative back before the period covered by the interviews to throw light on early party officials.

Documents produced by the parties themselves shed important light on the role of the Head Office. These include the parties' constitutions and amendments, rule books, conference papers and reports, policy platforms, post-election reviews, speeches, newspapers and newsletters. Produced for public consumption or widespread internal distribution, such records are commonly available in the National Library of Australia and, in some recent cases, on the parties' own websites. Some party records have been collected and published by academics from public sources (such as Graeme Starr's (1980) documentary history of the Liberal Party) or with the assistance of the parties (such as Pat Weller and Beverly Lloyd's (1978) minutes of the ALP Federal Executive). Party histories (Crisp, 1955; West, 1965; McMullin, 1991; Hancock, 2000) and other secondary accounts of party activities (Murray, 1970; Blewett, 1973) also provide relevant party documents. Some early party officials are recorded in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Using these records, it is possible to construct authoritative accounts of the 'founding moment' and early years of each national party and each party's Head Office which illuminate changing party practices governing the selection and work of party officials.

Documentary research of course carries the risk of selection bias (Vromen, 2010: 262). The Crisp and Weller-Lloyd volumes travel no further than the Labor Split in the mid-1950s; West leaves the Liberals at their zenith in the mid-1960s, while Starr and Hancock both trace the Party to Opposition in the mid-1970s; McMullin's is a party centenary volume that is complete to 1991. More contemporary records are generally not available from either party in consolidated published form. Both parties routinely archive their documents with the National Library of Australia; however researchers must seek permission before access is granted.<sup>4</sup> The reality is that for both parties, documents of potential relevance to this project – if they have survived – are likely to remain tightly held while they retain any strategic significance. These include campaign manuals ('how to' handbooks published by Head Office for distribution to electorate campaigners), campaign strategy documents, internal post-election reviews, minutes of national campaign committees, market research reports and campaign finance records. While these are rarely available in original form, sporadic examples emerge in campaign accounts by academics (Blewett, 1973) and journalists (Oakes & Solomon, 1973; Oakes & Solomon, 1974; Oakes, 1976; P. Kelly, 1984, 1992; P. Williams, 1997; P. Kelly, 2009). Funding and disclosure reports filed with the Australian Electoral Commission also provide basic though uneven data about how parties gathered, handled and spent their campaign funds.

### **Qualitative Data Coding and Analysis**

Open-ended semi-structured elite interviews generated rich and relevant data for this project, supplemented by varied documentary sources. Of course the different circumstances of each interview created data that is uneven and highly contextual. This project invited respondents to reflect on events that had taken place years – in some cases, decades – previously, and to appraise their performance, and that of others, in high-stakes political activity. Inevitably, recall and memory varied; retrospectivity is inherent; some personal justifications are to be expected; confidentiality and reputation are shoals to be carefully negotiated. One official was apparently relieved, in his informal post-interview comment, that:

I don't think I gave anything too much away.

Another official noted sardonically the heroic theme of some political reminiscence:

In politics, the thing you do is, you characterise yourself as inheriting a wrecked, destroyed, burnt-out hulk that you heroically (transformed) ... or that you inherited the termite-riddled *African Queen* that you pulled through the swamp.

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<sup>4</sup> This researcher sought the approval of both parties to access their records in the National Library. Approval from one party was readily granted. In the event, archival research archives proved beyond the scope of the project and neither request was pursued.

These factors needed to be carefully weighed at the coding and analysis stage of research. The starting point however must be the recognition that qualitative interviews are not designed to produce literally accurate accounts. Rather, it is the respondent's 'version' of events that is properly the subject of inquiry. The personal views and perspectives of party officials derive authority from their close involvement in election campaigns and in party management. The goal of research is to explore their subjective experiences and the meanings they attach to those experiences (Devine, 2002). As Brians puts it, rather than regarding 'what interviewees say as factual data', researchers should instead '*treat the fact that they said it as data*' (2011: 367, emphasis in original).

With this approach, translating this data into meaningful understanding (O'Leary, 2010) entailed an inductive, iterative process of coding and analysis. Despite the attractions of computer-aided qualitative data analysis programs such as NVivo, the relatively small number of interviews in this project, and the researcher's desire for intensive 'hands-on' exposure to each of them, suggested manual coding as the appropriate approach. Following close and repeated reading of each transcript, supplemented by the contextual documentation, clusters of common elements gradually emerged. After several iterations, these clusters were refined and assembled into a coding schedule which itemised key themes and sub-themes (Appendix Three, Table 2). Interviews were then coded according to this schedule.

Some themes emerged as 'manifest coding items' that reflected 'direct responses to particular questions' (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002). Examples included questions about prior campaign experience and methods of selection. To the extent that these responses included factual material such as dates and numbers, they could be quantified, aggregated and tabulated (see Appendix Three). Key attributes of the various methods of party selection could be captured and used to generate models of party behaviour (see Table 5). These quantitative approaches generated comparative patterns of party behaviour which, changing through time, helped develop theories about the process of professionalisation within each of the parties. In this limited sense then, qualitative data was used as an avenue for interpreting and informing quantitative analysis (Aberbach, et al., 1975; Aberbach & Rockman, 2002). The grand positivist traditions of US social science (exemplified by King, Keohane, & Verba, 1994) relegate qualitative research to an epistemologically dubious realm where it can perform the essentially subordinate or supplementary role of illuminating or verifying theory developed through quantitative means (Furlong & Marsh, : 196-7; Mahoney, 2010). Rejecting that approach, this thesis asserts that qualitative research can in fact generate valid descriptive and causal inferences in its own right. Interviews constitute a form of qualitative research built on an interpretive epistemology where social reality is 'dynamic, constructed and evolving' (Devine, 2002). In this sense, professionalisation in the Australian political parties can be discerned through the words of party officials – words which carry the authoritative experience of expert informants – and analysed through 'thick' description rather than numerical generalisations (Vromen, 2010).

Beyond the 'manifest' items then, coding more typically proceeded as a search 'below the surface', for themes which were often buried in indirect responses to questions and which only emerged as coding proceeded. A particularly rich vein of data was of course presented in the responses on professionalism. The ambiguity of the term and the open-ended nature of the questions encouraged respondents to construct their own interpretation of the term. In coding these responses, care was taken to disentangle and isolate the multiple threads of meaning they contained. In addition, two open-ended questions yielded responses whose unexpected importance emerged as coding proceeded. In one, respondents were asked to identify their 'key relationships' while working in Head Office. This yielded surface data about relationships with party members, with party leaders, with state branches and so on. It was only once these clusters had been assembled that their analytical importance could be appreciated: the dynamic relationships between national and state branches, and between party officials and party leaders, emerged as important factors in the work of Head Office and this, in turn, suggested broader patterns of centralisation underway in each party. Similarly, when asked the broad question about their 'role as national secretary/federal director', many respondents provided unexpectedly specific and



detailed responses about strategic planning and fundraising. These topics had not been envisaged in planning the interview outline. It is a matter for speculation whether such rich results would have been generated by direct questions. But taken together with the centralisation theme, they proved essential in conceptualising the three imperatives facing party officials which ultimately, as the thesis will argue, fed into an emerging understanding of the professionalisation process. At the same time, the responses to this question were also significant for what they failed to mention. While they are concerned from a strategic perspective about the overall communications messages emanating from the party, respondents made no mention of performing media management functions responsibility for which appears to lie not in Head Office but in the parliamentary party.

### **Interpretation and Theory Building: Historical Institutionalism**

In hypothesising the centrality of party officials to the professionalisation process, this research goes to the heart of an unresolved scholarly debate about the processes and causes of change and continuity in institutions. Political scientists have long been interested in the capacity of institutions to impose order on a potentially inchoate world, 'shap(ing) how political actors define their interests and ... structure their relations of power to other groups' (Thelen & Steinmo, 1992: 2). A venerable tradition of institutional studies – empirical, descriptive and largely non-theoretical – was submerged in the 1950s and 1960s by the emerging behaviouralist tide in social sciences, which attributed the prime explanation for social, economic and political outcomes not to institutional contexts but to individual preferences. More recently, institutionalism has been revived in a vigorous and critical new form. 'New' institutionalism operates with a more expansive and sophisticated definition of institutions and with richer and more explicit theoretical frameworks (Lowndes, 2010: 61). Where the 'old' focus was largely on the institutions of state power, new institutionalists are concerned with a much broader set of institutions operating independently of the state such as political parties, trade unions, interest groups and policy networks (Thelen & Steinmo, 1992: 11, Lowndes, 2010: 67-9). Indeed, the former emphasis on the formal and static, constitutional and hierarchical, characteristics of institutions has been supplanted with a recognition that institutions' informal and dynamic conventions can equally create 'stable, recurring, repetitive, patterned' behaviour (Goodin, 1996: 22). From solid, 'brass name-plate' entities (cited in Lowndes, 2010: 67), institutions have dematerialised into a 'mix of rules, routines, norms and identities' (March & Olsen, 2006: 11) or, more simply still, into 'rule structures' (Sanders, 2006: 39).

The new institutionalist insights have clear implications for the analysis of the interviews with campaign professionals. In Australian political studies, new institutionalism has been dismissed as just one of the 'latest American programmatic manifestos' which have failed to disrupt the discipline's modernist-empiricist norms (Rhodes, 2009; Rhodes & Wanna, 2009). Yet while it may not have been extensively theorised, institutionalism's evolving empirical agenda is certainly apparent, as two contrasting studies of the ALP demonstrate. For Crisp in 1955, the ALP could be understood through 'essentially a constitutional history' that described the operations and interactions of the party's formal structure of committees, executives and representatives while deliberately ignoring the rank-and-file and the trade unions (Crisp, 1955: 1). Thirty years later, Parkin and Warhurst insisted the ALP could only be understood through the varied, fluid and essentially extra-constitutional activities they describe as 'machine politics' (Parkin & Warhurst, 1983: 13, 16-26). A study of professionalisation must consider both the formal rules of the party organisation and its informal conventions, both its fixed structures and office holders and its more fluid power relations and conventions. Such concerns are squarely on the new institutionalist agenda. Specifically, given the multiple sub-themes that have appeared under the new institutional banner - Lowndes (2010) identifies nine, each emphasising different types of institutions and employing different theoretical approaches to assessing institutional influence – the 'historical institutionalist' variant offers significant opportunities for the analysis and interpretation of the professionalisation process in Australian political parties.

Historical institutionalism focuses on the way in which choices about institutional design shape future decision-making by individuals within the institution (Lowndes, 2010: 65; Thelen &

Steinmo, 1992: 9). For Elizabeth Sanders (2006: 39), there are two interrelated conditions that interest historical institutionalists in seeking to illuminate human political interactions. The first acknowledges that those interactions take place within the context of 'rule structures that are themselves human creations'. That is, while institutions are 'political actors in their own right' (March & Olsen, 1984: 738) with powerful structuring and stabilising characteristics, they are also subject to change at the hands of those very human agents whose behaviour they shape. As Thelen and Steinmo (1992: 10) comment, institutions can shape or constrain political strategies but are themselves also the outcome of deliberate political strategies, conflict and choice. Sanders' second condition concerns the process and timing of political activity: it must be understood as occurring 'sequentially, as life is lived' (Sanders, 2006: 39). For historical institutionalists, the order in which events take place is crucial, as early decisions and events impose powerful constraints on subsequent events. In this sense, institutions are said to be 'path dependent': 'once a particular path gets established ... self-reinforcing processes make reversals very difficult' (Pierson, 2004: 10). The contrast with 'rational choice institutionalists' is complete. Rational choice institutionalists see individuals choose strategies within institutions to achieve their goal of maximised self-interest. Historical institutionalists focus instead on satisficing: goals themselves are uncertain and contingent (Thelen & Steinmo, 1992: 8); outcomes may be inefficient, non-optimal, abrasive and problematic (March and Olsen, 1984: 737, Pierson, 2004: 55-6); and power is distributed unevenly among winners and losers (Hall & Taylor, 1996). Instead of the 'ruthless elegance' of rational choice (cited in Thelen & Steinmo, 1992: 12), historical institutionalism is 'messily eclectic' relying on narrative to set out its unavoidably long causal chains (Sanders, 2006: 44). Critically, historical institutionalism emphasises the temporal dimension, focussing not on institutional choice but on institutional development (Pierson, 2004: 177). Sanders (2006: 35) dismisses rational choice analysis as a 'snapshot' (Sanders, 2006: 35); in a more damning metaphor, Pierson claims that a rational choice chef would perfectly assemble all the necessary ingredients for a meal and perfectly measure them, but would be entirely indifferent as to how they were combined, in what order, or for how long (Pierson, 2004: 1).

Though the term is recent, scholars of political parties have long recognised the path dependent nature of change in parties and party systems. Key's (1964) three-face framework is essentially an (old) institutionalist statement about the structuring force of institutional location on the behaviours and interests of party actors. Lipset and Rokkan (1967) identified the underlying social cleavages in western Europe that were transformed into party systems that endured, in 'frozen' form, for subsequent decades. Panebianco (1988: xiii), reviving Weber's emphasis on the 'founding moment' of institutions, also argued that structures and rules formulated at the point of creation continue to shape party activities long after the founding environment has changed. He suggests 'the way in which the cards are dealt out, and the outcomes of the different rounds played out in the formative phase of an organisation, continue in many ways to condition the life of an organisation even decades afterwards'. The appointment of ex-Brigadier Cleland as the first Federal Director of the Liberal Party started a pattern which, as we shall see, endured for future appointments; in electing Arch Stewart from among its state officials as its first Federal Secretary the ALP likewise began as it was to continue.

Yet such instances only serve to highlight the deep and unresolved tension at the heart of the historical institutional approach: institutions develop, and shape individual behaviour, in powerful but somewhat inflexible ways – yet they are created and shaped by human agency and intervention. Institutions are defined by their stability and endurance – yet they do change. Political parties endure, but their platforms are revised, rules amended, committees reconstituted; deals are brokered, alliances forged and abandoned, and dearly held values shed and replaced; parties unite (Hancock, 2000:3-4) and parties split (Murray, 1970: 5). Parties may also undergo a process of professionalisation. How can such changes be explained or at least understood? New institutionalism is at its weakest when explaining this puzzle (Lowndes, 2010: 74). Path dependency grants little space and uncertain powers to human agency to 'break free' of the past; change is implicitly posited as an exogenous disruption (Greener, 2005).

We thus return to the challenge identified in chapter one. How can the systemic, party and agential level drivers, the exogenous and endogenous factors, be accommodated within a theoretically satisfying model of institutional change? Historical institutionalism suggests the answer may lie in understanding campaign professionalisation as a new structure of rules. Emerging within parties as an adaptive response to a rapidly changing external environment of new technologies and new voting alignments, these new rules of professionalism differ from, and sharply challenge, parties' existing rules - their formal rules and constitutions as well as their informal conventions of venerable practice and ideological commitments which in some cases date from the parties' foundation and which have shaped the path of party growth in powerful ways. Yet the new rules also draw on long-standing party ambitions: they represent a modernised approach to achieving the parties' goals of electoral success. Human agency, in the form of the party officials, can be observed formulating and applying these new rules of professionalism, adopting the identity of campaign professionals, driving the process of professionalisation, transforming parties' operational practices and the attitudes and working habits of those individuals within it. Interviews with elite party officials, spanning both parties and covering four decades of profound change in the political and broader environments, have provided a new set of data with which this process of institutional change can be confidently explored.

## Chapter Three

### **'I Do Regard Myself as a Professional': Economic, Technical and Ideological Characteristics of Head Office Professionals**

'I do regard myself as a professional. A professional does their job to the best of their abilities given the resources they've got. That's how I view it.'

'It's not "Amateur Hour". You're dealing with important things – or what you believe are important things - like policy, delivering good government, dealing with the democratic ideal.'

'I'm not an administrator – I can administrate but I'm not an administrator, and I'm not a press person and I'm not a policy person, I'm just interested in campaigns.'

'Trying to be dispassionate about it, I think experience does matter. I see myself as a campaign professional. I don't aspire at all to go into parliament.'

**W**hat does professionalism mean in the context of Australian parties and campaigns? The term, as already noted, is beset by many definitional ambiguities which have not, however, prevented its widespread usage by campaign scholars and political commentators. This chapter seeks to address this shortcoming. It does so by establishing how party officials themselves describe their work, and by using that foundation to clarify the concepts around the 'professional' character of party and campaign work. It is not to be expected that the party officials can produce the hard definitions or unambiguous criteria of professionalism that so far have eluded others; the singularities of context and the idiosyncrasies of expression of more than a dozen political actors spanning several decades of Australian election campaigns are likely to conspire against any such outcome. Nor should it be expected that their concepts about professionalism will necessarily match those that surround other more traditional professions. What can be expected, given their unique position at the head of party organisations, is that the party officials will speak authoritatively about campaign change; if professionalisation has taken place they are likely to have, at least, observed it. Accordingly two questions were put to the party officials in the research interview: they were asked to describe their job as National Secretary or Federal Director in their respective Head Offices, and they were asked whether in performing this role they regarded themselves as professionals. Reporting their responses, this chapter draws out key themes about the professionalisation process in Australian political parties.

#### **Professional Campaign Management**

Political parties are traditionally rich in activities arising from their presence 'on the ground' and in 'public office'. Party members gather in branch meetings to debate policy, select delegates and promote the party's cause, especially at election times. Candidates vie for preselection within the party and then for election by the voters. Members of Parliament promote legislative expression of their party's policies, representing their supporters and promoting their communities' interests on the broader stage. Amid this busy diversity – which has of course ebbed with the decline of the party membership – the party officials occupy highly specialised internal roles. Alone within the party, they are exclusively focussed on the task of campaigning and winning elections.

This exclusive focus is apparent from the descriptions given by the National Secretaries and Federal Directors about their work. For most of these officials, campaign management is a prominent element of their job. This prominence has increased through time to the point where it has become the definitive element. This trend is apparent among both ALP and Liberal officials.

Only two of the thirteen responses made no mention of election campaign management: Wyndham and Pascoe. These are the two earliest officials interviewed in each party, whose

experience dates back to the 1960s and 1970s; this suggests that in their day campaign management was not at least the superordinate task. For Wyndham, the job consisted of:

Policy. Stop the states from bickering.

For Pascoe, who entered the Liberal Party Head Office as a management consultant in turbulent circumstances after the 1972 loss of Government:

My role was like being brought into a company, to turn it around. It was a turnaround.

Two more officials from the 1970s, Eggleton and Combe, mentioned campaign activities as a prominent but not exclusive part of their job descriptions. They both employ the private sector metaphor of a Chief Executive Officer and describe their role in essentially managerial terms:

It was essentially being Chief Executive of the party headquarters, with all that involved. ... I never failed to accept that my principal role was to make the organisation work, to have a professional relationship with the state divisions, to make sure that we had appropriate research (and) good relations with the agency, that we had the confidence of all the state directors, and were ready for election campaigns (Eggleton).

I suppose you're Chief Executive Officer of the organisational wing of the party ... running it as a business. *Q: Was there anything more than the financial/ administrative role?* A: Well, the campaign role, because there were so many damn elections: in eight years, four national elections (Combe).

For later respondents, campaign management assumes a steadily more prominent element of the role. Four of these respondents – three Labor and one Liberal official – used virtually identical terms to describe their role as consisting of two parts, one of which is campaign management and the other party administration. For McMullan, for example, the job combines the role of 'efficient administrator of the organisation' with 'creative campaign director'. Walsh says the role has 'always' had an administrative and a campaign management component. For Gartrell, 'half the job, or a third of the job really' was taken up by the 'shepherding' role of administering the national conference and the National Executive; the balance of the time was taken up as campaign director. Loughnane, the incumbent Liberal official, says the job consists of two parts, being Chief Executive and campaign director.

This combination is a problematic one, requiring different skills at different times. According to McMullan, 'all jobs of this character' in both the ALP and, he understood, the Liberal Party contain the 'inherent tension': efficiency and creativity need to be combined in the one person. Walsh put it pithily: 'most people are forced to do the former (administrative role), and enjoy to do the latter (campaign role)'. For Gartrell likewise the campaign role was the 'most challenging but most rewarding' part, without which the National Secretaryship would 'just be a boring crap job with a lot of difficult meetings with difficult people'. Which of these two halves is the more important element? McMullan and Loughnane – spanning the 1980s and the 2000s – agree it is campaign management:

A key priority was to have the party in the shape that it was capable of running and winning an election campaign and forming a government. That was our number 1 task (McMullan).

The other way to look at it is, my job is to win elections (Loughnane).

In the more detailed descriptions of the role provided by two more Labor respondents, campaigning is again prominent:

Obviously campaigning, party development, finance, policy development – probably that's the quartet (Hogg).

It's one of those jobs that you define for yourself, and you define it around your own personality and capability. I saw it as being about the protection and the expansion of the national capability, to enhance and protect the reputation of the national organisation, and to support wherever I could the ambitions and aspirations of the state organisations. ... *Q: How did that conceptualisation of the role differ from your predecessors and successors?*

A: I built on the work that my predecessors had done. I became literally the embodiment of McMullan's obsession with campaign capability and Hoggy's obsession with building the asset base (Gray).

The most detailed response was given by Crosby. Describing himself as 'effectively the national CEO of the party', Crosby provided a long list of responsibilities attached to that role. These included 'organisational stewardship', supporting the national forums such as the Federal Executive and Federal Policy Committee, providing political strategy and advice to the parliamentary party, providing policy advice, training party employees, managing the party's international relations and fundraising. All these activities 'came together' in campaigning, which provides the 'ultimate reason' for them. Emphasising this campaign priority, Crosby had earlier emphasised that he saw himself primarily in a campaign role, while delegating lesser party tasks:

Really, I've always been interested in campaigns. I'm not an administrator – I can administrate but I'm not an administrator, and I'm not a press person and I'm not a policy person, I'm just interested in campaigns. ... As far as I was concerned, it was campaign director first, and most of the party support stuff you can fan out.

Thus for Crosby, the job involves more than the party's operational continuity. Outcomes matter. Professional campaign management is about helping the party achieve its goals:

Professional politics in my book is ... acting professionally in an objective and impartial way to provide considered advice and support for the party to achieve its objectives of winning elections by running good campaigns. That's what I mean (Crosby).

Two more respondents, Robb and Bitar, answered solely in terms of a campaign role. Robb recalls that his mission was to take the Liberal Party's campaign management to a new level of centralised technical sophistication:

I think (the Liberal Party) thought they were moving to, not a new generation, but a new perspective (in hiring me). There was a view that they had to ... centralise some of the activities, the coordination at least of the on-the-ground activities. ... But also there was a view that we need to make a leap in the use of sophisticated techniques and data bases and all of that. So I took it that a lot of my charter was to take the organisation, the campaign side of it, to another level.

Bitar saw the role as a specialised campaign one with a specific political goal:

The federal secretary (doesn't) have to ... look after the party membership<sup>5</sup>. You're running a national organisation, but it's pretty much a very specialised campaign director role and managing the national executive. ... I saw my primary job as getting the government re-elected. I saw that as my primary role.

From Wyndham and Pascoe through to the recent incumbents, campaign management has become the primary or even exclusive role. The party officials recognise – indeed, they insist – that this development carries implications about the character and broader purpose of the political party. McMullan states it explicitly: having described (above) campaign readiness as his 'number 1 task', he recognises that other important party activities such as political participation and policy debates are relegated behind, or subsumed into, that priority. Because they will not themselves win elections, these lesser functions can be dismissed as the activities of a 'debating society':

The administrative things about the character of the party, democratisation, the opportunity for (participation) – those are important. But we're not running a debating society where the significant thing is, 'How much chance did I get to speak?' We're running a political party that aspires to govern the country. So you do have to think about things like equity and propriety, and all those (administrative) things about how you run any organisation whether it's a tennis club or a political party. But (the) fundamental drivers, the thing that distinguishes (the party) from other organisations you run, is that (the party's) job, its only real job, is to win the election.

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<sup>5</sup> Party membership in both parties is managed through the state branches and divisions.

No doubt McMullan's emphasis on electoral success was particularly shaped by his achievement as campaign director in taking Labor from opposition into Government and keeping it in office through successive elections. Indeed, other officials who had enjoyed campaign success and who led a governing party, made the same general point about campaign priority:

There is no point in having a well-run organisation where the paper flows in a timely manner if you never win an election (Crosby).

We are a political organisation. We are not a business. We exist to win elections. We are not a lobby group. So the key focus is to win elections (Loughnane).

You build your secretariat for campaign capability - not for the day to day running of your party membership, but your big load (campaign) events (Gray).

It is apparent from all that they say, here and elsewhere, that the party officials do not regard their campaign focus as a normatively poor or unhealthy development for the party. To the contrary they regard it as a very proper and desirable characteristic: well-run campaigns serve the best interests of the party by maximising its chances of electoral success which in turn allows the party to implement its policy in government. In this sense, the party officials feel justified in imposing their campaign focus on the activities and purposes of the party as a whole. This logic, it emerges, is a key element of the party officials' understanding of themselves as professionals: as professionals they define their work as helping the party achieve its goal of electoral success.

### **Professionals on Professionalism**

Each party official interviewed for this research was asked if he regarded himself as a professional and what he meant by the term. The responses suggest that, while professionalism may be a contested term among scholars, the term is in increasingly wide usage among Australia's campaign managers and carries a rich and coherent set of meanings. It is, moreover, readily embraced by them as an appropriate way of describing their occupation.

More than half the interviewed group - seven of the thirteen party officials, representing both parties - accepted without hesitation the description of themselves as 'professional'. These were McMullan, Eggleton, Robb, Crosby, Gartrell, Loughnane and Bitar. Another three accepted the description with some qualification: Wyndham, Combe and Hogg. Another two who rejected the description of themselves as professionals - Pascoe and Walsh - did so with qualifications about the precise circumstances of their professional qualifications. Only Gray resisted the term, in terms which are significant and which will be discussed below.

For the great majority of this group, the term professional is a positive one. To be described as a professional is a 'compliment' (McMullan, Hogg); it is a desirable description (Combe, Loughnane); it carries positive connotations about skill levels (Gartrell, Bitar) and methods and standards of work (McMullan, Hogg); and it also captures a sense of engagement in public matters that are 'important' and 'serious' (McMullan, Hogg, Loughnane). Pascoe regarded himself as a political 'novice' though his professional (corporate) skills contributed to the 'professionalisation' of the Liberal Party's Head Office; Walsh likewise regarded himself as a professional but only in one specific campaign discipline, political communication.

There are of course many variations in expression and different approaches to defining the nature of professionalism. For several officials, professional work is described in contrast to other political activities; it is described by what it is *not* rather than what it is. Thus a professional is not an 'amateur' (Wyndham, Pascoe, Hogg, Crosby); nor is a professional someone who aspires to enter parliament (Eggleton, Loughnane). Crosby firmly describes himself as neither administrator nor media manager nor policy specialist, but as someone interested in election campaigns. Yet despite such negative definitions, the party officials do broadly agree on the core criteria that they believe constitute their work as professional. Examination of the interview transcripts reveals three broad clusters of professional characteristics or aspects of professionalism: an economic aspect centred around payment for services, a technical aspect centred on competence and experience, and an

ideological aspect centred on commitment to the client. These aspects of professionalism are discussed in turn below.

### **Professionalism: a Distinctive Economic Status**

Professionals are paid for their work. This economic aspect is fundamental to an understanding of professionalism, and provides a basic point of differentiation between party officials as paid employees and all other parts of the party. Underlining the distinctions drawn in Katz and Mair's (1993) 'three faces' analysis of party organisation, party officials are not unpaid volunteers at the branch level. Wyndham acknowledges that:

Most of the people in branches are amateurs. That's alright. No disparagement to them. But you can't be in a job like I had and be an amateur. It's like running a business - running a business with a cause.

McMullan commented that campaign work is 'not a part-time activity for dilettantes'; Hogg declared, 'It's not Amateur Hour'. In similar terms, Crosby differentiated those who 'as a career choice' chose employment in the 'professional wing' of the party from the 'well-meaning amateurs' and weekend activists who indulge in politics as a 'pastime':

In some countries - and the (British) Conservative Party has been like this somewhat - politics ... has been the pastime of the well-meaning amateur. 'It's what a chap does when a chap's made a bit of money and wants to put something back'. ... What I mean by a political professional is someone who as a career course effectively chose politics, and it wasn't a thing that you did on weekends and got excited by. I was a Young Liberal - probably a pretty obnoxious one - and they loved to play the game of politics, stacking branches and all that. That's not professional politics. ... I am unusual in that I started as a Young Liberal and have been fortunate to fumble my way through (to) the professional side of the party.

Likewise, party officials may define themselves by contrast to the party 'in office':

I never saw myself as a parliamentarian. ... (I had no) aspirations to use that then as a stepping stone to go into parliament (Eggleton).

I see myself as a campaign professional. I don't aspire at all to go into parliament (Loughnane).

Even within the party's central office, as V O Key noted, the party official stands in contrast to elected office holders - the party president, treasurer and other members of the central executive committee - who are honorary volunteers. In a party context of voluntary service, he is a paid employee. But there has been another critical change as well. The employee's role has shifted from a 'secretariat' role, providing clerical or logistic services to those honorary office holders, to an active executive role in a Head Office. The employee has become an employer and decision maker. This complex transformation is a hallmark of the professionalisation process:

(That's) my point about professionalism in a way. Once I think it was a case that the director was - perhaps not a facilitator, but - (someone who) provided a secretariat service to a committee of people who provided decisions. But that's changed. The federal director / campaign director is now a professional, a person professionally engaged to be the campaign manager... Of course there is an elected president but you are the professional, and people work for you directly (Crosby).

In assuming this distinctive economic status, the officials are of course confirming Weber's definition of the person who lives 'from' politics: one who strives to make it into an enduring source of income (Weber, 1919: 318). Yet the actual salaries paid to the officials do not themselves seem to be at issue; officials are not apparently motivated by remuneration and in any



event, as Loughnane states, 'just about everyone' among them 'could be earning more money doing something else'. This underlines the significance of Gray's rejection of the description of himself as a professional. He did so because he was uneasy about its implications for his motives and commitment as a political actor. In Weberian terms, Gray lived '*for*' politics - giving his life meaning and purpose by devoting it to a cause - and rejected the suggestion that he was living from politics as an income-earning official:

I'm not really sure what (the term professional) means, which is why I struggle a little bit.

*Q: What do you mean by it?* A: I got paid for doing political work. For me, my time as a party official (was) driven not by the fact that I got paid for doing it. It (was) driven by a very deep passion and a commitment to the agenda

*Q: You think professionalism implies a lack of personal commitment because you're paid?*

A: I think professionalism can sometimes be taken to mean you're a gun for hire. A good political professional is a professional partisan.

Gray was the only one to express it in these terms, but he is far from the only official to declare partisan commitment. Indeed, the officials' priority on campaign management is an expression of their commitment to the party's cause. This suggests the economic aspect of professionalism may sit uneasily alongside a deep-seated partisan sympathy. Weber attempted to resolve the dilemma by noting 'Generally one does both'. Yet in the context of the party official, this dilemma seems more enduring and will require further attention in the following chapter.

### **Professionalism: Technical Competence**

Professionals are highly skilled and experienced. Party officials acknowledge that the reason for their economic distinctiveness as professionals relates directly to their possession of scarce and distinctive expertise. They are paid because of their skills, which are derived from long experience, and which are applied to complex problems with high standards of care and competence. Campaign management is a complex challenge, a task requiring skills of a high order; for Wyndham in the 1960s, a professional attitude meant:

bearing in mind all the time, that (though) there were many things to be juggled, that you had one aim, to win election.

Forty years later, Gartrell used a similar metaphor: campaign management is not juggling but assembling a complex puzzle:

You've got to be skilled and understand how a campaign works, you've got to understand the role of strategy, the role of focus groups, advertising, the party, how it all fits together. It's quite a complex puzzle to put together. I'd argue that's a pretty reasonable professional achievement ...

Bitar described an even longer list of technical skills that are required for professional campaign management:

knowledge of research quant and qual, ... knowledge of campaigning - pamphlets, brochures, TV (and) radio advertising - all the things that it actually takes to run a professional campaign - understanding MPs, understanding marginal seat campaigning ...

Campaign managers do not necessarily employ all these tools themselves in a hands-on way, but they need sufficient understanding of them to appraise and direct the external consultants who do provide them, and to adopt new technological opportunities as they emerge. Campaign managers do this within a context of resource scarcity, where choices need to be made between what is strategically desirable and what is financially affordable. Two Labor officials summarised these constraints in defining the professional party role:

Professionalisation is about disciplined application of resources to election campaigning and the development of the opportunities that modern technology gives you to run campaigns of a sort ... inconceivable before (McMullan).

I do regard myself as a professional. A professional does their job to the best of their abilities given the resources they've got, that's how I view it (Bitar).

How do campaign managers acquire the skills to master this complexity? Part of their expertise may arise from formal education. Educational attainments by officials of both parties have increased over time (Appendix Three, Table 3). Given the white collar clerical nature of the work, some level of secondary education appears to have been typical. But not all of the early officials completed secondary school and until the 1960s, none had a university degree. Since Hartcher (a 1940s graduate) and Combe (1960s), all the party officials except Hogg are university graduates. Pascoe is the exceptional outlier with a double undergraduate degree, a doctorate from Cambridge and an MBA from Harvard.

Yet Gartrell is probably speaking for many of the party officials when he recognised that formal educational qualifications are less relevant than practical training:

*Q: In defining yourself as a political professional or a campaign professional, obviously your background is relevant? A: Yes, doing political science at uni (is relevant but) less so than understanding the (labour) movement. Coming up through the movement is really important.*

More often, the party officials speak of acquiring skills over a long period of time, through repeated exposure to campaigns and through regular practical experience of campaign management:

... (It's) not something that someone can pick up very quickly. You can't just walk in the door and do it (Gartrell).

(A professional is) someone who permanently works on it – doesn't just get involved in a campaign (without) that reservoir of experience and skill obtained over a long period of time (Crosby).

*Q: What made you a professional? A: Practicing those skills at the highest level over a long period, developing confidence in my judgement based on what I knew on what would and wouldn't work. ... You just acquire skills by practice (Walsh).*

I'm a great believer that experience matters in these jobs. There's no other job quite like them and there's no adequate external preparation really (Loughnane).

I absolutely loved the campaigning. Being state organiser and working in the party office is about the worst job in the world, it is so full-on. ... I threw myself into it. It was hard, hard work. I loved the campaigning - absolutely loved the campaigning (Bitar).

In the interviews, officials of both parties emphasised the need to build their campaign capacities by providing training opportunities for young up-and-coming campaign managers. This can take the form of overseas travel to participate in election campaigns with fraternal parties in the United States and the United Kingdom. More typically, it consists of local training in the form of extensive exposure to campaigning:

In 1990 I was the marginal seat guy. I'd spent all of 88 and 89 on the campaign trail. I had worked every single state election campaign in that period (Gray).

One thing Gary (Gray) was big on - and he was right, I tried to do it too - is (to) get young smart campaigners and roll them through state elections. A federal election only comes up every three years. But there's always a state election somewhere and you would deploy the really smart ones and say, 'This month you're off to the South Australian elections',

and three months later it's New South Wales. So you can give someone twenty years of campaign experience by rolling them through all these state elections. You also build up their networks as well. So they can come through pretty quickly (Gartrell).

I always took the view and I have always been a strong advocate of it – the importance of training, to offset this deficiency that I thought existed. So when I became the deputy (federal director) ... we provided a lot of training for staff. ... Training programs on messaging, on how to run a good electorate office... It's not done any more but for a couple of years we ran summer schools: we got the states to pick out some of the brightest - they didn't want to be an MP but could be active in the Young Liberals, a young lawyer who's in the party, whatever - but interested in (becoming) more effective as campaigners (Crosby).

Mastery of complexity requires more, however, than technical expertise or textbook knowledge. Judgement is required as well, and this too emerges only with time and practice. Robb suggests that the judgement was harder to acquire than the technical knowledge:

(Professionalism) means in the end that appropriate mix of the science and the art. In politics - and I've also run commercial companies - what you do about the future is always a matter of judgement, and invariably the CEO who has to make those judgements has to have gone down every dry gully. It's often a matter of how much experience that person has got ... I learned that through my time. I was more concerned about the science to start with, I suppose (Robb).

*Q: Professional skills – what does it take?* A: Judgement and character (laughs). ... You can be technically equipped in a 'what do you look for in a good advertisement' sense, but these other demands can be very – that's where the rubber hits the road (Loughnane).

In some contexts, the source of this personal skill-set is unknown or attributed to natural causes. For Combe, the requisite skill was 'having good antennae'; Hogg suggests he may have had:

one of the best political brains around that the party's had. A lot of it's instinct. Where did I get that from? I'm buggered if I know!

A consequence of emphasising the importance of technical skills is a conceptualisation of the political contest as commensurately less about values and passions. In this sense, the party official may see himself as a dispassionate technician rather than an emotional partisan; again, the professional living 'from' politics may be at odds with those living 'for' politics. Crosby's distinction between the professional wing and the 'excited' amateurs who play the game of politics has already been noted. Here, Crosby returns to the theme, describing the professional as a 'quality controller', developing an understanding of voter behaviour in a rational or 'clinical' or 'rigorous' way, instead of the more emotionally charged or anecdotal approach of the politicians:

One of the problems of politics - it's a bit like religion – (is that) everyone has their view and a theory. All too often people operate on anecdote rather than reality. It's very hard, particularly for a lot of politicians, to be sufficiently clinical - because they're caught up in it – (about) what needs to be done and what's happening. In a way you're a quality controller, because you're trying to get to the core of things, because you've got to get people (i.e. voters) to behave in a particular way. You're seeking to understand why people are motivated or why they are thinking a particular way, not what they're thinking.

Likewise Hogg insisted that professional conduct included rigorous analysis rather than prejudice:

I think I am professional in my conduct and approach, etc, if that means - not being infallible but - trying to be rigorous intellectually and fair and reasonable and put aside prejudices.

Walsh put it in similar terms. Describing the review of Labor's organisation after the heavy defeat of 1977, he said the party's raw political character was hindering its ability to perform the more technical aspects of campaigning:

It was felt that the party needed people who could bring professional communications and research skills to the organisation – which had raw politics in abundance but it wasn't proving to be the answer to winning elections.

Moreover, this combination of technical skills, disciplined resource allocation and clinical understanding of voter behaviour creates a sense that campaigning has become a scientific exercise; inspiration has given way to method and guesswork has been eclipsed by effectiveness measurement:

In the end you're running a professional outfit if you can measure the effectiveness of a lot of what you do. I thought in the end we were able to see where we had performed well and where we hadn't. We had some reasonable capacity to judge the effectiveness of our direct mail for instance (Robb).

Objectivity and professional skill, not having your own theories, knowing about research ... It's understanding what motivates voters and being able to measure and respond to it. Q: *That is in fact a scientific exercise. The measurability and in a sense the replicability is critical in what you're saying?* A: Yes, and having an established methodology. Politics involves people and people have their different hopes and aspirations, so it's not about dehumanising it, it's just putting a structure and process and – what's the opposite of professional? amateur – not being amateurish: not thinking we can design a leaflet and we'll win. It's getting to the core of what really drives people and responding in a professional way to that (Crosby).

The ultimate implication of all this is that professional campaign management may be used, as Bitar reluctantly conceded, in a way that transcends party boundaries:<sup>6</sup>

Q: *Would you have been able to do (Brian) Loughnane's job? Would he have been able to do yours?* A: Could I have done his job? What aspects of his job? Could I have chaired his National Executive? No.

Q: *Run a campaign?* A: It took me fifteen years to appreciate what it takes to run the Labor organisation. It took him just as long to tell how to run the Liberal organisation. Could I just go in and run a Liberal Party campaign? Probably I could, yes, why not? If you gave me enough time ... Could Brian come and run my campaign? I have no doubt. I know Brian well, and I have no doubt he could run a really professional campaign for the Labor Party ... I think he did a brilliant job in the last (2010) campaign despite us changing leaders weeks out after he'd put his whole campaign together ... Not dealing with the National Executive, not dealing with the unions, if you said to Brian, 'Do your research, develop ads, brief the leader, for the Labor Party', I reckon Brian could do it. And I could probably do it for him. You wouldn't do it but you could, because you are a professional at campaigning.

Even in these unlikely circumstances, technical competence (being a 'professional at campaigning') is presented as deliverable to the other party only if it does not involve responsibility for the political relationship with the party ('dealing with the National Executive'). In typical

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<sup>6</sup> See Mancini (1999: 234) for example: 'Today, the political professional, at least in the United States, is bound to the marketplace of abilities, not to political commitments. The new professional can change fronts, offer services to a party and candidate today and to their opponents tomorrow. The new professionals do not have an exclusive relationship with one party or leader; like all members of modern professions, they offer their technical knowledge to whomever needs it and has the resources to pay for it. They are part of the new labour market'

circumstances, the party officials can deliver technical competence while also handling the political aspects of the role. This political ability in fact emerges as a third critical aspect of professionalism, under the guise of client service.

### **An Ideology of Professionalism: Serving the Client**

Professionals serve their client. Party officials see their work as beneficial to their party by helping it achieve power in government. They view service to the party as a defining hallmark of their professional behaviour. In Australia, this sense of campaign professionalism operates strictly *within* party lines. These party officials campaign to win, but they are exclusive in their partisan attachment; they have never crossed party lines to help the 'other' party win. Commitment to the party is affirmed by Labor and Liberal officials, ranging from the 1960s to the present day:

Whilst you had to be professional you also had to believe in something – which I did. I believed... . It's like running a business. Running a business with a cause. *Q: On whose behalf were you working? The party? The leaders? The members?* A: Oh the party always. *Q: as opposed to the leader?* A: Oh no: he was part of the party (Wyndham).

I saw the role of state and national secretary as roughly akin to being a good public servant. In other words you had a service duty to the membership and to the organisation, to its growth and its betterment, its expansion, its intellectual capacity. That was part of my philosophy (Hogg).

As the Federal Director you are a steward of the party's interest. Well so is the (party's federal) president, but you are the professional. You are there every day. You have a job to protect the party's interests. While leaders come and go, the party goes on forever. So you've got an obligation to ensure the party continues to be strong and has continuity (Crosby).

*Q: As professionals, doctors provide their services for patients. Who are you doing this for?* A: You'd hope you are doing it for the party and the country. I mean most people on both sides - it can be quite dormant - but there is quite a streak of patriotism in their own funny way (Loughnane).

All these metaphors used to describe the campaign professional's service to the party - a 'business with a cause', the 'service duty' of a 'good public servant', the 'steward' who protects the enduring party while its leaders come and go – contain an element of altruism: the professional is understood to be motivated by a higher cause. This cause is represented as 'the party's interests' or as 'the organisation, its growth and betterment' or, simply, as 'the party'. This higher cause is understood to transcend the interests of any individual official, parliamentarian, or faction within the party. In organisations divided along factional lines or by leadership rivalry in the parliamentary party, the professional – at least ideally - takes no sides and works across boundaries to 'bring all the sections of the party together':

I saw myself as a professional in the sense of a professional behind-the-scenes person, who would make things happen, bring all the sections of the party together, enjoy the confidence of the parliamentary party and the organisation, and perform a professional job for the party. Delivering on a professional job for the party was how I saw my life... If ever any member of my staff showed any tendency to take a critical position on a politician, a member of our parliamentary party, I came down on them like a ton of bricks. It wasn't our job (in the Head Office) to engage in personality politics (Eggleton).

The best thing about being the National Secretary was you're not necessarily playing any factional games; you just focus professionally on your job. *Q: It's become defactionalised over time, this role?* A: Yes, it has - which is good and bad. The good aspect is you don't have to – sorry, you're not supposed to – worry about the factional games as the National Secretary. But unfortunately what you appreciate is that factions still run the party, so

you've got to deal with both factions. You're still spending a lot of time with the factions (Bitar).<sup>7</sup>

For the party officials, then, their work is professional work because it is directed to promoting a higher cause: the electoral interests of their party. These interests are not harnessed to any individual party leader or faction; they encompass the organisation as a whole. Nor are they defined in any ideological sense arising from the beliefs, values or platforms of parties on the Left or the Right; instead they are defined in an instrumental purposive sense of achieving the specific outcome of electoral success. On the basis of electoral success the party can form government and implement its policies – tasks which are implicitly understood as the responsibility of the parliamentarians in the party 'in office'. Getting there – winning the election – is the task of the party officials in 'central office'. This ideology of client service thus constitutes the third theme or cluster of professional criteria that emerge from the research interviews, and it powerfully connects the previous two themes. Client service transforms the economic relationship between the official and his party, from that of an employee-employer to that of a professional-client; it legitimises the official's distinctive economic status within the party – his capacity to be paid for providing professional services – by specifying that those services are to be applied to promoting the interests of the client. Likewise, the party official's technical competence is legitimised as professional since it is deployed in the interests of the client.

### **Discussion**

It is clearly not true that the profession of campaign management has attained a level of formal organisation comparable with the traditional professions of law and medicine (Scammell, 1997). Campaign management has no body of scientific knowledge, no formal educational or training path, no peer-assessment, no code of conduct and no disciplinary procedures against behaviour deemed unprofessional. Yet the party officials interviewed here embrace the description of themselves as professional. Moreover, notwithstanding the diversity of their expression and experience, they have articulated core elements of campaign management's claim to professionalism in the Australian party context: they are paid; they are highly skilled experts with long experience; and they are solely committed to the interests of their client. These economic, technical and ideological claims to professionalism are broadly consistent with those of the traditional professions. Stripped down to its essential elements, professionalism can be defined as a livelihood, derived from possession of scarce specialised skills, and practiced according to a code of client service.

This definition applies with equal validity to party officials of both major parties. Labor and Liberal Party officials share fundamentally similar views about the professional character of their work. Greater differences can be discerned between officials of different eras; notions of professionalism have changed over time. While making due allowance for the small numbers of officials in each decade, the earlier officials such as Wyndham, Pascoe and Combe do speak with more hesitation about the role of the professional in politics than the officials from the 1990s onwards, for whom this topic is a familiar one on which they articulate well-developed and multi-layered views.

And yet the definition raises a number of problems. These relate to the complex relationship between the professional and the party. Gray put his finger on the problem when he expressed reservations about applying the term to himself. He rejected it because it made him sound like a 'gun for hire' – someone for whom the economic aspect of the job was more important than its political content. To the contrary, Gray insisted that getting paid was irrelevant as a motivation compared to his passion for the party cause. A good professional, he insists, is a partisan one. Thus the economic aspect of professionalism – necessary to the definition since Weber – is not a sufficient criterion of it. The definitional problems are amplified to the extent that partisanship also challenges the technical aspect of the term. Technical competence is implicitly based in science rather than the emotions: professionals perform work that is expert, rational and even measurable

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<sup>7</sup> Likewise, James Walter (1986: 104) says of Bob Hogg that, despite his roots in the ALP's Socialist Left, his six years as state secretary had made him 'more strategist and tactician than ideologue'.

in its effect, and it is their scarce and distinctive ability to perform such work that underpins their claim to economic reward. Partisans however cannot be dispassionate or emotionally neutral. Their distinctive work must inevitably be tinged by subjective affiliation with, rather than emotional distance from, the object of their work, their client.

These problems over the economic and technical aspects of the definition are resolved to some extent through its ideological aspect. Campaign professionals are not 'guns for hire' and will not provide their services indiscriminately – for example, to a client merely offering them economic reward. Instead they are motivated by the altruistic concept of client service. They apply their technical expertise to promoting the interests of the party to which they belong, and which they support – the party in which they acquired and developed their expertise. Their professional service does not seek to promote their own economic interest but to advance the true and best interests of their client – which they rationally define, without exception, as electoral success.

This analysis inevitably raises further questions. How confidently can we accept the claim of party officials to understand the interests of their client? For a medical or judicial professional, the interests of the patient-client or accused-client might be patently clear. But in a collective organisation of political actors, the interests of the party-client are likely to be harder to discern and subject to greater contest. Is the superordinate goal of electoral success identified by the campaign professionals in Head Office truly shared by party actors 'on the ground' and 'in elected office'? Can indeed such a 'client' speak with one voice about its interests? More likely, within an organisation dedicated to political contest, there will be more than one authoritative voice about the interests of the party. Thus in seeking to impose their electoral priority on the party, the officials are likely to set the scene for tensions and conflicts with other party actors. Yet they do so as partisan adherents of the party, devoted to promoting what they regard as its best – that is, its electoral - interests. These tensions will be further explored in the following chapters.

## Chapter Four

### 'A Highly Contested Ballot' and 'Lines of Succession': Professionalisation and Party Structures

'I drove around the countryside, literally talking to all members of the National Executive. It was a highly contested ballot.'

'But the lines of succession in the Liberal Party – I think Eggleton was pretty clear, Andrew (Robb) was pretty clear, Lynton (Crosby) was pretty clear, I was probably the least clear of those four.'

'I think as soon as I said I was running, it was over, mainly because of my campaign expertise. I was seen as someone who could do it.'

'It's not always easy to stand up to leaders who think that they're the best campaign directors, and often bad blood is created between leaders and campaign directors'.

**A**s a process of institutional change, party professionalisation occurs, as we shall see, across a broad range of actors, structures and processes. At the very least, it involves a sweeping change of personnel, as the party's traditional bureaucratic hierarchy is replaced by a new cohort of professionally-trained technicians (Panebianco, 1988: 221-32). The emergence of these individuals, introducing new behaviours, attitudes and identities, generates what Panebianco describes as 'conspicuous alterations ... in power relations within parties'. Amateurs and volunteers are displaced. Traditional rules and decision-making prerogatives – derived from the party's foundational cleavages in class, region and federalism - are challenged and modified to accommodate the new professional style. Campaign practices are scrutinised and new disciplines imposed. Yet this disruptive change encounters resistance, as the structuring force of party institutions continues to exert influence on the actors within it. The new actors remain anchored within their party organisation. Despite their economic and technical characteristics of professionalism, they remain reliant on the party for providing the skills and experiences on which their technical competence is based. They are not external contractors offering their services to the highest bidder in the marketplace; to the contrary they are partisans, devoted to promoting their party's best interests by providing the professional services needed to win election campaigns.

To examine these problems further, it is necessary to develop a better understanding of the relationship between the officials and their parties. This chapter sets out to explore this relationship by examining four points of interaction between the campaign professionals and the institutional context of party:

- First, it considers the party officials as party members, to understand the character and intensity of their activities as members;
- Second, it considers the party officials as campaigners and campaign managers, to understand the skills and experience they acquired in these roles that qualified them as professional campaign managers;
- Third, it considers the party officials as candidates for selection as National Secretary/ Federal Director of their respective party, to understand how selection practices operated to shape the role of the party official and how they were in turn shaped by the emergent professionals;
- Fourth, it considers the party officials in relation to the leaders of the parliamentary party, to understand the contested terrain between the emergent campaign professionals and the parliamentary wing.



These four sets of party activities can be considered as a chronological sequence, tracing key points in the career development of a campaign professional. In proceeding, the chapter draws on two Appendices which provide more detailed background information, summarising the biographies of party officials in narrative form (Appendix One) and presenting key characteristics and party experiences of party officials in tabular form (Appendix Three).

### **Lifelong Party Members**

Party membership is the necessary entry point for participation in the affairs of an Australian political party, whether in the party 'on the ground' as a branch member or conference delegate, or in the party 'in office' as an endorsed candidate or elected representative. For employment in Head Office, too, membership is an essential pre-requisite: though party officials are not formally required to be members under the rules of either the federal Liberal Party or the ALP, membership is universal among the officials in this study.

A striking feature of these party officials is the early age at which most of them joined the party. A clear majority of them became a party member as a teenager or young adult (Appendix Three, Table 4). It is inherently hard to know what combination of factors - family background, enthusiasm for the policies and personalities of the party, or a more cold-blooded plan to secure career progression within the party - motivated these individuals to join the party. Family background provides some cues for this partisanship, but they are few and sometimes contradictory in direction (Gray did, but Combe and Gartrell did not, come from Labor families). Some were mentored or inspired by party leaders such as Dunstan (Combe) and Fraser (Loughnane). Stronger still is evidence of formative political influences from society at large (McMullan and Hogg were motivated by the Vietnam War, Loughnane by the Whitlam years). But there is no dynastic element about these individuals; this is not a case of sons following fathers into a line of work (though McMullan's father was a union organiser). The important point is that there is no evidence they joined with the intention of becoming party officials. Instead, most of these party recruits set about engaging in party activities as rank and file members at the grass roots. More than half of the interview group became actively engaged in the affairs of a branch (Combe, McMullan, Hogg, Gray, Bitar, Crosby and Loughnane), faction (Hogg), or youth wing (McMullan, Crosby, Gartrell, Bitar). Of course there is also evidence that, for some (Walsh, Eggleton and Robb) party membership was deemed incompatible with larger career aspirations - though party sympathy persisted.

At some point however these individuals outgrew branch level activity and began to locate other and higher levels of party engagement and career advancement within the party. Two (Hogg and Crosby) contested elections as candidates in unwinnable seats - a sign they were trying to establish their credentials in the party (Walter, 1986: 104). Many more worked in the 'party in office' as parliamentary staff members which, while not requiring party membership does imply partisan attachment and commitment as well as new opportunities for career advancement (Walter, 1986; Tiernan, 2007). This opportunity was seized by no fewer than nine members of this group (Appendix Three, Table 4). Willoughby was an early pioneer of this new route of career advancement, joining the staff of a Senator, then of the Opposition Leader Menzies and, after the Liberals' 1949 election triumph, of the new Prime Minister. Eggleton, Crosby and Loughnane all followed in his wake while on the Labor side Wyndham, Combe, Gray, Hogg, Walsh and Gartrell did likewise.

Another path of engagement led through the party organisation<sup>8</sup>, especially via the state branches. Thirteen of the individuals in this group, including 11 of the 14 Labor officials, had been employed

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<sup>8</sup> In another, now obsolete, form of career advancement through the party organisation, three early party officials - Willoughby, Kennelly and Wyndham - began their working lives as teenagers in junior administrative roles in the party organisation. Willoughby and Wyndham remained as party employees or parliamentary staffers for their whole careers. Willoughby had fourteen years in the South Australian organisation (1924-1938) after answering an advertisement for an office boy and, after his thirteen years as a parliamentary staffer (1938-1951) served another eighteen years as Federal Director. He retired to suburban Canberra in 1969 and died in 1993 aged 85. Wyndham began thirteen years in the British Labour Party (1944-1947),

by their party as the secretary or director of a state branch or division (Appendix Three, Table 4). Stewart, McNamara and Kennelly, all from Victoria, Schmella from Queensland, Chamberlain from Western Australia, and Young from South Australia were all serving as state secretary of their respective branches when they became Federal Secretaryship and all of them held the two roles *concurrently*. Wyndham resigned his post as Victorian state secretary to become the first full-time Federal Secretary; likewise Hogg from Victoria, McMullan from Western Australia, Combe from South Australia<sup>9</sup>, and Bitar from New South Wales all had served as state secretary *before* becoming National Secretary. This capacity for promotion from the state branches to the national Head Office is perhaps the oldest tradition among ALP officials. In nearly a century, the only exceptions to this enduring practice occurred in a 15 year span covering Gray, Walsh and Gartrell, none of whom had managed a state branch; all instead were employed and promoted through the federal office.<sup>10</sup>

For most of their history, the Liberals adopted a different policy. Only the two most recent appointments, Crosby (in Queensland) and Loughnane (Victoria) have experience of running a state division of the Liberal Party. By contrast, Willoughby came over from the parliamentary wing and Hartcher was promoted to the Federal Directorship from within the Federal office. But from the 1970s through to the end of the 1990s, the Liberals appointed Federal Directors who were outsiders. Pascoe, Eggleton and Robb were unlike any of their Liberal predecessors or Labor counterparts: not early party members, not former candidates, not state party directors or organisers and indeed not party employees at any level. None of the three had managed an election campaign for the party. Pascoe was an academic and management consultant, Eggleton a journalist and public relations specialist who had handled Prime Ministerial communications through turbulent times, and Robb was a rural industry activist. All of course were partisan sympathisers but they do not fit the mould of party members building careers through the organisation.

### **Seasoned Campaign Practitioners**

Many party members have no interest in party activity beyond their local branch meetings. Many ministerial staff do not progress to employment in the party organisation. Many state party officials are not selected for work in the national office. Some members, some staffers and some state officials however did progress to the national head office. What skill or experience did they gain within the party that pushed them in this direction? Table 5 (Appendix Three) suggests experience working on campaigns, and especially in managing campaigns, is a critical distinguishing feature of the national party officials.

The table shows every state and national election campaign in which the interviewed party officials participated *prior* to becoming national secretary/ federal director, and the capacity in which they did so.<sup>11</sup> Campaign experience is classified according to whether the individual was working with the party 'on the ground', 'in office' or in the central office. In total, more than seventy state and federal Australian elections, including by-elections, were reported.

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followed by four years in Australia as a parliamentary staffer before returning to employment as state secretary and Federal Secretary for eight years (1961-1969). In addition to these three, Hartcher – though he spent some early years with the NSW Railways – was a Liberal Party employee for 27 unbroken years (1947-1974). These four individuals were all roughly contemporary; with Wyndham's sudden departure in 1969, Willoughby's retirement in 1969, Kennelly's resignation from the Senate in 1971 and Hartcher's ouster in 1974, this uniquely protracted mode of career relationship with the party has disappeared.

<sup>9</sup> Technically, Combe was acting state secretary.

<sup>10</sup> The most recently appointed National Secretary, George Wright, also has no experience as a party office holder at either state or federal level.

<sup>11</sup> Table 5 covers interviewed party officials. Evidence about the campaign activities of earlier party officials is patchy. Strikingly however, Labor's first secretary Arch Stewart served as campaign manager during the 1906 Federal elections. As Ballarat secretary of the Australian Workers Union, he provided the campaign headquarters for James Scullin's attempt at unseating Prime Minister Alfred Deakin and marshalled 'over fifty canvassers' (Robertson, 1974).

Campaigning 'on the ground' provided important formative campaign experience. Many officials (Wyndham, Hogg, Walsh, Crosby, Gartrell and Bitar) recall early campaign experience in which they performed the basic electioneering tasks described by Bitar as 'foot-soldier stuff, mainly letterboxing, a lot of doorknocking'. These 'on the ground' experiences provide valuable insights into effective distribution of campaign messages. But they do not provide management responsibility or strategic insight. Campaigning with the party 'in office' – for example, travelling with the national party leader as a staff member or a Head Office secondment - provides high level experience in campaign management, as part of a broad campaign leadership group. Labor officials Wyndham, Hogg and Walsh worked for a Federal Labor leader during a campaign, as did Eggleton and Robb worked with Opposition Leader Peacock in 1990.

But it is only by campaigning with the party organisation that an individual can acquire experience as a campaign manager – that is, can exercise ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the party's campaign activities. Short of being a national campaign director, this high level experience can only be gained at the state level: state secretaries and state directors act as campaign director for state campaigns; they are also responsible during federal campaigns for activities within their state. The widespread practice of selecting Labor's national officials from its state secretaries suggests that the national officials will have had substantial experience as campaign managers. Table 5 (Appendix Three) confirms this. Wyndham, Combe, McMullan and Hogg had all managed campaigns at the state level. Among the Liberals, only Crosby and Loughnane had equivalent experience.

A lower level of campaign management responsibility is carried by those who work in senior assistant roles in the national Head Office. While not involving full responsibility for a campaign strategy, this work entails responsibility for significant activities such as fundraising, marginal seats strategy, communications and war room management. Labor's Walsh, Gray and Gartrell and the Liberals' Pascoe and Crosby reported this level of experience. Outside these relatively high-level campaign experiences, the officials reported several other campaign management experiences, including working in the state office as deputy (Bitar), as 'organisers' responsible for intensive grassroots campaigning in a specific electorate or region (Hogg, Gray, Bitar), in a state or territory's leader's office (Combe and Gray); in managing by-elections (Wyndham, Hogg, Loughnane); and in managing local campaigns (Loughnane).

A related set of evidence (Appendix Three, Table 6) suggests that Labor's National Secretaries are getting younger, relative both to their predecessors and to their Liberal counterparts. This carries the implication that they are entering Head Office with less experience of campaigns and perhaps also with more narrowly-based, party-specific experience. For the first five decades (1915-1963), Labor officials were selected at an average age of 50; most were in their 40s though Joe Chamberlain, in his 60s, was the oldest in either party. Since 1963, from the mould-breaking appointment of the 33-year old Wyndham, Labor has only appointed one man (Hogg) at this 'average' age. Most of the post-1963 secretaries were selected in their 30s<sup>12</sup> and the average age of national secretaries for this second five decades (1963-2011) is 37. The average age at selection of all Labor officials from 1915 to 2010 is 41. The Liberals display a different pattern. At 43, Federal Directors are on average slightly older than their Labor counterparts (notwithstanding the significant exception of Pascoe). Nor is there any discernible trend over the decades towards younger Liberal appointments; at 50 the present incumbent Brian Loughnane was above average and in fact older at appointment than all bar one (Hartcher).

Taken together, two conclusions can be drawn from this evidence. First, experience in managing election campaigns appears to be a critical factor in the selection of national party officials. To head their national Head Offices, parties are selecting seasoned campaign practitioners. If parties are considering candidates with other skills – such as policy experts, skilled administrators, or former MPs experienced in representation or legislation – they are certainly not appointing them. The days of a McNamara, with a lifetime in party administration, or a Cleland, with a background

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<sup>12</sup> Though not included in the sample, Bitar's successor George Wright was elected at age 43.

in military logistics, being selected appear long gone. Likewise, skilled outsiders such as Pascoe, Eggleton and Robb are no longer being appointed. From Combe and Crosby onwards, the ALP and the Liberal Party have both searched their own ranks to promote those with significant campaign experience.

A second conclusion follows. Labor officials have brought more experience in campaign management to the national Head Office than their Liberal counterparts. As Table 4 below indicates, Labor officials recorded more than two dozen prior campaign management experiences compared to just eight by the Liberal officials. Of course there are more Labor officials in this set than Liberal, a function of the higher rate of turnover in Labor’s Head Office. Yet Labor’s practice of promoting campaign managers from the state branch has provided a bountiful source of management expertise. This reached a high-point between 1969 and 1980 when three ALP officials (Combe, McMullan and Hogg) managed a total of 15 state-wide campaigns. Labor however appears to have abandoned this practice: since 2000 no Labor national secretary has arrived with campaign experience from the state level. Meanwhile, on the Liberal side, both Crosby and Loughnane share what used to be this exclusive Labor attribute of state campaign management experience, suggesting Labor’s superiority in campaign management experience derived from state campaigns may even out over time.

**Table 4: Prior Campaign Management Experience (summary)**

	<b>ALP</b>	<b>Liberal</b>
<b>State Head Office, campaign director</b>	17	3
<b>Federal Head Office, senior assistant role</b>	8	2
<b>Federal Leader’s Office</b>	6	4

This has implications for our understanding of the professionalisation process. The preference of both parties – first the ALP and more recently the Liberal Party – to select seasoned campaign managers is likely to reinforce those who argue, as the campaign professionals do, that campaigns are of central importance for parties. By appointing from within, both parties are underlining the importance of party membership as a qualification for selection as a party official. Likewise, they both appear to have developed clearer paths of career progression for their campaign managers. As professionalisation proceeded, the national Head Offices expanded: Federal Directors and National Secretaries were joined by deputies, assistants and specialist campaign organisers. Many of these deputies (Gray, Gartrell, Robb and Crosby) were promoted into the top job; indeed three of the last four ALP national secretaries were groomed within the national head office and had no state campaign management experience. But the state branches continue to provide both a talent bank and a testing ground for up and coming campaign practitioners. Rates of change with each of the parties have differed, but any advantages that different practices may have provided - for example to the ALP by drawing on its deep reservoirs of campaign expertise in the states or to the Liberals by appointing qualified outsiders – have been eroded by catch-up and emulation. Both parties want seasoned campaign practitioners and the paths of party engagement they construct to promote that expertise now broadly resemble each other.

#### **Elected or Appointed Officials**

A similar story of eroding party differences can be discerned in the methods used by each party to select their campaign professionals. Analysis of these methods reveals the complex interactions of the professionalisation process as noted at the outset of this chapter. The parties recruit, select, employ, remunerate and manage the campaign professionals, yet these professionals, nurtured within the parties, operate as a disruptive force on the parties’ structures and practices. Yet contrasting practices of each party, which predate the professional campaign model, have gradually changed to accommodate these officials within their ranks. Employment practices shaped the professionalisation process but, as that proceeded, were in turn shaped by it.

The contrasting methods of selection between the parties can be simply stated. The rules of the ALP require the National Secretary to be elected. The rules of the Liberal Party require the Federal Director to be appointed. These rules date respectively to 1915 and 1946 and remain in force, reflecting contrasting philosophies about internal democracy and managerial authority. In the Liberal Party, the rules underpinned the development of a *consensus appointment model*; in the words of Brian Loughnane, Liberal federal directors have been appointed in 'lines of succession'. By contrast the Labor Party traditionally used a *contested election model* which produced, in Gray's words, 'highly contested ballots'; in recent years, a more professional or pragmatic approach has seen a *consensus election model* emerge. On two significant occasions within the professionalisation process, Labor abandoned election altogether and made *consensus appointments* with highly disruptive consequences.

#### The Liberal Party: a Consensus Appointment Model

Despite Menzies admiring public statements about the Labor Party's effectiveness, the Liberals created a very different regulatory environment for its Federal Secretariat. Adopted in 1946, the Party's constitution formally created a Federal Secretariat – unlike Labor, which did not originally acknowledge its head office – and granted its Federal Executive the power to 'appoint all officers' of the Secretariat including its Director (Liberal Party of Australia, 1946a: Sections 54c, 61, 62). The Executive was also empowered to 'fix their remuneration and the terms of their employment.'

In practice however, the Executive appears to have played only a formal part in the appointment of Cleland as the first Federal Director. This was procured instead by the joint efforts of Menzies and the Party's federal president Malcolm Ritchie. Cleland's war record, political loyalty and legal and administrative qualifications – along with his status as a representative of a smaller state whose appointment would not exacerbate Victorian-NSW rivalries – made him a compelling candidate. There is no evidence Ritchie or Menzies considered any other candidate, and their nominee was appointed by the Executive in October without demur (Hancock, 2000: 64). This method of appointment – a single candidate formally brought for confirmation to the Executive by the party president, with the support or acquiescence of the parliamentary leader – set the trend for future appointments of the Federal Director. After Cleland's resignation in 1951,<sup>13</sup> Willoughby was 'personally selected by Menzies and Ritchie to succeed Cleland' (Hancock, 2000: 126). For Hartcher's promotion, newspaper reports make it clear he had the unanimous support of the Executive and of Willoughby (Juddery, 1968). Following defeat in 1972, Federal President Robert Southey restructured the Federal Secretariat and secured the appointments of both Pascoe and Eggleton. In the late 1980s, it was Federal President John Elliott who identified Robb, then at the National Farmers Federation, as a potential future party official:

I was approached by John Elliott ... and Tony Eggleton ... and I was asked to come on as a deputy to Tony Eggleton and to set up a campaigning unit in the Federal Secretariat. Elliott had said to me that Eggleton was likely to retire after the 1990 election and if I performed I'd be well placed to replace him. There were no promises, but the opportunity was presented (Robb).

Likewise, Crosby was nominated to succeed Robb by Federal President Tony Staley and 'endorsed' by Prime Minister Howard:

I don't even think there was even a recruitment process. I certainly didn't apply for anything. ... There was a federal executive phone hook-up ... it was unanimous, and that's the way it happened.

Loughnane was reticent about describing his appointment process, confirming only that 'very senior' people including Federal President Shane Stone approached him to apply for the position;

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<sup>13</sup> After his resignation, Cleland returned to Papua New Guinea as Administrator until 1967. He was knighted in 1961. He remained in Port Moresby, active in the University of Papua New Guinea and the Anglican Diocese of Papua New Guinea, until he died in 1975 (Nelson, 1993).

he was formally appointed by a sub-committee of the executive. Contemporary press reports make it clear he also was supported by Prime Minister Howard (Gordon, 2002). But he is clear that selection in the Liberal Party does not take place on a contested basis and forms instead a clear 'line of succession':

As a general proposition, there (are) usually not ten real candidates. There's usually a clear possibility. There may be two or three clear possibilities. But the lines of succession in the Liberal Party – I think Eggleton was pretty clear, Andrew (Robb) was pretty clear, Lynton (Crosby) was pretty clear. I was probably the least clear of those four.

This unanimity at the Executive level should not be mistaken for an absence of competition for the post; alternative candidates do exist and are considered, but they are eliminated before the recommendation is made to the Executive. The long-serving NSW state director John Carrick was reportedly Hartcher's 'chief rival' for the federal post but was passed over before the issue reached the Executive (Juddery, 1968). Crosby's appointment was also unanimous despite, as he recalls it, efforts at one stage by 'the Victorians' to push their state director Petro Georgiou into the role. The most serious dispute arose in the lead-up to Robb's appointment in 1991. Robb had performed well as Eggleton's deputy, setting up a specialist marginal seats unit within the Secretariat and then joining Peacock's office during the 1990 campaign proper. But Eggleton's retirement triggered interest from another highly regarded party official Nick Minchin, who had worked in the Federal Secretariat under Eggleton from 1977 and had been promoted as his deputy in 1983. Minchin had subsequently moved to Adelaide where he had been appointed the party's state director in 1985. But he remained, according to Eggleton a 'logical successor'. Robb too acknowledges Minchin 'could justifiably have felt that he was more qualified' to be federal director. Eggleton recalls that Minchin's desire to return to Canberra as director caused 'a fair bit of argy-bargy' in the organisation and that 'John Elliott was probably the deciding factor in appointing Andrew rather than Nick'. Here the dispute about the next organisational head was fought out as a sub-set of the leadership instability in the parliamentary wing, where Peacock and Howard continued to compete for supremacy and where Elliott himself was considering a run (P. Kelly, 1992: 399-417); Minchin was seen as a Howard supporter and opponent of Elliott. The dispute also centred on the rival attractions of an insider with campaign experience (Minchin) against an outsider with fresh skills (Robb). Even in this situation, the Liberals' consensus appointment method prevailed. The Federal President sorted it out; Minchin did not run; Robb was appointed unopposed, as he recalled:

It wasn't contested. It wasn't advertised. It does require the leader of the day to be supportive. John Hewson had just taken over as leader so he was supportive, but I don't think he knew me that well. But Elliott was still President.

In every Liberal case, then, a consensus model of selection prevailed. Its key elements are that powerful party presidents, including Ritchie, Southey and Elliott, played central behind the scenes roles to manage the succession process. They identified potential recruits, smoothed over rivalries, put deputies in place and held out to them the promise of succession. The Executive's powers to appoint were effectively exercised on its behalf by the President, who sought the formal ratification of his selected candidate. While it is clear that the party leader is consulted and provides tacit and sometimes active support, this is a decision for the organisational side of the Liberal Party not its parliamentary leader. As recently as 2011, this consensus method was criticised internally for having turned the Federal Secretariat into 'something of a fiefdom'.

It has been this way for many years. The appointment/election of the two top jobs, Federal Director and Federal President, has been a process involving the Parliamentary Leader, the Federal Executive and sometimes the Federal Council. It is a fairly limited group (Reith, 2011; P. Williams, 2011c).

#### The ALP: a Contested Election Model

In contrast to this consensus model, the evidence covering the selection of the fourteen Labor Party secretaries suggests frequent adoption of a contested election model.

The ALP was structured on democratic lines, with the election and instruction of delegates ensuring that as far as possible the views of the rank and file determined the party's policy (Crisp, 1955: 4). The Federal Executive was accordingly composed of elected delegates of the state branches, who were themselves elected delegates of the rank and file; the Executive in turn could 'elect and control' its own officers' (Rule 5c, Australian Political Labor Executive, in Weller and Lloyd, 1978: 4). At its first meeting in May 1915, two Federal parliamentarians, Queensland Senator Tom Givens and NSW MP Billy Hughes, were elected unopposed as President and Vice-President. But when it came to filling the post of Secretary, there were two nominations from among the state branch delegates seated at the executive table. A ballot was necessary in which a South Australian delegate J H Olifent was defeated by Victorian Archibald Stewart.

Stewart was required to face regular re-election as Federal Secretary; this usually happened unanimously but on one occasion required a contested ballot. Of Stewart's twelve successors, half of them had to win hard-fought elections to become Federal Secretary. Schmella, Young, Combe, McMullan, Hogg and Gray all won an Executive ballot, either by a majority or by a unanimous decision after the withdrawal of rival candidates. Schmella was elected by a 8-4 majority over the NSW delegate Bill Colbourne in 1954, the contest a manifestation of the broader party Split then starting to engulf the party (Weller & Lloyd, 1978: 579-80). Schmella's opponents contemplated taking the fight to Conference, in Hobart in 1955, and seeking to have Schmella's election overturned there; but that Conference degenerated into a formal party Split and Schmella was not challenged (Murray, 1970: 54). An even fiercer contest took place in 1969. On one side was the formidable Western Australian, Joe Chamberlain, the Party's former President and Federal Secretary and a member of the executive for twenty years; on the other was South Australian Mick Young, who had been a member of the executive for twelve months. Young recalled later that he only decided to stand for the position when informed, over dinner during the Executive meeting, that Chamberlain had manoeuvred himself into contesting the position:

I was quite alarmed by this turn of events, which I had not been party to, especially knowing the feeling that existed between (party leader) Gough Whitlam and Joe Chamberlain. I thought the move would be an absolute political disaster. ... I did not want to return to South Australia saying I had supported Joe Chamberlain in becoming, at his age and with his views, Federal Secretary of the Party. I (said) I would stand for the position if nominated, as a token of protest (M. Young, 1986).

Both Young and Chamberlain were nominated, but Chamberlain had miscalculated the vote of one of the Tasmanian delegates and in two ballots the vote of the Executive was tied. Chamberlain withdrew and Young was elected unopposed (Barnes, 1969; M. Young, 1986: 96).

Combe's succession to the secretaryship in 1973 was complicated by the ambitions of the NSW branch for its state secretary Peter Westerway, who had played a big role in the 1972 campaign. Combe had the support of Whitlam and Westerway withdrew from the contest before the vote; even so, there were seven other candidates. Combe was elected unanimously. McMullan was elected by a majority over two other candidates, assistant federal secretary Ken Bennett and future MP Alan Griffiths. Hogg's election came only after protracted factional manoeuvring. He had the – somewhat qualified – support of the Left faction, while the Right wanted Geoff Walsh to return from his posting with the International Labor Organisation to take the position (Cockburn, 1987). The Centre Left, which had initially supported Hogg, then 'started to wobble', with some prominent faction leaders including former secretary Mick Young and former leader Bill Hayden backing assistant federal secretary Ian Henderson (Logue, 1988). After a confrontation with the faction leaders at Melbourne airport, Hogg boldly told the press he had received their support; when the executive voted, Hogg was the only candidate. He recalled wryly:

It was unanimous, by the time I finished.

Gray also had to battle Henderson for the secretaryship in 1993. He recalled that when Hogg announced his intention to resign:

'Hendo' and I immediately then announced that we would contest the position, and we both resigned from our positions (in the federal Head Office) and we went out and campaigned. I drove around the countryside, literally talking to all members of the National Executive. It was a highly contested ballot until Ian's own faction split, and two thirds of the Centre Left determined they would back me, which gave me an overwhelming majority, because I had already got half the Left plus the Right. Ian withdrew from the ballot around about Anzac Day and the ballot was due on the 30<sup>th</sup> April. Although I had not been endorsed by (Prime Minister) Keating I was elected unopposed.

In Labor's contested model of selection, then, rival candidates emerge to engage in lobbying exercises and factional negotiations inside the executive and the broader party, pressing their claim as far as practical. The contests are settled by the surrender of the weaker candidate to permit a show of unanimity or, where necessary, by a vote of the executive. Differences are not resolved in advance. Labor's Federal President apparently has no greater influence on the outcome than any other voting member of the executive. As the elections of Hogg and Gray suggest, the parliamentary leader's preferences, though never without influence, can be overridden.

#### The ALP: a Consensus Election Model

Yet Gray's election was the last to take place under this contested model. In more recent years Labor has reverted to an earlier practice of consensus elections. McNamara and Kennelly had both been elected by consensus and without opposition, though in both cases they had already served in an acting capacity when their predecessors died (Stewart<sup>14</sup>) or fell ill (McNamara<sup>15</sup>). Chamberlain also smoothly filled the vacancy left by the death of Schmella<sup>16</sup>, making the transition – unprecedented then and since – from the presidency to the secretaryship. More recently, all of Gray's successors – Walsh, Gartrell and Bitar<sup>17</sup> – were elected not just unanimously but without opposition. Walsh's candidacy had been promoted by the outgoing secretary, Gray, and was supported by the party leader, Kim Beazley. His successor, Gartrell, found himself the only candidate in 'a freaky moment when no one had the numbers on the National Executive' and was elected with Left and Centre-Left support. Bitar was also the beneficiary of a smooth and rapid promotion and was elected unopposed, less than three weeks after Gartrell announced his resignation:

I think as soon as I said I was running, it was over, mainly because of my campaign expertise. I was seen as someone who could do it. ... All the factional people said, 'Yep, we back you' and even (Gartrell's preferred candidate, former Beazley staffer and party campaigner) Jim Chalmers called and said, 'If you're running Karl, I'll withdraw. I won't even run'.

Bitar also sought the 'blessing' of the parliamentary leader, Kevin Rudd:

I didn't really know Kevin at the time, so I did this walk around Kirribilli, having a chat with him, getting to know him, him getting to know me, him asking me a whole heap of questions, and at the end of the walk he said, 'Well, mate, congratulations. You've got my blessing to be the National Secretary'. So I said, 'Mate thank you, I appreciate it'. During this whole period I was saying, 'I'm not sure if I'm doing it or not,' because I wanted to have Kevin's backing first. That just shows that the organisation does respect the leader. There is a lot of respect for the leader still.

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<sup>14</sup> Stewart died in office in May 1925 from tuberculosis. Federal Executive carried in silence a motion of deepest regret following 'the excellent and faithful services rendered to the Movement by our late Comrade' (Weller & Lloyd, 1978: 88, 89; Love, 1990).

<sup>15</sup> McNamara resigned through ill health in early 1946 and died in December 1947.

<sup>16</sup> Stress and the effects of heavy drinking took their toll on Schmella, who died in office July 1960 (Murphy, Joyce, & Hughes, 1980; Chamberlain, 1998; Cross, 2002).

<sup>17</sup> Bitar's successor George Wright was also elected by consensus in 2011.



The contested election model undoubtedly produced a formidable cast of long-serving and successful national secretaries: every one of Labor's electoral campaign victories under Whitlam, Hawke and Keating were directed by National Secretaries who had won contested ballots. Their ability to read and respond to the political, personal and factional dynamics on the Executive underscores their political skills. Yet these skills are perhaps more characteristic of the partisan than the professional. The demise of the contested election model suggests a pragmatic recognition by the party of the cost and disruption of internal democracy and a growing awareness that National Secretaries should be selected on their technical competence as campaign managers rather than their electoral appeal in the Executive.

#### The ALP: a Consensus Appointment Model

Whether by contest or consensus, all these National Secretaries were still formally elected, as the party rules require. There are two examples however where Labor abandoned election and instead appointed its national secretary. Both occasions occurred when the ALP was contemplating the appointment of a Secretary on a permanent or full-time basis. As described in the Introduction, Labor had discussed setting up a federal secretariat in 1945 in response to Cleland's appointment. Pat Kennelly had stepped in as acting Secretary when McNamara fell ill and was confirmed by the Executive as the party's third secretary in November 1946. In 1949, the Executive finally determined 'to establish a Federal Secretariat on a full-time basis' from 1 January 1950, with a £750 annual salary for the Secretary. As the national party's first salaried employee, the Secretary was to be appointed, not elected. Kennelly accordingly relinquished the secretaryship in Victoria and ceased being a delegate to the executive (Weller & Lloyd, 1978: 5-6, 405; Love, 2007).

Conference confirmed Kennelly's appointment in 1951 but rejected the description of him as a 'full-time' officer and instead called him 'permanent'. The change recognised that Kennelly combined his role as Federal Secretary with another form of paid employment as a member of the Victorian Parliament. This arrangement lasted until Kennelly's departure in 1954. Amid the bitterness of the Split, Kennelly was forced to choose between his organisational role as Federal Secretary as his representative roles in the Victorian and then Commonwealth Parliament (Weller & Lloyd, 1978: 9)<sup>18</sup>. Inadvertently perhaps, his forced resignation from Head Office strengthened the autonomy of the post by eliminating any question about a conflict of interest between the two wings of the party. Kennelly was the last secretary to combine the Secretaryship with a parliamentary position; thus the party's 'permanent' administrative role was no longer subsidised by a Parliamentary salary, nor could it be distracted from national campaign responsibilities by accusations – like those directed against Kennelly – that personal political aspirations were placed ahead of the party's interests in a campaign.

But in 1963, again no doubt inspired by the continued success of the Liberal Party's Secretariat, Labor 'belatedly' (McMullin, 1991: 304) revived the experiment once again, and posted advertisements for a 'full-time' national secretary. At the time Chamberlain was Federal Secretary. In his posthumously published autobiography, Chamberlain wrote that his experience in this role had taught him that a part-timer was not able to give the party either the administrative continuity or the research skills it needed to develop national policy. As a result he claimed to have been the 'author' of the plan to revive the full-time secretaryship (Chamberlain, 1998). This claim overlooks both Kennelly's earlier experience and also Schmella's success in winning the Executive's 'in principle' approval of a national Secretariat in 1958, endorsed by Conference in 1959 subject to funding by the States (Overacker, 1968; Cross, 2002).<sup>19</sup> Yet Chamberlain's voice was influential in

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<sup>18</sup> Kennelly resigned in May 1954; his Federal Executive colleagues voted him a farewell present of 'an inscribed wristlet watch' (Weller & Lloyd, 1978: 517-8, 538-539, 578-579). He served in Senate until 1971.

<sup>19</sup> In his account, Chamberlain also acknowledged he had been accused of advocating the full-time plan to 'feather my own nest', and did own up to 'some interest in occupying the position', but denied this was the reason he had advocated it. Besides, he said, he 'finally ... lost the desire to sit in the cold corridors of power in Canberra'. This claim too, is somewhat self-serving. His distaste for the cold corridors of power overlooks not just his protracted service on the federal Executive but also – as we have seen – his active candidacy for the secretaryship in 1969 (Chamberlain, 1998). After his stint as Secretary, Chamberlain remained a member of Federal Executive and Western Australian state secretary until 1974, during which he continued to justify the

the Executive's appointment, from a field of five, of Cyril Wyndham. Wyndham was the first individual to serve as Federal Secretary without being simultaneously employed as a state secretary or Member of Parliament. That is, as the 'full-time' secretary Wyndham was fully and solely devoted to the performance of duties at the federal level, free of any encumbrances or allegiances arising from other employment.

**Table 5: Methods of Selection: Consensus and Contested models**

Type	Contested Model	Consensus Model I	Consensus Model II
<b>Method of selection</b>	Election by Federal Executive	Appointment by Federal Executive	Election by Federal Executive
<b>Where and when used</b>	ALP 1954, 1969-1993	Liberal Party 1945-present ALP 1949 and 1963	ALP 1925, 1946, 1961 2000 - present
<b>Secretaries/directors</b>	Stewart, Schmella, Young, Combe, McMullan, Hogg, Gray	Cleland, Willoughby, Hartcher, Pascoe, Eggleton, Robb, Crosby, Loughnane Kennelly (1949), Wyndham	McNamara, Kennelly (1946), Chamberlain, Walsh, Gartrell, Bitar
<b>Key features</b>	Rival candidates emerge, Candidates 'campaign' by lobbying Executive members, Winner determined by majority or by withdrawal of candidate to allow unanimity, Factional considerations can be prominent, Party leader opposition can be irrelevant	Single candidate presented to Executive for approval, Significant role for Federal President in identifying candidates and managing succession planning, Party leader consulted and supportive	Single preferred candidate emerges early, no significant rival, Factional considerations overlooked, Suitable to fill unexpected vacancy (eg 1946, 1961, 2007), Federal President can play influential role, Party leader likely to support
<b>Duration of employment</b>	Fixed term, Eligible for reelection	Open-ended term	Fixed term, Eligible for reelection

In summary, the methods of selection used by the ALP and Liberal Party reveal three broad types (Table 5). For all types, the final decision is made by each party's executive body. Appointment of the Federal Director in the Liberal Party has generated a consensus model. In contrast, the ALP has generated a contested election model in which rival candidates compete for the votes of executive members in determined and protracted campaigns. The contests are settled only when it is clear that one candidate has a majority of the executive's support: an unsuccessful candidate may withdraw to provide a unanimous vote for the winner, but not infrequently a vote by the executive has been necessary. In two critical cases – that of Kennelly and Wyndham – Labor abandoned elections in favour of appointments. These were critical because they were the first occasions on which Labor selected a full-time national secretary and thus represented a watershed in the professionalisation of its campaign management, though its faltering steps meant it was nearly two decades behind the Liberal Party. More recently, Labor's elections have taken place on

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description of him by Labor historian Ross McMullan as Labor's 'most significant backroom powerbroker nationally' (McMullan, 1991). Chamberlain battled Western Australian Premier Hawke over proposed negotiations with the Democratic Labor Party and also challenged the reformist aspirations of Gough Whitlam, whose commitment to parliamentary supremacy was entirely at odds with his own militant reliance on 'the book' – the party's rules which underlined the supremacy of the party organisation. Forced by illness to relinquish the secretaryship in Perth, he died in 1984.

a consensus election model where a single candidate has emerged without contest and has received unanimous endorsement by the executive.

#### ALP and Liberal Party: Duration of Employment

A consequence of the parties' different methods of selecting their party officials was the emergence of different practices for setting the duration of the officials' term in office. In line with their preference for appointment by consensus, the Liberal Party's rules left decisions about 'remuneration and the terms of their employment' to the Executive (Liberal Party of Australia, 1946: Section 54c). In Labor's case, the election of officials posed vexed questions about their term in office requiring, in turn, numerous revisions of the party's rules. (These are summarised in Appendix Three, Table 7.)

From its establishment, the full-time salaried officers in the Liberals' Federal Secretariat were engaged on an open-ended basis. Once appointed, they were implicitly able to hold the job until removal or retirement, subject to satisfactory performance defined in equally implicit fashion by the Federal President. This open-endedness complements the consensus model of appointment, permitting great flexibility in the duration of the official's term, with terms ranging from twelve months (Pascoe) to eighteen years (Willoughby). Eggleton recalls that at the time of his appointment:

No one was talking about terms. I didn't think about it very much. After three or four years, by which time Sir John Atwill was federal president and Sir Robert Crichton-Browne was federal treasurer, we had an informal chat about the ongoing nature of the Federal Director's appointment and salary. Annual reviews were initiated but it all remained pretty flexible for my 15 years.

Crosby likewise recalled:

I don't think I even had a contract. No term and no contract. There was just a letter of offer about salary, and that was it.

The Liberals' rules concerning the appointment and role of the Director have remained largely stable, and Directors have in most cases – Hartcher being the sole exception – served long terms and have timed their own departures. In contrast, the ALP Federal Secretaries served under conditions of uncertainty and frequent rule changes. Even Stewart and McNamara, who held the post for ten and twenty years respectively – in effect, for the remainder of their lives – were nominally limited under the 1915 Rules to a twelve-month term; their annual re-election was normally a formality but it served to underline their control by the Federal Executive. In 1951, the rules were substantially revised by Federal Conference with the introduction of performance indicators: as the 'permanent' Federal Secretary, Kennelly's appointment was 'subject to good conduct, satisfactory performance of duty and adherence to the Policy and Objectives of the Party'. This rule stayed on the books even as Labor's actual employment practices changed regularly. Schmella and Chamberlain were elected as permanent part-timers (i.e. they were both full-time state secretaries). Wyndham was appointed as a permanent full-timer – he was not employed in any other capacity. Then Young was elected as a permanent part-timer since he too was a state secretary; the 1969 Conference reconciled Young's status with the 1951 rules by passing an 'administrative' decision permitting Young to stay in office pending further consultations. Then with Combe, elected as a permanent and full-time national official, that 'administrative' decision was repealed in 1973. It was not until 1986 that the 1951 rules about permanency and good conduct were deleted.

In their place, Conference simply asserted its power to elect the Secretary. This 1986 revision made another, critically important, innovation by specifying that the secretary would be 'subject to re-election at every second conference'. The effect of these changes, which were introduced under McMullan, was to strengthen the position of the Secretary relative to both the Executive and the Conference. The new rules rendered the Secretary immune from frivolous or vexatious exercise of

the executive's power, and for the first time guaranteed a minimum term: with conferences held on a triennial schedule, the secretary could usually count on a term of six years. Underpinning the autonomy of the Head Office and permitting the secretary to undertake longer-term campaign planning and strategic development, these rules represented a breakthrough in the professionalisation of Labor's election campaigning.

The Secretary's role was further strengthened by a rule change in 1994 on the apparently trivial subject of casual vacancies. The 1963 Conference had permitted the Executive, if the Secretary resigned, to appoint an acting Secretary until the next Conference, which would elect a replacement. This was deleted in 1975 but in 1994, under Gray, Conference returned to the problem by permitting any such vacancy to be filled by the ballot of the Executive. By smoothing the impact of a casual vacancy, the rule effectively allowed Secretaries to choose their time of resignation. Rather than waiting for the expiry of their two-Conference term, they could go when they wished; Conference's role was reduced to ratifying a *fait accompli*. Under this rule, National Secretaries now routinely resign at a time of their own choosing; the two-Conference six-year term is observed only in the breach.<sup>20</sup>

The upshot of these contrasting approaches by the two parties is that Labor's recent national secretaries are serving for shorter periods, both compared to their predecessors and to their Liberal Party opposite numbers (Appendix Three, Table 6). Labor's first two Federal Secretaries Stewart and McNamara held office for more than three decades between them, spanning the entire inter-war period from nearly the start of the First World War to the end of the Second. Since then, no Labor National Secretary has served for longer than 8 years, while four have only served for three years. From Kennelly's appointment in 1946 to Bitar's resignation in 2011 the average term of service is less than 5.5 years. Moreover, Labor's length of service appears to be becoming shorter: the three most recent officials served terms at or below this Labor average. In contrast, Liberal terms are on average longer; the average from Cleland's appointment in 1945 to 2011 is more than 8 years. There is no evidence of Liberal terms becoming shorter: Loughnane's term, still incomplete, is only just below the Liberals' long term average<sup>21</sup>. Labor's turnover is much higher than the Liberals' and seems to be increasing: Eggleton saw three Labor National Secretaries in his seventeen year term (Combe, McMullan and Hogg); Loughnane in his eight year term has already seen three (Gartrell, Bitar and now Wright).

In summary, the Liberals' practice of a full-time Federal Director appointed through consensus and enjoying stable long-term tenure, allowed the Director to get on with the job of managing the party and running the campaigns – a powerful driver of the Liberals' move to a professionalised campaign model. In strong contrast, the ALP was reluctant to cede autonomy to its employed staff, insisting on electing them and on limiting their terms in office, but refusing for decades to employ them on a full-time basis. Having embarked in 1945 on an effort to match the Liberals in creating a full-time federal secretariat, Labor did not employ a 'permanent' officer until 1951, a full-time officer until 1963, or an officer with a fixed minimum term until the 1980s. The inherent uncertainty and inefficiency thus hampered and delayed Labor's capacity to adopt a professional

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<sup>20</sup> Thus when Hogg chose to resign following the 1993 election, Gray was elected by the Executive to the balance of Hogg's term, which was not due to expire until the forthcoming conference. When that conference rolled around in 1994, Gray was confirmed as Secretary in his own right for a six-year term. Likewise, Gray resigned in 2000, a few months short of his complete term, and the Executive elected Walsh to fill the casual vacancy and to serve out the balance of Gray's term. Walsh was confirmed by the Hobart conference in 2000, which gave him a new 6-year term. But the process started to unravel when Walsh resigned after only three years: Gartrell, elected by executive in 2003 to the casual vacancy, spent most of his time as secretary completing Walsh's term; he was not formally elected by Conference until 2007. Then Gartrell's resignation in 2008 compounded the problem, bequeathing a balance of five years to his successor Bitar which the latter did not in fact serve out before resigning in 2010. The two-conference rule is thus quite out of kilter with the actual terms of the Secretaries.

<sup>21</sup> The pattern of service differs in the parties' state offices. In the immediate post-war years, several state officials from both parties held office for very long periods, led by the Liberals' McConnell (Victoria, 26 years), Labor's Chamberlain (WA, 25 years) and the Liberals' Carrick (NSW, 23 years). In all, seven state officials have held terms for more 15 years, with all terms completed by the mid-1970s. Since that date, no official in either party has reached double figures, and terms of two and three years have become common (Mills, 2010).

model of centralised campaign management. Labor's frequent revisions of its rules demonstrate its struggle to reconcile its democratic impulse with its emerging recognition of the requirements of campaign professionalism. Ultimately, the rules were pragmatically engineered to grant the National Secretary a timetable driven by campaign necessity rather than by internal democracy.

### **Contested Relationships with Party Leaders**

In considering the impact of professionalism on party structures, the most contested terrain undoubtedly lies between the party's Head Office and its parliamentary leader. If party officials are selected with little formal regard for the preferences of the parliamentary leader yet it is also true that, from the perspective of the party official, the most important and potentially difficult relationship is with the party leader. Professionalisation, manifested as tensions among the three faces of the party structure, has increased the likelihood of trespass across this contested terrain. As partisan professionals, the Head Office officials are devoted to the best interests of their client, the party. Yet within a political party, with its many cross-cutting ambitions and tendencies, those interests can never be entirely clear or definitively agreed upon: is the goal electoral success, ideological purity or personal ambition? Moreover, there will be dispute about whose voice provides the authoritative articulation of those interests: the parliamentary leader or the officials in Head Office? The campaign professional, devoted to the party as a whole, must negotiate these contentious issues without favour, creating a relationship with the parliamentary leader of mutual dependence troubled by tension and asymmetry.

At face value, the research interviews suggest that party officials recognise the importance of a respectful and trusting relationship with the parliamentary leadership. The two faces of the party had to 'be seen as one team' with a 'mutually respectful relationship' - though 'brutal' words could be spoken behind the scenes; party officials should not get involved in 'caucus politics' and should support the leader, however 'tricky' this might be to negotiate:

He (Whitlam) was the party leader, so I had to work with him (Wyndham).

I never got involved in caucus politics. ... I always used to think that the role of the national secretary is fairly clearly defined as the organisational wing of the party. My job was to say, 'Long live the Leader', and support whoever that leader was, and endeavour to ensure that the leader was always seen to be victorious in the executive meetings. That wasn't always easy (Combe).

My job as I saw it was to have good relations with the parliamentary leader, no matter who he was. ... Andrew (Peacock) saw John (Valder, the party president) as a strong supporter of John Howard. So I had a parliamentary leader who, at one stage, was at daggers drawn with the organisation leader. And then John Howard had a difficult relationship with John Elliott when John Elliott was (president), and again I was the meat in the sandwich in those things. It made our task at the Secretariat tricky, trying to get on with our work, which we were determined to do, when we had tension between the organisation and the parliamentary leadership (Eggleton).

Having my office and the leader's office almost as one - you had to be seen as one team really. If that's not the case it's really dysfunctional - especially in Opposition (Robb).

If you don't have a strong mutually respecting relationship with the leader, then one of you is in the wrong job. So that's foundational in my view. It doesn't mean you have to be best friends, or regard each other as the two smartest people in the room. But it does mean you need to have confidence that both of you are good at what you do, that you've got sound judgement and maturity to deal with the fairly - sort of - volatile situations that arise, ... to keep a cool head, to keep things calm, to the extent that that's possible (Walsh).

You have to have a good working relationship with the leader, and if you didn't have the leader's confidence you wouldn't be in the job (Crosby).

The relationship has got to work. You've got to trust each other. You've got to be able to speak very brutally, frankly (Loughnane).

These expressions of respect and neutrality are based on the reality of electoral politics and professional campaign management. On one hand, the party leader is the focus of centralised and televised campaign communications and the ultimate authority for statements about party policy and campaign promises. On the other, the party official is the campaign director<sup>22</sup>, the repository of the market research which drives campaign strategy and the recipient of the public funding which enables it to be delivered. The campaign director must accommodate the public profile of the parliamentary leader, while the parliamentary leader cannot practically dispense with the expertise and organisational support of the Head Office. At its most effective, the relationship between a professional campaign manager and a skilful and committed parliamentary leadership has produced enduring electoral success and policy reform. As McMullan recalled of the early Hawke years:

I hope I contributed to the view that we, the party, (were) entitled to consider ourselves as the Government equally (with the Liberal Party). If we were good enough, we would win more of it. And we should be about long-term government that makes lasting reform, not glorious periods of fiery opposition and occasional good fortune to be in government.

Gray likewise recalled of Labor's 1987 election win:

It actually demonstrated not just a victory of a campaign framework, it was more important than that: it was a victory of a political philosophy, of a political capability, a prodigiously capable cabinet, and a political machine that matched it.

Loughnane likewise recalled of the Liberals' repeated electoral successes:

One of the great strengths of the Howard Government was that it was able to ... put good government ahead of good politics. ... There is no use (for Head Office) trying to impose a strategy or develop a strategy if the senior parliamentary team don't want to go in a particular direction. That's one of the areas where in Government there may be things that are electorally appealing but from a governmental point of view are difficult to do. It's a bit easier in opposition.

However, this idealised synergy between campaigning and governing is in practice liable to give way to a less balanced relationship. Strong parliamentary leaders tend to dominate the central office and extract active support from party officials. Cleland engineered support for Menzies' leadership against his party doubters (Martin, 1999:66-8); Willoughby was a deferential loyalist who routinely took Menzies' side ahead of 'activist presidents and unruly executive members' (Hancock 2000: 126). Wyndham supported Whitlam in his daredevil strategy against Cairns' leadership challenge (Freudenberg, 1977: 131-2). Eggleton, too, with his long career at the side of Prime Ministers, bound the Secretariat closely in behind Fraser's leadership and unswervingly met the Prime Minister's requests for organisational support: Fraser required Eggleton to travel with him during election campaigns, established on a direct telephone link, insisted on memos from Eggleton being on a blue paper for easy identification and included Eggleton in pre-Question Time briefings. He also insisted on Eggleton buying more TV advertising in the final week of the 1983 election campaign, though the campaign director regarded this as too late to stave off defeat.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> This important term is discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>23</sup> 'I remember the latter stages of the 1983 election campaign, with the outlook already bleak. Senior Liberals were attending a special dinner in Sydney to celebrate Malcolm Fraser's achievement in becoming Australia's second-longest serving Prime Minister. Anxious to keep Malcolm as PM, there were suggestions that we should pour more money into campaign advertising. Not surprisingly, Malcolm responded enthusiastically to this idea. It was not a climate in which a campaign director could credibly demur, even though I doubted whether extra

Eggleton regards his close relationship with Fraser as having been 'a great asset to the organisation' but concedes that some critics felt:

I was too close to Fraser, that I was almost as much involved as a personal adviser to Fraser as I was in running the organisation.

In the ALP, electoral success has sufficiently empowered the parliamentary leader to move against the party official – unfairly, perhaps, given the campaign has just delivered victory. Keating dispensed with Hogg's services after winning the 'unwinnable' election in 1993 (Williams, 1997:38), Gartrell moved on after delivering victory to Rudd in 2007, and Hawke moved against McMullan after the 1987 campaign:

One of the consequences of the '87 campaign is something that I think is one of the great truisms of effective campaigns, and that is the need for tension between a leader and the organisation. McMullan had tested that too often, and Hawke resolved to remove McMullan (Gray).

I don't want to rehash it too much because I am an unabashed Bob Hawke fan. ... But somehow or other the relationship, which had been terrific - we'd been friends a long time before he became Prime Minister, and we worked very close together and we're friends now - but it just professionally wasn't working any more. Maybe it was my fault, maybe it his, maybe it was intermediaries, I'm not sure. So it wasn't proper for me to continue (after the 1987 campaign) (McMullan).

The '87 campaign had been very acrimonious and Bob (McMullan) had been knocked around a bit. ... He and Hawke fell out over a number of things. And (on) the things he fell out over ..., Bob (McMullan) was correct. (That's) my view as a good organisation person (Hogg).<sup>24</sup>

If strong parliamentary leaders can trespass on the central office, then the reverse is also true. Against weak parliamentary leaders, there are several examples of party officials intervening in parliamentary affairs to play a less supportive role. As parliamentary leadership itself has become more liable to challenge, the party official has negotiated ever more difficult terrain, determining whether and how to maintain or withdraw support for a leader under fire. When Snedden's leadership was under threat in 1974, Pascoe deftly positioned Head Office for a change:

I briefed Malcolm (Fraser) when it was obvious the challenge was coming. ... I met with Malcolm in Melbourne, separately, and said, 'Look, we can't be seen to do anything, but we're here' and so on.<sup>25</sup>

McMullan supported Hawke against Hayden as Opposition Leader in 1980 (P. Kelly, 1984):

I don't pretend that my relationship with Bill (Hayden) was as good as my relationship with Bob Hawke, it wasn't. But it was professional. I'd seen Bill (run) an excellent 1980 campaign. But I certainly supported the fact that we needed to change the leadership and I'm pleased we did.

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advertising money was the answer. I believe in advertising but there are times and circumstances when last minute spending per se is not a solution. Sitting next to me was (party Federal Treasurer Sir Robert) Bob Crichton-Browne. He said, 'Tony, how much more do I need to raise for this extra advertising? I said, 'I guess we'll need another three quarters of a million if we are to make the kind of effort envisaged here this evening.' He was never one to be deterred, but said, 'Christ, this is the most expensive dinner I've ever attended' (laughter). He stumped up, and the surprised agency embarked on this final campaign blitz. It was frustrating because in my heart I knew it was highly unlikely to save our bacon' (Eggleton Interview).

<sup>24</sup> Hawke describes in his memoirs (Hawke, 1994: 389-400) having to 'insist' on the appointment of John Singleton Advertising to manage Labor's 1987 campaign advertising over McMullan's objections.

<sup>25</sup> Pascoe also acted to protect Eggleton, then still on Snedden's staff, from being tarnished by too close an association with the soon-to-be-former Opposition Leader, arranging for him 'to be out of town so that he couldn't get caught in the middle.'

More dramatically, Hogg supported Keating against Hawke as Prime Minister in 1991. As Hawke recalled:

Hogg came to my office on 24th May 1991. His main pitch to me was that the Keating forces would not give up and that I should be prepared to step aside because, if I did not, these forces would damage the party by their continuing thrust for the leadership. I rejected this thinking ... (Hawke, 1994: 502)

Gray regarded this move by Hogg as a significant point in the development of the National Secretary's role:

He (Hogg) is himself a national political figure by the time he becomes national secretary, and as a national political figure ... the role that (he) plays in the public space is very different to that that McMullan had played. ... I would never have taken, and ... McMullan would never have taken (but Hogg) unashamedly took, a position on the leadership. He prosecuted that. He took an active view that Hawke's time had run out and he actively pursued that outcome.

In the Liberal Party, Robb faced an Opposition leadership severely weakened by electoral defeat in 1993. Market research commissioned by Robb was leaked to the media from the Secretariat and was influential in the dumping of Hewson; his replacement Downer was also brought down thanks to the Secretariat's market research which Robb personally communicated to Downer and others within the party (Williams 1997: 15-21, 55).

Thus strong leaders can dominate the officials, while weak leaders can be undone by them. This asymmetrical relationship arises in the first instance from the structural autonomy of Head Office – exemplified, as we have seen, by the practice of selecting party officials with little formal regard for the preferences of the parliamentary leader. In the Liberal Party, the consensus model of selecting party officials yields few overt struggles between the Secretariat and the parliamentary wing; even so, there is a deep awareness of Head Office autonomy. In contrast to the British Conservative Party, where the organisation is a 'creature' of the parliamentary leader, Crosby said the role of the Liberal Party organisation is more independent:

You're not an employee of the leader, you are a representative of the party who's charged with the responsibility of advising and supporting the leader, but you're not the employee of the leader.

In the ALP, structural autonomy – which under the contested election model has produced a series of savvy political operators to run its organisation – appears even more forcefully related to the repeated struggles between Labor's Head Office and its parliamentary leadership. It seems no coincidence that the two Labor officials who took sides in parliamentary leadership challenges, McMullan and Hogg, were both elected under the contested model – as was Gray, who clashed so fiercely with Keating.

Moreover, given this degree of autonomy, party officials have developed a sense of professionalism which emphasises their service to the party as a whole. As discussed in Chapter Three, this client service is understood to transcend the interests of individual party leaders who after all, as Crosby noted, may 'come and go'. Thus as technically skilled and experienced campaign professionals, campaign directors can certainly develop campaign strategies to maximise the electoral appeal of the parliamentary leader and hide their blemishes. But equally, a parliamentary leader who polls badly, or who cannot use the media to the satisfaction of the campaign practitioners, or who fails to attract sufficient private donations to fund the campaign, may well be in jeopardy. A professional campaign director is likely to prefer fewer blemishes and more campaign strengths. As Combe put it, where the campaign professional believes he has special expertise, he has a special responsibility to 'stand up' to the leader:



You're not always going to be right. I think you've got to be prepared to stand up for what you believe in. It's not always easy to stand up to leaders who think that they're the best campaign directors, and often bad blood is created between leaders and campaign directors.

Thus McMullan explained his decision to support Hawke against Hayden as a 'professional' one, built around the relative electoral appeal of the two parliamentary rivals:

I don't think he (Hayden) ever accepted it, but it was my view that it was my professional responsibility to say this is a change we need to make.

The potential for conflict on this contested terrain was never more explosively realised than in the battle between Gray and Keating in the 1996 election campaign. Keating and his staff unpredictably second-guessed campaign management decisions, wanting to retain flexibility in campaign itineraries and rejecting research-driven advice on campaign messaging and advertising; exasperated, Gray and his team came to refer to the Prime Minister as 'Captain Wacky' (Williams, 1997: 260-1). The clash came to a head in the final week of the campaign when, like Eggleton in 1983, Gray was pressured to lift TV advertising spending; unlike Eggleton, Gray did not acquiesce. Keating replied with a scorching letter which insisted on the party leader's right to impose his 'intuition' or 'instinct' on the campaign plan:

There must be intuitive play here. We cannot be dominated by the lowest common denominator in a focus group. We are politicians and as a political party we have to follow our instincts. ... I cannot have a position where my instincts as party leader run for three years but not the last week of the election campaign; to be held back by an ad agency or focus group advice (Keating, quoted in Williams 1997: 275-6).<sup>26</sup>

Professional campaign management, as defined by the party officials, of course specifically rejects political 'instincts' or 'intuitive play' for research-based knowledge; last-minute 'flexibility' on campaign logistics likewise offends a professionally managed campaign. It is the professional campaign manager, not the party leader, who appears more capable of making dispassionate judgements about the prospects of electoral defeat and, thus, about conserving the party's resources towards the end of a losing campaign.

It is a truism of election campaigns that parliamentary leaders claim responsibility for success, while losses are attributed to the anonymous professionals in the organisation.<sup>27</sup> In Bitar's view, this practice reveals that, on the Labor side at least, the party:

does not value its campaign professionals enough. Respect them enough. Pay them well enough. Treat them well enough. When you have victories, it is the MPs who get all the glory, and when things go bad the first person who gets blamed is always the party official who, any objective analysis would show, did their very best in difficult circumstances. This

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<sup>26</sup> Don Russell, who had returned from his post as Australian Ambassador to Washington to serve as Keating's chief of staff, rightly summarised the structural distinctiveness of the Australian campaign management system. Praising the US system where 'the President appoints the campaign manager', he said Australia has 'this weird system where the party secretary, who gets the job by some process known only to the party, runs the campaign for five weeks, At the end of the day the leader doesn't have an advertising campaign that backs up what he wants to say' (Williams, 1997: 277).

<sup>27</sup> Claiming victory on election night in 1993, Keating's 'true believers' speech failed to thank Hogg or even mention him, describing himself as the boy alone on the burning deck; delivering his own farewell speech a week later, Hogg rebuked him: 'You're never on your own Paul. We're all there ... in a campaign. We all do our jobs ... with one objective. And that is to maintain government so we can do something to improve the quality of life in this country' (Williams, 1997: 38). After the 2004 defeat, Opposition Leader Mark Latham also took the trouble of publishing, at some length, his critique of Gartrell's performance as campaign director: 'Gartrell is a nice inoffensive guy, but he got lost in the big campaign. ... The bottom line is, he's not up to it. That's the crippling paradox of our show. We have become a machine party, constructed around factions and yes-men, yet our campaign machine is shallow.' (Latham, 2005: 338, 359-60).

goes for (Labor's campaigns in) '01, '04, '07, 2010 and future election campaigns. (It makes you wonder why anyone would want to be a professional party official any more. ...

His own experience in the 2010 election provided another example of the finger-pointing syndrome:

As an observer you look at the way I was treated after the (2010) Federal election campaign despite all the circumstances - despite three years of pretty average government in the lead-up to the 2010 election campaign, despite home insulation, and the asylum seekers, and the broken promises. There were probably about 150 variables in that election campaign. Post the election campaign, a lot of people (said), 'Well, let's just blame the campaign director'.

Given the contested terrain between campaign professionals and parliamentary leaders, such questions may continue to be asked.

### **Discussion**

The evidence presented reveals some important differences in the professionalisation processes that occurred within each Party. These are most apparent in the different ways they selected their Head Office professionals. The Liberal Party operated from the outset with a corporate and managerial mindset. The Federal Director was regarded as a Chief Executive Officer, often recruited from outside the organisation by a powerful chairman leading a supportive board in a consensual process. Appointed on the basis of professional skills rather than political ambitions, the Federal Director works full-time in a stable organisational environment; typically there are smooth 'lines of succession'. If professionalism involves a financial aspect, this managerial approach allowed the Liberals to professionalise their Head Office - in the sense of introducing paid officials - much earlier and more smoothly than Labor. In contrast, Labor's preference for internal democracy created a pattern of electoral contest and instability, producing officials who were savvy political actors capable of assembling a majority of supporters on the National Executive. Labor's officials were also seasoned campaign practitioners who emerged from, and operated within, the tectonic plates of the party's power struggles: centralists against the states, modernisers against traditionalists, left and centre and right factions against each other, organisational wing against parliamentary wing. If professionalism involves an aspect of technical competence and experience, then Labor in this sense professionalised earlier than the Liberal Party.

More striking however than these differences between the two parties are the similarities. As campaign professionals, Labor and Liberal party officials have come to resemble each other. Whether appointed or elected, they are increasingly selected as seasoned campaign practitioners. They share and articulate the same characteristics of professionalism, in its economic, technical and ideological aspects. They are located in Head Offices that enjoy a similar autonomy, not selected by, and owing little accountability to, members 'on the ground' or parliamentarians 'in public office'. They are partisans of rival causes locked in electoral battle, each identifying electoral success as their principal priority and seeking to impose this superordinate goal on their party organisations. Challenging and disrupting existing relationships and practices in both parties, they bring about a gradual process of institutional accommodation to the practical requirements of professional campaign management. The three forced departures of Kennelly, Wyndham and Hartcher served as disruptive exclamation points in the protracted and contested process of professionalisation but such brutal reversals have, like the ALP's contested elections, been shed. The sequence and timing of professionalisation within each party differed, but as party differences eroded, the finished products look similar. Liberal officials are acquiring greater campaign management experience at the state level; Labor is becoming more pragmatic in its selection process yet by producing younger officials with narrower campaign skills and higher turnover it is further reducing its advantage in campaign experience.

Significantly, neither party has surrendered control of election campaign management. External consultants have not replaced party officials as campaign directors. Nor have the organisational wings surrendered control over the selection of officials to the parliamentary wing. Campaign professionals are the creatures of party. As this chapter has shown, they are typically party members from an early age, seasoned managers of the party's election campaigns, and selected under party rules to manage the party's organisation. They are deeply committed partisans, devoted to achieving for the party its goal of electoral success. In the eyes of Scammell (1997), Johnson (2001) and others, staunch partisanship disqualifies campaign workers from classification as professional. But this does not square with the Australian experience where as we have seen, the party officials identify partisanship as one of the defining features of their status as campaign professionals. Thus there seems little reason to abandon the term *professionalisation* in the context of party change, despite the impatience of scholars such as Lilleker and Negrine (2002) with its complexity and contested nature. The concept of professionalism has been part of political discourse since Michels and Weber; the research presented here suggests it retains contemporary utility. But any discussion of campaign professionalisation is inconceivable without the campaign professionals. The party officials interviewed here have provided distinctive definitional elements of campaign professionalism. It remains to add flesh to those definitional bones by considering in more detail the evidence they provide about their professionalising work within the Australian parties. This evidence is presented in the next three chapters, which describe the centralising, strategising and funding imperatives of campaign professionalism.

The next chapter introduces this theme by broadening the discussion beyond its current focus on the national level of party organisation. We have examined the attitudes of the national party officials about professionalism, we have reviewed the evidence of national party rules and practices relating to the selection of these officials, and we have considered the relationship between the officials and the national parliamentary leadership. Yet political parties are not unitary national actors single-mindedly pursuing agreed national goals behind unchallengeable national leadership. Rather, they are arenas of conflict in which ideas and ambitions compete for primacy; created on federal lines, parties' organisational authority is distributed among multiple locations. In Chapter One, it was suggested that processes of disruption and change within parties can be understood through the 'three-face, two-level' framework derived from Katz and Mair. The framework suggests the professionals in the national Head Office were not simply granted authority over campaign management; they had to win it. In particular, they had to win and secure it at the expense of the state officials in the state branches.

## Chapter Five

### **'The Left Hand Never Knew What the Right Hand Was Doing': Head Office and the Centralising Imperative**

'In those days the left hand never knew what the right hand was doing.'

""Don't say anything to anyone about anything, until you've rung Fred at the Head Office.""

'We imposed more of a national pattern because we could. The technology made it possible.'

'We were progressively trying to impose ourselves on all these autonomous organisations.'

**I**t was not until 1963 – nearly half a century after the creation of the Federal Secretary's position in 1915 – that Labor finally appointed a full-time official in its national Head Office. Cyril Wyndham recalls that his appointment was designed to 'coordinate the campaigns' on a national basis. The existing practice, where the party's state branches managed election campaigns, led to fragmented and disorganised campaigns. In Wyndham's exasperated words, 'the left hand never knew what the right hand was doing'. Wyndham was never able to follow through on his aspiration to overcome such inefficiencies. But for every one of his successors in the national Head Office, centralisation of campaign management was an imperative to be pursued, achieved and secured. In the Liberal Party too, from around 1974, the national Head Office accepted the same imperative for the same reasons: organising, coordinating and directing campaigns from the centre permitted consistent and unified campaign communications and efficient usage of campaign resources. These are core characteristics of the professional campaign model.

The campaign logic of centralisation arose in opposition to the federal structure of the Australian party system. The federal character of Australian parties introduces a layer of organisational complexity and internal tension absent from British and many European parties (Crisp, 1955: Ch1; Epstein, 1977: 12; Holmes & Sharman, 1977: Ch4; Sharman & Moon, 2003). In Glyn Davis's evocative phrase, Australian parties are made up of 'not one gang, but several', allied on issues of external competition while aggressively pursuing their own interests internally (Davis, 1992). Both the ALP and the Liberal Party are structured on federal lines in which the fundamental units of party organisation are the 'branches' (ALP) or 'divisions' (Liberal) based in the six states of the Australian Commonwealth (and latterly in the two mainland territories). For the best part of seventy years from Federation, these state units had primary responsibility for the conduct of election campaigns not just for their own state elections but also for national elections. They also dominated the national executives of both parties. Campaigning was further decentralised and fragmented with policy emanating from the parliamentary leadership, while much of the campaign activity was typically performed at the electorate level by parliamentary candidates and local party members.

In experiencing these centrifugal tendencies of federalism, political parties were no different from many other institutions of Australian political, commercial and social activity. By the 1960s however – a time, in Donald Horne's words, of 'perceived crisis in national identity' – both the Liberal Government under Gorton and the Labor Opposition under Whitlam articulated and championed a new national agenda over the heads of parochial or dilatory states (Freudenberg, 1977: Ch5; Horne, 1980: 166; Hancock, 2002: Chs9, 12). A burgeoning national consciousness was further fuelled by a media industry that was itself transcending state boundaries in covering public affairs: the Australian Broadcasting Commission launched *Four Corners* in 1961; Melbourne and Sydney TV networks were linked by coaxial cable from 1962; and Rupert Murdoch launched the first national daily newspaper, *The Australian*, in 1964. In this context, parties were increasingly rewarded for mounting centralised, coordinated and consistent campaigns, particularly

through national television broadcasting. The parties' national Head Offices accordingly moved to seize responsibility for national campaign management. They established campaigning as a responsibility of the national office, conducting campaigning on a national basis and progressively extending the reach or intensifying the influence of the national office while disempowering or co-opting the party state branches. This process of centralisation was occasionally achieved in sudden break-throughs. The 1970 decision of the Federal ALP to 'intervene' in the affairs of its recalcitrant Victorian branch – that is, to abolish and replace it with a federal administration – immediately removed many impediments to centralised campaign management (Blewett, 1973). More typically however, centralisation was achieved through patient accretion of influence and resources in the national Head Office; fraught with internal tensions arising from the structural fragmentation of federalism, this process was slow and frequently contested.

In exploring this process, we are shifting from considering the vertical relationships contained in the three-face two-level framework – that is, relationships among the various elements of the national party – to considering the horizontal relationships between central offices at the national and state levels (Jaensch, 1994: 120-1). This chapter first describes the decentralised campaign structures which prevailed in both parties up to the 1970s. It then draws on the research interviews to explore how the party officials themselves explain their centralising imperative in relation to the state branches, before proceeding to outline the principal methods used by the party officials to establish and extend centralised control of campaign management. Interviews with the party officials, supplemented by a review of the historical record, reveal six principal techniques or mechanisms employed by the party officials to transform and centralise campaign management:

- appointing a campaign director,
- strengthening the Head Office,
- building national cooperation,
- imposing consistent internal communications,
- engaging specialist agencies and
- building a national party.

These are discrete themes but they are arranged here to describe an expanding circle of influence, centred on the Head Office to embrace the larger party organisation. Presented on a thematic basis, they also fall into a rough chronological series, with a particular emphasis on the critically important work performed in the 1970s.

The Chapter concludes by reviewing the main themes of the centralisation process and assessing its relevance to the professional campaign model.

### **Decentralised Campaign Management pre-1970s: the ALP**

For more than twenty years after its creation in 1891, the Australian Labor Party was content to operate with neither head office nor national secretary. 'Australian' Labor was organised as a state-based party, and this arrangement persisted long after Federation. The few national administrative responsibilities, such as organising the triennial Commonwealth Political Labor Conference, were handled by the secretaries of the state branches on a rotating basis. Nor was the decision to set up a Federal Executive made in haste; it was twice considered and twice deferred by Conferences in 1908 and 1912 because of the implied weakening of state branch authority; in 1908 William Holman, a NSW delegate, had asserted that 'the centralisation of executive authority was, as far as Labor was concerned, a fundamentally mischievous exercise' (Crisp, 1955; Weller & Lloyd, 1978: 3). It was not until the 1915 Conference that the state branches sufficiently overcame their 'jealous attachment to 'home rule'' (Crisp, 1955: 49) to form a Federal Executive. 'With its formation', McMullin observes, 'Labor's organisational structure was complete' (McMullin, 1991: 98). Yet the rules devised by the state officials for the new Australian Political Labor Executive did not encourage any expansive view of its operations. It was granted power only to organise the triennial conferences and to act as the 'administrative authority' carrying out

conference decisions; Labor essentially replicated at the national level the arrangements that existed in each state where the supreme but infrequent party conferences delegated executive authority to smaller administrative bodies. The new Executive was entirely reliant on the states for its funding, agenda and membership; on principles of federal equality, each state branch contributed two delegates to the executive regardless of size and wealth. All the federal office holders, were elected by and from the twelve state delegates and they continued to act as state representatives while also performing their federal duties; Stewart, the first Federal Secretary, continued his more substantive role as state secretary of the Victorian branch. As Crisp observed, the Federal offices were at this time 'in most cases secondary or incidental responsibilities' relative to their principal preoccupations at the State level; the Federal Secretary's authority was 'severely circumscribed' and, without any secretariat, he handled 'little cash and less patronage' (Crisp, 1955: 7, 67).

During its early decades the Executive was repeatedly exposed as lacking the power to enforce its decisions upon recalcitrant states; at times, its very existence was in jeopardy (Weller & Lloyd, 1978: 10, 13). As a delegate in his own right, Stewart was actively involved in these policy and political disputes; he was a prominent anti-conscriptionist, and also helped negotiate between the warring factions in New South Wales (Weller & Lloyd, 1978: 47; Love, 1990). But in his role as Secretary, his remit travelled no further than that of the Executive as a whole; he literally provided secretarial services to the executive, handling correspondence and minutes, organising transport and logistics for Executive meetings and the triennial Conference, and receiving the meagre sustentation fees the states paid each year to sustain the operations of the executive. From time to time Stewart was voted an 'honorarium' of ten pounds or fifteen guineas, underlining his honorary and part-time nature of this post and recognising the reality that his full-time job lay elsewhere (i.e. as the Victorian state secretary).

After Stewart's death, the Victorian branch quickly selected McNamara as his replacement both as delegate to the executive and, in an acting capacity, as the Federal Secretary. Federal Executive confirmed him as secretary – he was elected unopposed – but not before a debate about the appropriate status of its honorary official. Must the Secretary be elected 'by and from' the Executive, or could a secretary serve without also being a delegate? On the Executive's recommendation, the 1927 Conference changed the rules to allow 'a Secretary to be appointed who may not be a delegate member of the executive, a Secretary so appointed to have no vote'. From 1931, McNamara ceased being a Victorian delegate and attended executive meetings solely as the Secretary: by separating the secretary's administrative and representative functions, the ALP took a small but notable step towards an autonomous secretaryship. But the lowly status of the Federal Secretary can be gauged by the meagre resources the states provided for him. McNamara was granted honoraria from time to time (ten guineas in 1925, £25 in 1931, £100 in 1943) but he authorised no expenditure and was supported by no staff; an occasional payment was made to a minute secretary. The full apparatus of Head Office consisted, to judge from the Executive's startlingly bare balance sheet in 1930, of nothing more than a typewriter and filing cabinet (£20). Indeed, for its first fifty years, the national Labor Party had no national Head Office as such – no 'distinct room or office' (Crisp 1955: 78) in which the party's national business was performed. Instead it was accommodated in a series of state branch offices, shifting to a new capital city with the election of each new Federal Secretary: from Melbourne to Brisbane (under Schmella) and Perth (Chamberlain) pausing in Canberra in 1963 as a genuinely national office (under Wyndham) before heading off again to Adelaide (Young). Only in 1973 under Combe did the Head Office become anchored in Canberra.

This subordination to the jealous and thrifty states helps explain why, for many decades, the Federal Executive's role in election campaign management, and that of the Federal Secretary, was sporadic and limited (Crisp, 1955: Ch5). The state branch officials organised the party members, controlled the party's funding and effectively ran the Federal Executive; 'since they paid the piper, they liked to be able to call at least a few variations on the federal tune' (Crisp, 1955: 84). Centralising initiatives were repeatedly blunted or thwarted. Before the 1925 federal election, for example, the Executive put up £20 to prepare campaign literature 'of a uniform character in the

different States' – but, lacking authority to act on this inspiration, the Executive had to couch it as a recommendation to Caucus (Weller & Lloyd, 1978: 92, 104). In 1937 the Executive considered appointing Federal Secretary McNamara 'campaign director' for the forthcoming elections but – again uncertain of its powers – suggested the appointment be made by Caucus. In 1938, debating the idea of a 'general survey of the political situation with a view to preparing plans for the next federal election' due in 1940, the Executive directed McNamara and the federal President Norman Makin MP to visit each state executive so as to 'discuss ... closer cooperation upon Commonwealth lines' – but again, there was no power to enforce the idea (Weller & Lloyd, 1978: 221). In 1943, the year of Labor's greatest electoral triumph, the Executive scarcely met and contributed little to the effort which was led by the parliamentary party and the state branches. In the lead-up to the 1946 election, the Executive again tried to improve campaign coordination. It called on Caucus and the state branches to focus on 'better coordination ... with a view to formulation of an effective plan for conducting future Federal elections'. Caucus thought it was a good idea and recommended a rudimentary plan where state campaign managers would liaise with a designated Federal MP to coordinate local campaigning by candidates and branches. But even with this lead from Caucus, the Executive could only 'recommend' that the states appoint their campaign directors 'immediately' (Weller, 1975: 359-60; Weller & Lloyd, 1978: 281, 299). In the event, apart from Prime Minister Chifley's initiative in meeting with state branches, there was little of a coordinated nature in 1946; and after the victory, apart from sending a telegram of congratulations to Chifley, the Executive undertook no review to analyse why the party had won or how their new Liberal opponents had fared (Weller & Lloyd, 1978: 320,323). In a blunt reminder of who was running the campaign, the Executive also resolved that:

in all future elections the Federal Members shall be under the jurisdiction of the respective State Campaign Directors and that the Federal Ministers shall be notified accordingly, and that a Minister be assigned the responsibility with state campaign directors to control the movement of Ministers in election campaigns. Motion carried (Lloyd and Weller 1978, p323).

The Secretaryship gained influence during the early 1950s, due in part to the personal skills and networks of the Federal Secretary, Pat Kennelly.<sup>28</sup> Kennelly pioneered the concept of the marginal seat campaign (see Appendix Two). After Kennelly's forced departure from Head Office, lack of resources and capacity forced the party to revert to state-based part timers in Schmella and Chamberlain for the best part of the next decade. The 1958 campaign, documented by Rawson, portrays a Labor Party held back by a 'serious' lack of personnel at the federal level. Campaigning was funded by the 'Special Publicity Fund' established by Curtin in the late 1930s and used to pay for the services of the Hansen Rubensohn advertising agency; the fund received contributions from many sources including state branches 'in the belief that it would be used more effectively from a central source' – but this did nothing to strengthen the federal Head Office (Crisp, 1955; Rawson, 1961: 75).<sup>29</sup>

In his posthumously published recollections, Joe Chamberlain provided a telling insight into Labor's prevailing decentralised, state-based system of campaign management. His long list of campaign duties as the Western Australian state secretary included arranging public meetings; preparing advertising material such as leaflets and, after the advent of TV, scriptwriting and hiring actors and producers; staffing polling booths; researching opposition policy statements for inconsistencies and

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<sup>28</sup> Like his two predecessors, Kennelly was a Victorian and a career party administrator, hired as a 16-year old clerk in 1916. Renowned in Labor folklore for his stuttering insistence that 'he didn't care who won the argument, just so long as he got to count the votes', Kennelly elevated the Secretaryship to the first rank of party political manoeuvring. Through influencing candidate pre-selections – or, as he termed it, choosing 'horses for courses' – and through cultivating a personal relationship with the party leader (John Cain in Victoria and then Prime Minister Ben Chifley), Kennelly became, in Weller and Lloyd's phrase, 'the one federal officer before 1955 who gained considerable influence from his federal role'; but they caution that this was due to his personal skills and networks rather than from any power bestowed on the secretaryship itself (Weller & Lloyd, 1978, p. 9; Love, 2007).

<sup>29</sup> Rawson clearly indicates the state contributions were directed to the federal leader's fund not, as reported in S. Young (2004: 83) the Federal Executive.

inaccuracies; providing media commentary on campaign matters; and negotiating preference deals, 'ad nauseam'. As a self-described 'jack-of-all-trades', Chamberlain was obviously satisfied with his local know-how and campaign expertise, based in the state capital where he had built his political career and where his real power base lay. But considering his term as state secretary ran from 1949 to 1974 and spanned nine or ten Federal elections, his failure to mention any form of coordination or even consultation with the Federal party seems a significant assertion of state authority. Indeed, when Chamberlain eventually advocated the establishment of a full-time secretariat, his reasoning was based not on any need for campaign centralisation but to assist the party research and develop national policy (Chamberlain, 1998: 64, 80). As we have seen the subsequent appointment of Wyndham as a full-time national officer did little to break the dominance of the states over the ALP Federal Secretary. By the early 1970s, Blewett (1973, p9) describes Labor's electoral activities as 'sporadic and individualistic, often haphazard or even accidental, and lacking any overall coherence'.

### **Decentralised Campaign Management pre-1970s: the Liberal Party**

Problems of federalism also plagued the Liberal organisation. This was apparent from the time of the establishment of the Federal Secretariat in 1945. Menzies had called for 'unanimity and cohesion on the organisational side' and 'a concerted force under one command and with one staff'. Yet when it came to putting this principle into action, the Liberal Party balked at any such single 'command' structure, creating instead a Head Office that was, like its ALP counterpart, hamstrung by federal power struggles.

Laying down the party's organising principles, the Albury Conference determined on a federal structure 'in which the maximum autonomy would remain with each State organisation'. The Federal Secretariat would provide 'co-ordination, research, publicity and assistance to the Federal Parliamentary Party' (Starr, 1980: 80). The party's constitution enforced these principles. True, the Secretariat was recognised from the beginning as a separate unit of the new federal structure with distinct responsibilities and this was a departure from the Labor Party model. But these responsibilities were to be exercised in a condition of dispersed federal authority. The major organising unit of the party was the state division: individual party members were affiliated at the state not national level, state delegates dominated the Federal Council and Federal Executive; the state divisions could employ their own officials such as a General Secretary (Liberal Party of Australia, 1946a, Sections 22, 24-31, 39, 53). Where Menzies had invoked the military analogy of a general staff, and Ritchie the business analogy of a Chief Executive Officer, the reality was that Cleland's executive powers were limited. Unlike in the early Labor Party, the Director was not a voting member of the Executive and he was enjoined by the Constitution to 'coordinate the activities of the State Divisions on a federal basis' and to control and organise Federal publicity 'in cooperation with' publicity committees in any State division (Liberal Party of Australia, 1946a, Sections 63, 64). But the divisions carried no counterpart responsibility; functions of 'coordination' and 'assistance' imply persuasion rather than direction. This lack of clarity about the powers of the Secretariat - even, perhaps a deliberate ambiguity about them - suggests a complex authorising environment in which the federal parliamentarians on the one hand, and the state divisions of the federal party organisation on the other, have different and unresolved perspectives on the proper scope of the new body. The Secretariat was founded with a job to do, but amid uncertainty and tensions about how to do it. This was the point of Cleland's and White's report after their inspection tour: theirs was a national project, which inevitably and immediately challenged the 'six separate entities' at the state level.

As Hancock has noted in his invaluable account of the federal Liberal organisation, the new party embraced 'two conflicting understandings of the concepts "federal" and "national".' For Ritchie, a *federal* outlook and a *national* outlook meant the same thing: a willingness to place the party's nation-wide interests above sectional concerns. To the state divisions, that sort of federalism was centralist and unificationist: a truly *federal* perspective acknowledged their right to remain autonomous' (Hancock, 2000: 63). The federal Head Office, excluded from policy making by a parliamentary party that was not interested in sharing this role, increased its efforts in the



campaign sphere. Having delivered electoral victory through a centralised and professional national election campaign in 1949, the national office built a successful campaign strategy through promoting the image of Prime Minister Menzies (Hancock, 2000: 120). Yet the party only narrowly survived close shaves in 1954 and 1961, and the state branches continued to resist national incursions onto their electoral turf. Two long-serving state officials in particular – John Carrick, general secretary of the New South Wales branch, and his Victorian counterpart John McConnell – are described by Hancock as the ‘real enemies’ of Federal Director Willoughby in the 1950s and 1960s. According to Hancock, they strongly resisted any expansion of the Federal Secretariat’s authority, treating it as little more than a central post office which supplied propaganda literature, organised meetings, and assisted contacts with the federal government. Carrick and McConnell were also the ‘shrewd’ authors of ‘Political Appreciations’ which were influential in forming the party’s campaign strategies. Hancock further notes that ‘none of the divisions was prepared to hand over the key functions of selecting candidates, employing field staff, conducting their own public relations, and fighting elections.’ Willoughby wrote in 1954 of the ‘growing recognition of the need to speak with one voice’, but he could never issue a command to that effect. These tensions between a centralising Federal Head Office under Willoughby and a centrifugal state structure exemplified by Carrick and McConnell were, as Hancock points out, still unresolved after twenty years. ‘Ritchie’s goal of a truly *national* organisation, in spirit and structure, had not been realised’ (Hancock, 2000: 74-5, 126, 129, 147, 248). Carrick, like Chamberlain, took personal responsibility for writing copy for advertisements; his individualistic understanding of campaign strategy and his hands-on approach were described by Kaldor (1968). In Queensland, the influential state director Charles Porter took the view, as director of federal campaigns in that state, that advertising and other campaign material was ‘all a waste of money and effort’ and polling of leaders was a ‘prime piece of pointless nonsense’; he championed campaigns fought with the ‘sweat of the brow’ and the ‘gut feeling’ of experienced campaigners (C. Porter, 1981).

In this system, the Federal Director played a linkage role that, while it achieved some degree of coordination, did so largely on the states’ terms. In an interview Bede Hartcher gave after his appointment – one of his rare public statements – he reflected on his previous experience as a federal official rotated through several state divisions to broaden his experience, including helping the Victorian Liberals to victory under Bolte in 1954-7:

They (the state divisions) just regard you as a person with a lot of experience, and you can be helpful just being able to sit there and say, ‘we have had this problem in Queensland and this is an effective way of handling it’. This sort of linkage is an effective way of getting unification of policy (Juddery, 1968).

By Hartcher’s time, however, the Liberal Party’s problems were deeper than his laid-back style suggested. The party organisation that had so ably supported Menzies could do little with the leadership turmoil and rivalries in the parliamentary party and coalition and its committee structures and personnel had atrophied. Australian campaigning in 1969 was regarded by a visiting British scholar as ‘dated’:

The image makers had not been at work. The stilted formality of TV presentations, especially by the government coalition parties was astonishing (Butler, 1974: Ch14).

In 1972 Hartcher took the party to its first campaign defeat in more than two decades and was subsequently ‘brutally removed’ (Hancock, 2000: 248-9, 269). But finding itself in opposition for the first time since Cleland, the party’s Head Office which had outlived Menzies and had outlived the Liberal Government, once again began a process of regeneration.

### **Centralised Campaign Management in a Federal System**

Against this background of decentralised campaign management, the national party officials set about transforming campaigning from a state-based to a nationally-based activity. This centralising imperative only emerged in the face of deeply entrenched and intransigent state interests. In

speaking of his frustrations with the party's 'left hand' not knowing what its 'right hand' was doing, Wyndham gave two examples of this 'ridiculous' dysfunctional decentralisation:

Western Australia could say one thing and New South Wales the other. There was no coordination of the leader's campaign. There was one ridiculous occasion when for Doc Evatt, he was speaking in Adelaide, then speaking in Brisbane, then had to fly all the way back to speak in Hobart. I said, 'What bloody nonsense. Why doesn't he go from Adelaide to Hobart then up to Brisbane?'

Both problems would be remedied through a coordinated approach which would permit consistent campaign communications and efficient usage of campaign resources. These solutions had not been implemented because of personal antagonisms but more deeply because of the institutional problems of federalism, which permitted sectional interests to be put ahead of national interests:

There was a lot of animosity between the states. ... The states, as I've said, played one off against the other. It was incredible. There was no Australianism. There were six separate states. Federal was notional, in fact it was a bloody nuisance to most of them.

The 'nuisance' factor was illustrated when, immediately after Wyndham's appointment as Federal Secretary, Prime Minister Menzies called an early election in November 1963. Having sent Wyndham to Canberra, the Victorian branch found itself undermanned and asked Federal Executive to defer Wyndham's start date so that he could remain in Victoria as the state campaign director (Australian Labor Party, 1964). The Executive's agreement meant that Labor in effect conducted its national campaign for the 1963 elections without a national secretary – an unprecedented circumstance even for this decentralised party.

That the London-born Wyndham should decry the lack of 'Australianism' in the ALP is perhaps ironic. But the lack of an 'Australian' approach to national campaign management was of course the very problem. As Freudenberg notes of this period, it was the state branches that by definition had the 'deepest vested interest in the fragmented federal structure' and would be weakened, both within their own states and nationally, by a strong national organisation that transcended state interests (Freudenberg, 1977: 92). Achieving electoral success at the national level required the new federal Head Office to secure the cooperation of the states in a nationally-focused campaign effort. After the failure of Wyndham's efforts to reduce the power of the state branches, a critically important stage in this transformation was reached by his successor Young, for whom the party's decentralised structure, with its associated 'jealousy and suspicion', had been the principal cause of Labor's electoral failures:

There was no doubt in my mind that one of the grave deficiencies in the Labor campaigns of the (pre-1972) past had been the lack of a truly national effort. To win federal government we had to run a properly coordinated national campaign. The biggest hurdle the Party had to clear in order to run a successful campaign was the jealousy and suspicion that existed between the national office and the state branches. Previously everyone had run their own campaigns (M. Young, 1986).

In turn Combe recalls the vulnerability of the federal office to the better resourced state branches:

Federalism implies powerful states' rights, and at the time (1973) the states felt enormous influence over what you could do, because they paid sustentation fees. If a state branch, New South Wales or Victoria, chose not to pay sustentation fees, then you had a hell of a problem paying your own wages, let alone the wages of any staff member. ... The federal entities were the poor relations dictated to by the States. In accordance with the principle of, 'He who pays the piper calls the tune', you're at the mercy of the big states.

The illogical nature of decentralised national election campaigning was underscored by McMullan who identified instead a 'logic' in which the national party was pre-eminent:

We have a Westminster system. That means that a key choice for voters is, 'Who do you want to be the government?' (It is) not, 'Who do you want to be the local member?' ... At the core, the overwhelming majority of Australians go to the polling booth to decide who they want to be the Government. That's a perfectly rational judgement for them to make. Once you come to that conclusion, the logic is that a major campaign is about the party not the candidate. That leads to a centralisation of campaign resources and the acquisition of campaign skills. That just follows.

Liberal officials of the era also recall a party organisation that was decentralised and lacking national coordination. Pascoe found the party in 1974:

(It was) all pretty untidy and independent. Everyone did their own thing.

Eggleton recalled that prior to 1974:

We'd run elections on a state basis, managed by each state division. There'd been some national coordination and input, but there'd not been a truly national campaign.<sup>30</sup>

None of the party officials interviewed for this research speaks of national campaigning as being other than a responsibility of the national office. They all accept the need, in Loughnane's words, for 'someone' to take charge of campaign management – and for that person to be based in the national office. Discussing a hypothetical situation of state-based control of the party leader's itinerary – the same problem Wyndham had condemned as 'ridiculous' – Loughnane said:

Politically my view is, it would be politically disastrous. You can't (have) the leader turn up interstate and being told ... I'm saying, 'Go here', and someone else is saying 'Go there'. It doesn't work that way. Somebody's got to make the call.

It was under Combe's secretaryship that Labor made a symbolic switch of names, exchanging the adjective 'federal' with 'national'. Combe, elected as Federal Secretary in 1973, was retitled National Secretary from 1975; the party's 'Federal' or 'Commonwealth' conferences became National Conferences. The switch marked a turning point in campaigning:

It just became entrenched that the federal campaigns were run as national campaigns. ... When I came in, there were national campaigns in name only (Combe).

McMullan likewise acknowledged that by his time in the 1980s:

The authority of the national office had been pretty firmly established as people who ran the campaign and with whom the states cooperated, rather than the other way around.

Robb noted the same outcome in the Liberal Party, where

The Secretariat (under Eggleton in the 1970s) had run the national advertising campaign, and had developed themes and messages.

Crosby, later, agreed that

The Liberal Party in particular was a very devolved organisation. ... (But by the late 1990s) no one would dispute that the Federal Director and the federal organisation would have centralised campaign responsibilities – which was quite a change.

Loughnane is even more definite:

On the campaigning side, the states are if you like an extension of my campaign unit. ... Each state doesn't go and run its own campaign in a federal election. They're about the

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<sup>30</sup> Former Liberal official Martin Rawlinson wrote in 1983 of the Liberals' 'introduction of national campaigning' in 1974 – that is, centralised control of the TV advertising campaign in the Federal office (Rawlinson, 1983).

implementation of the strategy in their individual states. If you like they're an extension of my campaign apparatus. ... I think everyone accepts you can only have one strategy.

### **Appointing a National Campaign Director**

The centrality of the Head Office to campaign management is captured by the title 'national campaign director', which from the 1970s has come to be routinely attached to Labor Party National Secretary and Liberal Party Federal Director. Young in 1972, and Eggleton in 1975, were the first national campaign managers. Prior to 1972, only state secretaries had carried the title of campaign director. Chamberlain for example noted that as state secretary he was 'automatically' campaign director for state and federal elections in Western Australia (Chamberlain, 1998). The arrangement meant in effect that for national elections, each party campaigned with six campaign directors, each responsible for efforts within state boundaries with minimal central coordination. It was to eliminate the duplication and inefficiency of this system that the parties – first Labor in 1972 and then the Liberals in 1975 – appointed their federal party official as national campaign director. This represented a very clear transfer of authority for campaign management from the periphery to the centre and permitted a uniform, top-down and centralised direction to national campaigning.

Campaign directors embody the centralised coordination and direction of all the party's campaign resources, including the parliamentary leadership and candidates, state party divisions, party employees, members. Campaign directors also engaged and controlled the specialist consultants – the market researchers, advertising agents, direct mail providers and media communications advisers – and thus could apply an ever-expanding repertoire of marketing techniques to the disciplined pursuit of electoral advantage. Beyond this, the campaign director also performs the higher task of formulating the party's overall strategy. To an extent that would perhaps have surprised Cleland and McNamara, their successors in their party Head Offices from the 1970s onwards became key advisers to their respective Prime Ministers and Opposition Leaders and decisive voices in shaping the political strategy of Governments and Oppositions. Thus empowered, the campaign directors exert influence over policy formation, over the recruitment and preselection of candidates, and in certain cases even over the choice of party leaders. Meanwhile, campaigning itself became an increasingly protracted function. From Young's 'mini-campaign' in late 1971 (Blewett, 1973: 9), electioneering expanded beyond the formal intensive campaign period prior to polling day to take place on a virtually continual or in Blumenthal's word 'permanent' basis, throughout the political calendar (Blumenthal, 1980).

Young's 1986 account of the 1972 campaign mentions his appointment as campaign director only in passing. Blewett however noted that once appointed as campaign director, Young established his 'mastery' over campaign planning 'almost immediately' and became Labor's 'organiser of victory'. The position carried little 'directive' power, and relied for its authority on Young's previous campaign experience in South Australia and his position at the nexus of the three groups critically involved in campaign planning and execution: the Secretariat, the party leader and the advertising agency (Blewett 1973: 10-11). As campaign director, Young implemented his stated vision of a nationally integrated election campaign, including a national television advertising campaign based around the research-tested, mood-oriented, celebrity-sung slogan and anthem, 'It's Time'. Not since 1949 had there been such a conspicuous example of the professionalised campaign model.

The Liberals matched this arrangement before the 1975 elections, appointing Eggleton as national campaign director with the support of parliamentary leader Malcolm Fraser. Fraser required the new campaign director to take an unprecedentedly 'hands-on' campaign role, travelling with him to all his election events during the campaign. Eggleton also had to 'slip back' to Melbourne regularly, to supervise the advertising agency and attend the campaign headquarters. He further took on a coordinating role in relation to the Liberals' coalition partner, setting up a regular morning telephone conference 'bringing the two parliamentary leaders together with me' for a briefing to have 'both coalition leaders ... hopefully taking a similar stance'. Underlining the essentially transient nature of such arrangements, however, Eggleton had to reaffirm his authority

as campaign director after Fraser's departure. The new party leaders, Howard and Peacock, did not require him to travel with them during election campaigns in 1984, 1987 or 1990, with Peacock's 'independently-minded' staff deciding during the 1984 campaign on a different itinerary from that determined by the Head Office. Again, the problem of the leader's itinerary, as old as Wyndham, was revived:

We (in Head Office) designed the programs for the leader - but they (the leader's staff) started to decide where he (Peacock) would go and what he would do differently from what we wanted.

That issue was resolved with the leader reaffirming the need for one campaign, led by Eggleton:

And (we) also increasingly determined that there should be one person totally responsible for the campaign. ... The leader's office should become a cohesive part of the total campaign and not be out there running a parallel campaign for the leader separately from the national campaign. These were lessons that we were very firm about. The parliamentary leaders of the day all supported me on this saying, 'OK Tony, my team becomes part of your team for the campaign'.

But after the 1987 campaign, Eggleton again had to reassert his authority, appealing to the federal executive for:

a new approach to election campaigns which would give the Federal campaign director real control of the campaign, not just its federal elements such as advertising and Federal campaign headquarters, but actual operational responsibility for everything including the leader's staff. I made it pretty clear I didn't know what people might want me to do in the future, but that I certainly wouldn't be prepared again to be Federal campaign director unless I got that authority. If you have the authority, and things go wrong, then you put up with the kicks. But it's a bit irritating if you get the blame for matters you have no control over. That was totally endorsed (Ramsey, 2009).

Such problems indicate that campaign directors need constantly to maintain the centralising pressure. Yet the innovation of a national campaign director quickly became completely entrenched in both parties. All national secretaries and federal directors following Young and Eggleton have also been appointed campaign director. These appointments take place automatically as they are regarded as inherent in the party official's role. As noted earlier, the party officials themselves regard it as an essential and increasingly central part of the role:

The Federal Director is the campaign director. ... It's not a formal resolution that you get appointed campaign director. By virtue of being one, you are the other (Crosby).

It's always been the tradition. There is no reference to it in the rules. I know in the lead-up to me being appointed there was some view about maybe there needs to be - basically when it became clear that I'd got the numbers, some dissenters in the right said, 'Let him be secretary, but we'll have a separate campaign director'. I said, 'I'm not going to do it - you're not going to get anyone to just be secretary and not campaign director' ... It was only floated by one person who was being mischievous. But the interesting thing was very strongly, people said, 'No. It's an important job to have both in, you can't really split it' (Gartrell).

Despite the title, the campaign director's directive powers are limited. The real source of influence lies in the director's centrality in the campaign machinery and the use of his personal authority to induce the cooperation of state officials and parliamentary leaders. This point recurs frequently in the research interviews. Combe described himself as a 'consensual' leader, with his own sphere of responsibility which he did not seek to expand. Crosby described the federal director as the 'senior peer' of the state directors. Eggleton carefully managed state sensitivities:

This is how we made it work. I made sure they were all an integral part of the Federal campaign team. They knew I had this Federal campaign job to do and they wanted to cooperate. I wanted to avoid them feeling overshadowed by the federal campaign director and the new machine.

Eggleton described campaign management as using personal experience and judgement to assemble a 'puzzle' of diverse pieces:

You've got to be skilled and understand how a campaign works. You've got to understand the role of strategy, the role of focus groups, advertising, the party, how it all fits together. It's quite a complex puzzle to put together. ... You can't just walk in the door and do it.

Thirty years later, in the other party, Gartrell described his role in similar terms:

My experience was, to make sure you've got all your ducks lined up, to get all the best competing egos, creative minds, technical people, configured into a functional team. That's what I prided myself on. The same thing with the management of the party - to get all those factions and people lined up. To me I never saw it as me trying to be the preeminent political operator or the preeminent strategist, but more that your job was to get out of that lumpy system, to get the best out.

Less like a commander and more like an impresario, then, the campaign director coordinates from behind the scenes the diverse talents of party officials and external consultants into a single concerted campaign effort.

### **Strengthening the Head Office**

Both parties aspired to base their national Secretariat in purpose-built premises in the national capital, but until this aspiration was fulfilled, the national Head Office remained physically based in the states. The Canberra Conference of the nascent Liberal party had recommended the formation of a permanent Secretariat in Canberra (Starr 1980, p79), but the organisational blueprint drawn up by federal president Ritchie had recognised that until a site was found the Secretariat should share accommodation in Sydney with the New South Wales division (Hancock 2000, p56). Willoughby had opened a part-time office in Canberra soon after he was appointed Federal Director in 1951. But it was not until 1965, marking the twentieth anniversary of its founding, that he was able to preside over the opening of the Party's national headquarters - 'Menzies House' - in a purpose-built brick building in Canberra (Hancock, 2000:1-2). For the ALP, as noted earlier, the national Head Office was merely a notional concept rotated among the state capitals. Nothing came of a 'long discussion' at the Federal Executive in 1945 - no doubt inspired by the Liberals' planning - about setting up 'a Federal Secretariat' in Canberra 'as early as possible' (Weller & Lloyd, 1978: 298). As the full-time secretary, Wyndham operated out of rented premises in the national capital from January 1964, albeit in 'a small, ratty office suite at the top of the world's most ancient lift' (Ramsey 1996). Young, Adelaide-based had 'carried the federal secretariat around in his briefcase for several years' (Brenchley, 1973) but under his successor Combe, the ALP finally matched the Liberal Party, opening its own national headquarters - John Curtin House - in 1974.

The Liberal Federal Secretariat had been staffed from inception with a substantial professional team. The tripartite staffing structure of the Secretariat established under Cleland - in which the Federal Director was assisted by a Public Relations Officer and a Senior Research Officer - was retained, though White had been replaced by Edgar Holt in 1950, and Bengtsson resigned to join British Tobacco in 1955 to be replaced by his deputy Bede Hartcher (Hancock 2000; Griffen-Foley 2003). Willoughby boasted to the state divisions about the 'splendid condition' of the Federal office, with its 'three top-ranking men' (Hancock 2000). Each of these senior officials was paid £2000 a year; by 1961 Willoughby's salary was reported to be 'something over £4000' with Holt and Hartcher on 'about £3500' (Whittington 1961; Hancock 2000). All of them routinely complained about inadequate resourcing, but the Head Office appears to have enjoyed a comfortable level of

support: six staff members in the Research team, a prolific publications budget, and international travel to observe political developments in the UK and USA (Whittington 1961; Hancock 2000).

Certainly the contrast with Labor's minimal resources was striking. In 1961, Labor's campaign publicity effort relied entirely on a journalist attached to the New South Wales branch and to media-savvy MPs such as Leslie Haylen (Whittington 1961). Even after Wyndham had become Labor's first full-time national officer, he lacked administrative support and resources; while every other socialist party in the world had an effective national organisation, Whitlam told a party conference in 1967, the ALP had just 'one man and two typists' (Anon, 1967a; McMullin, 1991: 304-5). Young's appointment as national campaign director, however, was accompanied by a significant strengthening of Labor's Head Office. Three professional staff members and consultants were engaged - David White, Peter Martin and Eric Walsh - all of whom had backgrounds in journalism and publicity (Blewett 1973, p10). The party was quickly convinced of the value of national Head office staff devoted single-mindedly - that is, without the distraction of state priorities - to the task of winning national elections. Combe's Head Office was strengthened with the creation of a senior role as assistant national secretary (initially filled by former Collingwood premiership player Ken Bennett) and, following the electoral debacle of 1977, an internal party review recommended further resources be added, with directors of communications (Tony Ferguson, then Geoff Walsh) and research (Geoff Prior, assisted by Gary Johns). In a fine articulation of the centralising imperative, Combe's successor McMullan observes that his priority was not to make the Secretariat bigger:

We didn't need to make it bigger. I didn't want to take on more things. I just wanted to be more in control, more in charge, of the way the campaign was conducted.

Even so, Geoff Walsh replaced Ferguson as communications director and in 1986 national organiser Kate Moore was joined by two more national organisers, Gary Gray and Ian Henderson. Gray was later appointed as assistant national secretary under Hogg and, as National Secretary, in turn appointed Candy Broad as his assistant secretary. Walsh's election as National Secretary was accompanied by Gartrell's move into the assistant secretaryship.

Eggleton was supported by a larger cast of senior executives. He inherited and retained the tripartite structure of a director supported by professionals in research and policy (initially, Ian Marsh, then Martin Rawlinson and Keith Richmond) and media and communications (John Leggoe, who went on to become the state director in Queensland, then Press Gallery journalists Bob Baudino then Graham Morris). There were also officers tasked with parliamentary relations (Graham Wynn and Al Kinloch) and international relations. He also briefly experimented with a professional fundraiser, though this function soon reverted to the party treasurer. Eggleton also initiated the appointment of deputy directors, first appointing Nick Minchin and then Andrew Robb. Robb as director in turn appointed Crosby as his deputy. As well as his media role, Morris went on to play a permanent campaign role as Eggleton recalls:

Graham (Morris) has probably run more campaigns than anyone because he was the officer on my team who contributed to state campaigns. When they wanted help it was Graham Morris. If the Liberal Party had campaign medals, they'd cover his whole chest. He'd go off and spend three or four weeks with the campaign teams in each of the states and also became the key person with Masius and other agencies. He was the day-to-day liaison person with the agencies and that was one of his quite specific roles.

Likewise Gray says his role as organiser was 'to do the campaign work'. Robb also says he was hired 'to set up a campaigning unit'. Crosby was hired as Robb's deputy to do 'a lot of the on-the-ground campaigning stuff'.

In addition to these enhancements to the Secretariat's campaign resources, many of the interviewed federal officials spoke of a cyclical process of staffing up the Secretariat in advance of elections. Eggleton said he 'worked on the basis of building up to maximum staff leading up to the election campaign'. Gartrell said his core full-time staff of 8 to 10 officers was expanded 'really

strongly in the election year' to as many as 100 staff for the short period of the campaign. Loughnane agreed that 'typically staffing wise we tend to staff up the closer we get to an election and then drop off'. As Eggleton and Crosby both noted, victory at the ballot box allows Head Office to shrink, as staff move into ministerial or other positions with the Government. This cyclical staffing underlines that - for all the focus on the 'permanent campaign' - party managers must still be able to mount an effective effort in the sharp intense few weeks of the campaign proper.

### **Building National Cooperation**

An obvious organisational response to a problem of dispersed and autonomous units is to create forums in which all units can participate and collaborate. Such forums build habits of trust, promote information sharing and pool expertise; they can serve flexibly as vehicles for collective decision making or for centralised command and control. In both parties, Head Office created such forums, bringing the central officials together the state secretaries, parliamentary leaders and external campaign consultants. These forums became a critical method for the federal party officials to, in Combe's words, get the state secretaries 'on board':

You had to have them on board, to do the things that you wanted to do in a campaigning sense ... by cultivating (them), involving them in what was happening federally, trying to get them on board.

In the Liberal Party, Robb echoed the need for rapport with the state directors:

They've got to be your generals. They've got to have confidence in you, and you've got to have confidence in them. ... If you've got a good rapport and trust it can make a hell of a difference. State directors are critical.

Labor's first joint national-state forums operated in a specific campaign context. Wyndham had worked with a National Organising and Planning Committee (NOPC) of the Federal Executive, which formulated 'the broad national lines of the campaign' based on the leader's policy priorities and the advertising agency's outline of 'the best method of utilising to maximum advantage the funds available'. State branches 'grafted' their own campaigns on to this national framework (Wyndham, 1968). Given this limited mandate, and against the backdrop of the antagonistic internal relations in Wyndham's time, the NOPC not surprisingly failed to achieve much by way of coordination. In January 1972, however, Young's appointment as national campaign director was accompanied by the creation of a National Campaign Committee (NCC) which he headed. The NCC brought together in a single, campaign-focused, forum, the national secretary, the party leader Whitlam, and the six state secretaries; present 'by invitation' were representatives of the advertising agency, parliamentary staff, and other state and federal officials (Blewett, 1973). Blewett describes the NCC as the instrument Young used to gather information and gain formal authorisation, and through which he 'imposed his concept of a national and professional campaign on the state organisations' in the lead-up to the December 1972 election (Blewett 1973 p10). The NCC's last meeting was in October, more than a month before the beginning of the campaign proper; that is, the committee exercised a planning not implementation role (Blewett 1973 p10). Having been such a critically important vehicle for Young in 1972, by 1974 the NCC under Combe became bogged down with 'a cast of thousands'; coordination forums once established do not necessarily endure. Victory in 1974 came only after Labor's 'disjointed and dispirited campaign' was 'rejuvenated' by a mid-campaign change of strategy; Mick Young had to be drafted in to assist (C. J. Lloyd & Reid, 1974: 409; Souter, 1976; Richardson, 1994).

Combe was responsible for 'instituting' a new forum with the state secretaries which operated outside the campaigning periods with a more general focus:

We'd ask them to share what they were doing in terms of their state campaigns. We would get people like (market researcher) Rod Cameron to present.



This forum has endured as a vital means of ensuring the cooperation of the powerful state branch officials, as Gartrell noted:

There's a state secretaries' forum called the State Secretaries Meeting. They also attend the (National) Executive. They also form the Finance Committee of the party. So having the state secretaries at best on side, at worst neutral, is the goal. That worked pretty well. I didn't have too many problems. I may have had one or two guys who were problematic but on the whole the cooperation was good with that bunch. But they're very important.

*Q: Why important?* A: Because power lies with the state branches. I always used to say, and the most important thing for me to get across to you, is that the national secretary is influential not powerful. That's what Geoff (Walsh) had said to me when he was mentoring me. I think that's right. It's not a powerful position. It is very influential but not powerful.

Or, as McMullan put it:

You can make whatever decision you like at the central level, but if the people who run the actual operational arms aren't carrying it out it doesn't happen.

Labor's state secretaries' forum is a relatively late blooming version of a much more long-running forum developed in the Liberal Party in its earliest days. In preparing for the 1949 campaign, the first federal director, Cleland, had convened and chaired an officials' forum which brought the general secretaries from the state divisions together with the Federal Secretariat. In two campaign planning meetings, the officials discussed and determined issues such as roll cleansing, Speakers' Notes, advertising, and the relationship between research and public relations. This organisational innovation quickly established itself as a principal focal point for national co-operation. Institutionalised after the 1949 victory as the Staff Planning Committee (SPC), it is thus the first of what was to become a key tool in both parties to achieve a nationally consistent and centralised campaign effort. The SPC became in Hancock's phrase the party's 'brains trust', increasingly relied upon by the federal executive and Menzies himself for strategic and tactical advice and planning (Hancock, 2000: 7, 93).

Defeat in 1972 had come as an unprecedented shock for the Liberal Party and yet, just as in the 1940s, this presented opportunities for electoral revival through radical organisational reform – not least, the ouster of Hartcher. The Liberals also emulated and indeed leapfrogged Labor in adopting a national campaign approach, developing coordination forums to drive their agenda of campaign centralisation. The key was a Federal Campaign Committee consisting of the parliamentary leaders, federal president and federal and state officials – 'a group of about a dozen people altogether; then we seconded research and advertising people as required to brief us (Eggleton Interview). Eggleton attributes to Fraser the decision to 'stop running these separate divisional election campaigns' and 'to have a truly national campaign', though there is plenty of evidence that this was happening earlier (Starr 1980, p284, 292). Eggleton's description of its role – again reminiscent of Labor's NCC – emphasises its authorising rather than implementation role:

I put my plans and recommendations to them to consider and endorse. ... Occasionally we would get the committee to meet during the campaign, but it was significant how much authority the Federal Director was then given for the campaigns. I had fairly frequent meetings with the state directors. The Federal Director chaired a Staff Planning Committee which met every month, two months. During the campaign we didn't meet personally but we'd certainly talk frequently on the telephone so they could keep me in touch with what was going on around the place in the states and the reactions to the campaign.

Robb described the SPC in similar terms, confirming that Hancock's judgement about the utility of this forum in the Menzies years endured through to the Howard years:

We had quite a lot of (Federal) Executive meetings, probably six a year, every two months, and we would have a full day with the state directors and myself before. We would go through a lot of campaign stuff, and then on to the business that the federal executive was going to talk about the next day. As you got closer to a campaign you'd be talking about advertising, your presentations. (It is) still a very important forum, probably one of the most important. In the latter Howard years they didn't have as many executives, so probably didn't have as many meetings of Staff Planning.

The success or failure of these coordinating forums depends in part then on the willingness of the state officials to cooperate. Getting the state secretaries 'on board' was a lot easier when they wanted to climb aboard. It's significant that for both the Liberal and Labor parties, the creation of these forums coincided with a period of generational change at the state level, in which long-serving state officials were replaced by a new cohort less inclined to oppose central initiatives. Thus Combe's officials' forum had the willing cooperation and support of key state branch officials. The state secretary of Victoria at the time was Bob Hogg, who recalled attending, as Victorian state secretary, the 'first ever national officials meeting', in 1976:

We had a very interesting seminar up in Port Stephens. I started arguing about sharing assets: if we're going to win federally we need to win seats in Tasmania; Tasmania's broke; so we need to be subsidising it and helping. We used to send organisers to help out – that was the first time that happened – to Tasmania and Queensland.

McMullan was also a member of that group, having replaced the aged Chamberlain in Western Australia, and he too had adopted national campaign initiatives at the state level:

When I became acting secretary in Western Australia, prior to that (i.e. when Chamberlain was state secretary) there'd been a separate Western Australian advertising campaign from the national one. There wasn't from my time on. I didn't do that in WA and to my knowledge it hasn't happened since. So I think we were a bit more national.

McMullan in turn acknowledged that he was 'lucky' with the 'key people that I had to work with' at the state level. Richardson and Hogg:

were both competent but also committed to the party at the federal as well as the state level. Sometimes you have to fight to get that priority because people are focussed on their state issues and their internal power struggles and everybody gets diverted on to that from time to time. ... There was Peter Beattie (state secretary in Queensland) ... Chris Schacht (South Australia) ... Michael Beahan (Western Australia) ... were all people who wanted to win the federal election. Now that sounds like a statement of the bleeding obvious, but it isn't.

On the Liberal side, the long-serving McConnell had resigned in Victoria in 1971 after 26 years as state director; he was replaced by Leo Hawkins, a former advertising agent, and in turn by Pascoe in 1975; Victoria became a much more willing supporter of the federal Head Office. Likewise in New South Wales Carrick had also resigned in 1971, after 23 years as state director, to take up a Senate appointment. He was replaced by Jim Carlton who, like Pascoe, was a McKinsey alumnus.

Pascoe was able to make good use of the relationship:

He (Carlton) and my staff worked on getting it so we led from the centre, both in election campaigns and in a lot of other stuff.

Another Head Office approach to winning the cooperation of state divisions was to offer them inducements. Robb, as already noted, found himself trying to 'impose' federal direction on the autonomous divisions of the Liberal Party; he found his task in the Liberal Party similar to his previous role as director of the rural industry lobby, the National Farmers Federation (NFF), in that both were federal structures that combined numerous autonomous groups and sections. His

strategy for securing the cooperation of the state divisions was inspired by the competition policy being pursued by the-then Hawke Government. Robb described this as a progressive process of central imposition on the decentralised party organisation:

I'd had twenty-two autonomous organisations at the NFF, so I understood the psychology of working with (states and territories) who were autonomous. So the Liberal Party had all its divisions ..., and we were progressively trying to impose ourselves on all these autonomous organisations. ... It was my experience at the NFF and it was borne out at the Liberal Party that the best way to get a coordinated program is to buy cooperation. I thought the Hawke Keating competition policy, where they provide an incentive to the states – it was one of the big periods of micro-economic reform - but it was bought, so I sought to do the same thing: to buy cooperation.

Robb's particular goal was to extend Eggleton's achievement of federal campaign control of national television advertising to secure federal influence over 'on the ground' campaigning in selected seats. To secure this new influence, Robb convened pre-election meetings for each of 30 federal electorates that had been identified for special attention to defend or win from Labor:

I would sit down with the state directors, and then with the campaign teams and my campaigners, and we would agree on a strategy for that seat, and a budget, and a program of activities, and the priority groups that would be targeted ... and lines of authority. ... And then I would say, 'A \$200,000 budget. I'll put in 100,000, and my 100,000 will be spent last'. And if we agree with this – it was not something I came in and imposed, you'd work through it, because they would have a lot of local experience ... - but we had to make sure that that occurred.<sup>31</sup>

The resultant effort prescribed specific campaign activities directed at particular target groups, identified by market research as being 'the ones that had to shift to win the seat':

If the swing voters were a certain group they (the local campaigners) spent most of their time with that group, whether it was just doorknocking or getting involved with different organisations or whatever it was. If families (aged) 29-45 were the target group, they were the ones that had to shift to win the seat, (we had to ensure the local campaigners) spent 60 per cent of their time, and their budget, going there (and actually doing that).

### **Imposing Consistent Internal Communications**

Head Office's efforts to centralise campaign management took place against a backdrop of the rapid transformations taking place in communications technology. Alongside the many other effects of their widespread application throughout society, these technologies served to assist and promote the campaign centralisation process. They did so in three ways. They made it easier for Head Office to communicate with and control the campaign apparatus – candidates, leaders, frontbenchers, party officials - dispersed as it must be during a campaign. They provided practical means of disseminating from the centre a single set of authorised political communications to voters and to the media. And they provided a way of tracking and monitoring the activities of the opposition party, especially their media statements. This centralisation of communications permitted consistency of communications. By coordinating internal communications, Head Office could ensure candidates avoided statements that were inconsistent with each other and with the leadership group; centralised tracking of opposition statements allowed Head Office to discover and exploit inconsistent statements by its opponent; and coordination of external communications ensured only one, authorised, version of the party's views were disseminated to voters and the media. Thus Head Office was able to position itself at the centre of the party's communications

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<sup>31</sup> Crosby, who was then deputy Federal Director, believed the influence of the Federal Liberal Party in individual local campaigns had increased through the early 1990s. 'This means influence in terms of providing support and resources to ensure that essentially we achieve minimum standards of performance' through an 'agreed' campaign program by the Federal, State and local campaign organisations (Bathgate, Crosby, & Henderson, 1996).

systems and to impose a disciplined consistency on the party's messages to the electorate. As these various communications systems were progressively superseded by new technologies and devices with broader reach or speedier application, Head Office became adept at exploring and exploiting their possible applications to election campaigning, creating new opportunities for centralised control - as well as a new arena for competition between the two parties.

The most striking example of this process was provided with the adoption of national television advertising campaigns by the Head Offices in the early 1970s. For the first time, parties were able to project the same advertising message to homes across the country. It should be emphasised however that the logic of campaign consistency predates the advent of, and is not dependent on, any particular communications technology. Print-era campaign communications such as pamphlets were prone to inconsistency when produced by different state branches, as Labor's Federal Executive noted as early as 1925; it 'recommend(ed)' Caucus appoint a publicity officer to prepare pamphlets 'in order that campaign literature may be of a uniform character in the different States' (Weller & Lloyd, 1978: 92, 104). Likewise, as noted in the Introduction, Menzies had wanted a 'nexus' between the parliamentary party and the workers 'in the field'. At a time when the new party needed urgently to establish its policies and formalise its critique of the Labor Government, Cleland's Secretariat provided that linkage with the production of Speakers Notes for Liberal candidates in the 1946 elections. Produced on a scale and quality not previously seen in Australian elections, the leather-bound two-ring binders included contained Notes on seventy-six current issues, each designed to provide candidates with a factual background, as well as lines of attack, for use on the podium or in meetings with constituents. Underlining its methodical work habits, the Secretariat issued updates on developing issues; the revised sheets could be easily inserted in the binders. Each booklet carried the instruction that they were to be returned to party headquarters after the election and in the meantime, 'every care must be exercised to ensure that these notes do not come into the possession of the opposition (sic) parties' (Liberal Party of Australia, 1946b). On a less lavish scale but with the same intent, Wyndham was writing Speakers' Notes in the 1960s:

The purpose of that was to see that everyone was speaking the same language in Western Australia and New South Wales.

By 1974, Pascoe saw the requirement for a campaign 'war room' to centralise the Liberals' campaign logistics and communications:

I set up the war room in (Opposition Leader) Bill Snedden's offices in Westfield Towers on William St (in Sydney), and was there day and night sort of thing. Coordinating. We had a big board - we didn't have computers in those days; we didn't have most things we have now - and we had the names of all the shadow ministers and where they were everyday day, a matrix across the board, just in handwriting. And if Bill wanted to contact somebody, where are they? Or if something needed to go out, we could shoot something out. All unbelievably low tech but it seemed to be rocket science compared to anything that had ever been done before.

Combe used telegrams and the telephone to advise candidates on how to communicate during the 1977 elections; on one occasion, urging them to focus on unemployment and on another, advising a 'no comment' on the selectively leaked report of the Evatt Royal Commission on Human Relations (Cameron, 1990: 775, 813). In the 1980s, McMullan recalled that:

the technology was making it more possible to communicate to candidates. We didn't have computers but you had - you know - telexes and faxes that started to enable you to say to people, so that the candidate in the most remote part of Australia knew what the leader was saying that day. ... We imposed more of a national pattern because we could. The technology made it possible, and we applied what is now terribly primitive technology, but as it evolved: doing old things in new ways.

Later still, Walsh reflected on the campaign application of mobile telephony and text messaging:

So when you've got the capacity to send text messages by phone - or go back further, and when people first started carrying mobile phones and you could ring up and leave a message - so when the shadow minister got off the plane in Cairns and checked his phone and got a message saying, 'Don't say anything to anyone about anything, until you've rung Fred at the Head Office'. Gradually that evolved to the point where, instead of getting a message telling him not to say anything, there was a text message saying, 'This is the approved line'. So suddenly, magically, there was 30 shadow ministers in 30 parts of the country saying word for word the same thing.

It is notable of course that whether the generic 'Fred' is using broadcast faxes or SMS messaging, and whether he is issuing no-comments or a lengthy approved 'line', he is doing so, not from the leader's office or the state branch, but from the national headquarters.

The counterpart of this capacity to achieve consistency of communications on one's own side was a capacity to exploit inconsistency in one's opponent. Labor in the 1980s developed sophisticated techniques for media monitoring to track comments of opposition spokespeople and to exploit inconsistencies. In his list of campaign responsibilities as a state secretary, Chamberlain describes researching opposition statements for inconsistencies and inaccuracies. But through the 1980s and 1990s, media monitoring had developed into a technology intensive process which involved monitoring radio and television broadcasts around the nation, including the voluminous talk-back radio, transcribing relevant interviews with opposition politicians, scanning them for potential inconsistencies and, once discovered, exploiting them by circulating them as 'gaffes' in real time to news reporters. This is a task for the national Head Office not only because of the cost involved but also because, by definition, opposition inconsistencies can best be detected and exploited on a national scale. Interviewed by David O'Reilly, Gray described media monitoring as part of the campaign 'skills-set' that Labor had mastered from 1983:

(We were) able not only to respond to what the opposition was doing but picking up some insignificant comment that might have been made by a backbencher .... I mean we would pick up a National Party MP comment about petrol prices in Gympie and make it an issue in Sydney (O'Reilly, 2007: 75).

Crosby agreed:

And with the media the way it is now you can't say something in Cairns and think you'll never be found out. It's taped. It's broadcast.

### **Engaging Specialist Agencies**

In taking over television advertising from the state branches, the national Head Offices also took over the relationship with the external advertising agencies while also building new relationships with market research firms. These agency relationships are detailed in Appendix Three, Table 8. They made significant contributions to the federal office's centralising agenda in at least four ways.

First, by taking on the agency relationships the federal office effectively disempowered the state branches which had previously managed them. From 1972 (ALP) and 1975 (Liberal Party), it was the federal Head Office that was responsible for selecting, engaging and commissioning an advertising agency for federal campaigns. In New South Wales, for example, the Liberal Party (and its UAP predecessor) had a four-decade long relationship with the Goldberg Advertising Agency (Kaldor, 1968; V. Lawson, 1996), while the Labor state branch had built the initial relationship with the Hansen Rubensohn agency. (Rubensohn's work at the national level had, at least until 1963, been conducted through the parliamentary leadership rather than through the federal office (Wyndham, 1968; Goot, 2002: 144-146). Within a short space of time, the national offices of both parties moved to terminate these long-standing agency relationships and to seek new sources of external advice. Young banned Hansen-Rubensohn from any spending without his written authorisation, and by 1975 Combe had broken the relationship entirely -

We put ourselves in a position where for the next election campaign we were able to conduct a selection process to appoint our advertising agency.

- and secured the services of Mullins, Clarke and Ralph for the 1975 campaign. Eggleton identified Masius Wynn Williams as the federal party's new agency for the 1975 elections; this British-owned firm had in 1968 acquired the Sydney-based Goldberg Advertising Agency which had conducted advertising for the Liberal Party and its UAP forerunner (Braund, 1978:312; V. Lawson, 1996). Several other party officials speak in the research interviews about the process of hiring advertising agencies. Eggleton replaced Masius with the George Patterson agency before the 1990 campaign:

No-one was sacked; it was a matter of agreement that the time had come for a change.

Robb in turn replaced that agency with a 'cherry-picked' team of individuals from separate agencies, assembled on a contract basis for the duration of the campaign:

'I saved \$600,000 and got a team that was tailor-made, rather than getting an agency that has got a good creative guy but the rest of them don't know anything about politics.

Walsh also speaks of supplementing Labor's existing relationship with the Saatchi agency by hiring a smaller agency for the 2001 campaign so as:

to get a menu of things rather than being a sole package: this is the campaign that we have to buy through you.

The general conclusion that party officials are responsible for agency engagement is necessarily qualified by exceptions where strong parliamentary leaders made it their business to get involved in this area of campaign management. For Labor's 1987 campaign, Prime Minister Hawke wanted to replace the party's existing agency Forbes Macfie Hansen with the untested and controversy-seeking John Singleton Advertising agency. In Hawke's recollection, he insisted upon the change despite the arguments of the campaign director:

Labor Party campaign director Bob McMullan particularly, feared party reaction should Labor switch its account to Singleton. Upsetting the party in this way, he reasoned, would detract from running the most effective campaign. In addition, he worried at the new agency's capacity to organise the necessary media outlets in the same way as our existing agency, with whom he had an easy and well-established relationship. These were legitimate concerns on Bob's part but I had a totally contrary instinct. This together with personal knowledge of Singleton, made me insist upon the change (Hawke, 1994: 399).

Market research, too, was quickly shifted to the centre from the states. The first professional market research was conducted by the South Australian branch of the ALP in the lead-up to the 1968 elections in that state. The branch commissioned the survey work from Marplan, the research arm of the Hansen-Rubensohn agency (Blewett & Jaensch, 1971). Young carried this relationship with him to Canberra when he became Federal Secretary and used Marplan and another agency, Spectrum International, to conduct research for the 1972 'It's Time' campaign (Blewett, 1973; M. Young, 1986). Young also identified Rod Cameron's Australian National Opinion Polls (ANOP), which began qualitative research work for federal Labor in the mid-1970s under Combe; this relationship with ANOP was to last for some two decades. On the Liberal side, too, Eggleton realised the party needed 'a stronger link' in market research and 'established a close rapport' with the Melbourne-based pollster Gary Morgan of the Roy Morgan Research Centre; this relationship, too, was to last for two decades.

McMullan is definite in affirming that Head Office controls the relationship with the external research and advertising consultants:

It is the party organisation that drives things, and the consultants work to the party organisation ... In a Westminster system the party people are supposed to be the professionals ... and what you do is hire the skills. They're either skills of advertising agencies (or of) pollsters and (of) other communications experts, to carry out the task that you decide.

Second, in forging these agency relationships, the national office was recognising that advertising and market research constituted a specialised form of work, with techniques developed and refined in the commercial marketplace; it was not work that could adequately be undertaken by the party's existing internal resources. Thus the days of party officials writing advertising copy - as state officials Carrick and Chamberlain had done, and Wyndham had done in 1968 - were gone; the party-dominated 'propaganda' committees of media industry volunteers passed their use-by date<sup>32</sup>. Likewise, there was an end to state branch experiments in survey work using volunteers; these had produced predictably disappointing results. In their place, external specialists were engaged by the national party officials on commercial terms to perform this work. This represented a decisive moment in the professionalisation of election campaigning in Australia, marking the emergence of a distinctively Australian style of professionalisation. Unlike in the United States, where external specialists are retained by political candidates directly, the Head Offices of Australia's political parties continued to control the hiring and firing of external agencies and thereby secured a pivotal continuing role in campaign management.

Third, the advent of professional market research into the election campaign environment had the effect of empowering the national office at the expense of the states. Previously, local candidates and MPs and state branches claimed to understand voter sentiment, arising from their day-to-day contact with party members and voters and with state-based media and providing a bottom-up flow of political information from the electorate to the centre. This kind of intuitive, experiential, 'gut feel' about the public mood was superseded by the advent of apparently reliable, authoritative, testable data about public opinion acquired through commercial research methods. Ownership of the information shifted from the members 'on the ground' and MPs 'in office' to the party officials in Head Office who commissioned the research and interpreted its meaning. Importantly, this new data was privileged and confidential where previously it had been by definition in the public domain; market research reports were tightly held by party officials and disseminated with care. The rise of professional market research then empowered the centre at the expense of the periphery, creating a 'tendency to concentrate information in the hands of party leaders, who may have few incentives to distribute findings widely through the organisation' (J. K. Smith, 2009).

While state branches did in some cases continue to conduct their own market research, they were more typically brought under the sway of the national Head Office in this regard, encouraged to engage the same researcher for their state campaigns as well. It was the national office, too, that invited the external research and advertising agencies to participate in the new internal party forums such as the national campaign committees, reinforcing the utility of those coordinating forums for information sharing. Combe recalls:

At one stage (after 1980) we pretty well had ANOP involved with everyone everywhere, at some stage involved in every campaign and ... (the federal advertising agency) Forbes Macfie Hansen became the advertising agency for a number of states. So there was a common thread between the states in campaigning.

On the Liberal side, the Masius-Wynn Williams and d'Arcy McManus agency served the same purpose, providing advertising for every Liberal campaigns at the state and federal level from 1975

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<sup>32</sup> See for example the 'Publicity and Public Relations Committee' - later, the 'Propaganda and Public Relations Committee' - established by the Victorian ALP state conference in 1964. The committee included media personality and Labor MP Doug Elliot, the future advertising executive Phillip Adams, a TV producer, a solicitor, and a raft of party officials; media appearances by ALP members had to be authorised in advance by the party executive. (Australian Labor Party, 1965:11-14; 1966: 5-6)

until at least 1979 (O'Toole, 1979). On the research side, the qualitative research firm Brian Sweeney and Associates, engaged by the Federal Liberals for the 1984 campaign, was also progressively taken on by state divisions for their election campaigns (Neat, 1987). This 'common thread' was occasionally broken, as states retained the capacity to choose their own agency relationships; Hogg recalled that in 1993 Queensland and New South Wales branches opted not to engage the federal office's preferred agency, Australian Community Research. But the 'common thread' also provided benefits to the party apparatus as a whole, providing economies of scale while creating opportunities to accumulate campaign expertise through shared research data and advertising strategies – and thus building the campaign coordination desired by the federal Head Office.

### **Building a National Party**

National campaign management had proven itself to political parties in the 1970s as a feasible and effective means of winning office from the opposition benches; just as in 1949, that was the lesson of Young's 1972 campaign and Eggleton's campaign in 1975 (Oakes & Solomon, 1973; Penniman, 1977). The same formula of organised disciplined campaigning by an opposition, against a changing backdrop of campaign technologies and of strategic circumstances, was rewarded with electoral success in successive decades - 1983 (P. Kelly, 1984) and 1996 (Williams 1997) and 2007 (Jackman 2008). Moreover, the successful parties learned to retain and apply the skills of national campaigning in the more challenging and complex environment of government, with incumbents successfully securing re-election by harnessing a nationally directed organisation to skilled and focussed political leadership. McMullan, Labor's national secretary at the time, describes such a combination of factors in Labor's re-election in 1987. In his post-election report, McMullan wrote:

This was the most researched and the best researched election campaign the party has ever conducted. ... Cooperation and discipline of the ministers in this campaign was probably the best of any with which I have been associated (Hawke, 1994: 412).

Gray, who had worked on the 1987 campaign in Labor's secretariat as an organiser, was even more enthusiastic:

(Labor) established in '87, I would argue, the best political communications framework we had had, which was the combination of the Singleton agency driving the overall message, the focus that Bob (Hawke) had as leader, the hunger that Paul (Keating) had as Treasurer and (his) destructive capacity at his best, and it was the first time anyone had seen anything like the campaign machine that we put together. It resulted in the complete restoration of the party's political position ... we actually increased our vote and increased our number of seats. It actually demonstrated not just a victory of a campaign framework. ... It was a victory of a political philosophy, of a political capability, a prodigiously capable cabinet, and a political machine that matched it.

Gray came to occupy a special place in the centralisation of national campaigning. As the first Labor national secretary selected from outside the cohort of current state secretaries, Gray was a creature of the national office. With seven years' experience working under two national secretaries Gray's promotion recognised that for the first time the national office had become a primary locus of relevant campaign expertise.<sup>33</sup> He commented that his appointment:

reflects the changed nature of the party. By the time I'm there (as national secretary) the party had a genuine objective of becoming a national organisation. I think I reflect that, both in terms of my aspirations and my work in the job.

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<sup>33</sup> The candidate Gray defeated in the election for national secretary, Ian Henderson, had likewise worked solely at the national office level.



His 'work in the job' marked a high point of the centralisation of Labor's Head Office, and his aspirations he described as 'my idea of building a national organisation'. Under Gray's administration the national Head Office reached a high point in its influence within the party as a whole. He strengthened the capabilities of the national organisation – its assets, personnel and campaign abilities – and its influence over the state branches – especially through funding state election campaigns and putting state offices on sound financial grounds:

I saw (the role) as being about the protection and the expansion of the national capability, to enhance and protect the reputation of the national organisation and to support wherever I could the ambitions and aspirations of the state organisations'.

Structural reform of the party organisation under Gray included an expanded national conference and new affirmative action provisions. The opening pages of Labor's 1994 Platform assert that the organisational changes 'mark the transformation of the ALP into a genuinely national Party' and, while maintaining the autonomy of the state branches 'improve the national operation of the Party' (Australian Labor Party, 1994). Gray also launched a national party newspaper. Behind these public developments, Gray was pursuing a broad agenda of internal changes aimed at strengthening the national organisation and the National Secretariat:

The language of being able to project the national secretariat, to project Labor's footprint wherever you wanted to be, were critically important to us.

Building on the state secretaries' forum, Gray purchased and installed a national videoconferencing network to link all the state offices, and created a national finance committee, including state secretaries, which monitored all aspects of the party's finances transparently. Reflecting the financial success of the federal party's fundraising efforts after more than a decade in office, which he had led, Gray used national funds to bolster campaign efforts in state elections in South Australia and Western Australia and in the territories – a reversal of the traditional flow of funds, – and also offered capital intervention to support the weaker state branches:

I'd also, with my economic surpluses, begun underpinning the state branches. I'd purchased in 94 the new offices for the Tasmanian branch, at Constitution Dock, a really good location. I would look at it and say it's a good building for us to be in: convict built building, signature address, a location where people see it every weekend, a respectable visible part of town, not a dingy office.

Gray's ambition was to lift the party's physical infrastructure so as to improve its campaigning capacity. The new Tasmanian building was:

built and designed along my kind of campaign lines, which was (to) build your secretariat for campaign capability, not for the day to day running of your party membership but your peak load events ... (with) prodigious capacity to project yourself. So you didn't have to worry about. 'How are we going to get in 3 television sets to monitor the 3 TV stations?' 'Where are we going to locate the computer printers?' You had them all set up ready to roll.

But Gray's centralising initiative was to reveal the limits to national control, and the resilience of the state units, in a federal organisation. His centripetal pressure triggered a centrifugal reaction; the states pulled back. Not all the states, he notes, 'allowed' him to make substantial investments as he had in Tasmania:

because when I stepped in to do the fiscal repair of the branch, I took over the branch as well. The Tasmanian branch was the first one and everyone realised that the Tasmanian branch had become a clone of the national secretariat.

Gray's centralising initiatives were opposed in particular by New South Wales and Queensland, seeing the national drive as a threat to their own autonomy; as the largest state, New South

Wales in particular was most threatened by any general reduction in the autonomy of states branches. After Labor lost office in 1996, many of Gray's initiatives were contested or duplicated: the New South Wales branch banned the circulation of the *Labor Herald* in favour of its own *Labor Times*, and campaign coordination was likewise threatened. As his later successor Gartrell recalled:

Gary was, in style early on, he very much wanted to create a national party, to have the national secretariat – I think he would have liked membership of the national party. I know he was keen on a national data base, national newspaper, a lot of those things. Towards the end they became flash points in the opposition to him, which was run really by (New South Wales state secretary) John Della Bosca and (Queensland state secretary) Mike Kaiser. ... Towards his end Gary had a very antagonistic relationship with New South Wales and Queensland. It was open warfare.

Walsh acknowledges that after succeeding Gray, he:

did work very hard on trying to have better relations with the state secretaries than Gary was considered to have. So there weren't doctrinal squabbles at critical moments. That is less a lesson about the last campaign than about the dynamics between state and federal officials ... As with any organisation in this country, there were the traditional tensions between the national office and the NSW branch of it.

Walsh, himself a Victorian, notes that these 'dynamics' were complicated by Victoria, the second largest state, playing the 'role of friend of the national office as a way of countering New South Wales' oppositionist position' or 'Victoria barracking for the centre as a counterweight to New South Wales calling the shots'.

Gartrell says that following Walsh's 'rapprochement with the states', he continued that process:

I did it under the framework of no duplication: what do you do and what don't you do. ... I dropped off any idea of a national member data base and I also ended the national *Labor Herald* as a printed publication; we then put it online.

In a reversion to the practice of rotating the Head Office depending on the state affiliation of the National Secretary, the day to day operations of the party have increasingly shifted out of the national capital. Bitar largely operated the national office from his home base of Sydney leaving a skeleton staff in the national capital – a setback for the centralising initiative.

McMullan acknowledges there has been:

a reassertion of the authority of the states *vis a vis* the national office. I see that more reflected in things that happen here, around the parliament, but I think that is so. ... A combination of things going back to be more state-based, and factions being a bit more tightly disciplined - for good or ill, and sometimes it's good and sometimes it's not – have combined perhaps to weaken the role of the National Secretary.

In the Liberal Party, state rejection of the centralising imperative took a less dramatic but not less deep-seated form. As is frequently the case in Liberal Party disputes, it dealt with fundraising. Robb saw the opportunity to apply centralised data base management to generate funds from members, but despite 'several attempts', this effort to 'centralise' low-donor fundraising failed because of opposition from the state divisions. His plan required the states to provide the national office with data about people who had donated to state campaigns in the past. This data would have been fed into the federal secretariat's existing data base and used for an expanded nationwide phone bank/ direct mail effort. Robb believes this plan - the idea had its roots in fundraising practices by political parties in the United States which Robb had visited - would have 'turbo charged' party fundraising and political communications, because 'we could have run state and federal issues, all off the same data base'. But the proposal failed, because:

there was never a level of sufficient trust. Everyone always thought that their data would be given to the feds to misuse that their data would be taken, or whatever.

The critical stumbling block was the nature of the data Robb sought. The existing federal data base concentrated on swinging voters in marginal seats; in the 1996 election Robb said the Liberal Party had identified and called 10 per cent of the households in 30 marginal seats. The states' data however represented the party's strongest supporters – those who were prepared to donate to support party fundraising drives. As will be discussed in Chapter 7, funding has long been a point of tension between federal and state offices in the Liberal Party, whether corporate or individual; access to donors is jealously protected by the states as it provided them with independent resources to conduct their own activities including campaigning for state elections. The states refused to cooperate with Robb, even though he offered to return 90 per cent of funds raised to the states. He also offered to pay all the fundraising costs, including the 'political' staff who were needed to 'convert opportunities into outcomes immediately':

We could have enhanced the political message because people give when they feel there's some reason to give. ... Once they get engaged, then the money flows subsequently.

He also demonstrated the effectiveness of the idea by trialling it. One trial involved contacting voters living within a 2km radius of polling booths where the Liberal candidate had received more than 60 per cent of the vote at the last elections – i.e. voters who were likely to be strong Liberal supporters. The trial paid for itself in the first mailing.

I was subsequently chairman of the Australian Direct Marketing Association for four years, and a lot of the members, if they'd paid for a mailing in the first mail out if they were fundraising, it was a heroic performance. (The state officials) said, 'Yeah, good'. But they didn't understand it at all. I still didn't get it off the ground. I put a lot of effort into it. So that's a huge political opportunity that's still out there for both sides.

This ebb tide in the centralisation process does not, on the evidence, indicate any fundamental rejection of the logic that drives national campaign management. It does underline that in a federal system states continue to exercise significant influence as discrete bases of power that are ultimately irreducible and that, fraught with internal tensions, a centralisation project will be frequently contested. Yet the contrast with the pre-1970s decentralised era is sharp, and there is no evidence that the campaign centralisation process itself will be unwound.

## **Discussion**

The chapter has reviewed the national Head Office's concerted effort to centralise control of campaign management in its own hands. In both parties, path dependent federal practices ran counter to the centralising logic of the professional campaign model and impeded its adoption; in both parties, campaign management was transferred from once-powerful state units to the national office. Path dependent ideological preferences which might, in the ALP at least, have militated against the adoption of corporate marketing practices were likewise suppressed in the interests of a professional approach to campaigning. This process was facilitated by the national reach of the new marketing and communications technologies; centralised management of the external marketing agencies was an obvious corollary. In this environment, the logic of centralised campaign communications impacted on all party actors: in Walsh's description, an anonymous 'Fred' in Head Office became a critical gatekeeper of campaign messaging.

The centralisation imperative was pursued within both parties in broadly similar fashion. Party officials speak of the process without notable partisan differences: the Labor centralisation project does not differ markedly from the Liberal centralisation project. Differences of timing and degree can be discerned. The Liberal Party's national Head Office appears to have centralised campaigning activities around Menzies as the parliamentary leader increasingly from 1949; but this discipline was always under challenge from influential state divisions and by the late 1960s was in decline. Labor's centralisation occurred much later but, under Young, more rapidly, leaving the Liberal

Party to catch up. Gray's national party initiatives in the 1990s may be examples of centralisation overreach. But the outcomes in each party look similar: a national campaign director at the head of a well-resourced national office sits at the centre of a professional campaign model that has largely co-opted state party branches, that engages external marketing agencies and that imposes consistent campaign communications across the organisational and parliamentary wings. In this project the personal skills of the party officials – their professional abilities to coordinate state branches, adapt to ever-changing technological communications, and manage national campaigns of increasing logistic complexity and expense – were of paramount importance. Without capable officials at the centre, centralisation could not have proceeded.

More than by party differences, this centralisation imperative appears to have been driven by incumbency status. Being in opposition and being in government helped, in different ways, to drive and impose a centralised campaign. In opposition before 1949, the nascent Liberals were able to create a centralised organisation and its pioneering John Henry Austral campaign; the shock of losing office in 1972 catalysed them into emulating Labor's national campaign apparatus. Likewise Labor in Opposition also experienced periods of renewal – faintly in the early 1950s, decisively in the late 1960s and again in the early 1980s – where the national Head Office sought and gained new resources and central authority over campaigning; another effort to centralise and professionalise while in opposition, through Wyndham's appointment in 1963, was stymied by state parochialism. On the other hand, the experience of government allowed some parties – such as the Liberals under Menzies, Labor more effectively under Hawke and Keating, and then again the Liberals under Howard – to entrench centralised campaign management through combining professional campaigning with parliamentary dominance, access to the resources and prestige of office, and a commitment to policy reform. Labor in 1987, in Gray's phrase, had 'a prodigiously capable cabinet and a political machine that matched it'.

But these developments did not complete the centralisation project or exhaust the agenda of possible initiatives; nor was there a clear-cut moment at which centralisation had been finally achieved. National Head Offices had to continue to maintain and to extend their central coordinating role against the centrifugal forces in their parties, all the while adapting to the ever-changing strategic and technological circumstances of campaigning.

## Chapter Six

### **'What Is Required To Win the Election and What Do We Have to Do?': Head Office and the Strategic Imperative**

'What is required to win the election and what do we have to do? Answering that question is the strategy.'

'You use focus groups to inform your strategy and your communications, knowing that you want to achieve something. ... It's a navigational tool. It doesn't tell you your destination.'

'Going back as far as I can see, people have always tried to work out where the election was going to be won or lost and put their effort there.'

'The campaign has to be run top-down and bottom-up, and completely integrated.'

**H**aving established control of campaigning within their own parties, the national Head Office needed to rise to the challenge of managing the national campaign. National campaign management involves a welter of discrete tasks: mobilising and coordinating a large and dispersed party organisation of candidates, volunteers and supporters; crafting campaign messages and communicating them to voters and interest groups through the ever-present ever-sceptical channels of the media; raising campaign funds; and handling a host of operational logistics such as itineraries and events. These tasks must be performed within a changing political and party environment and in the face of competition from another, equally determined, rival organisation; pressure is high and tolerance for error is low. The challenge is further complicated by the protracted but inherently unpredictable time frame, which extends over the whole electoral cycle and culminates in an intense finale the scheduling of which is uncertain but, once known, entirely inflexible. The stakes are high: victory is a great prize and the winner takes all.

In line with Margaret Scammell's (1992) suggestion that researchers pay attention to the 'why' of election campaigns, the various tasks performed by party officials, important in themselves, should be understood as manifestations of a broader rationale or strategy. In the research interviews, the party officials make clear that a campaign strategy forms the essential foundation of the professionalised campaign model and that strategic planning is the campaign director's distinctive and primary task. Campaign directors lead the process of formulating the plan and oversee its complete and disciplined implementation. Alongside the centralising imperative, this strategic imperative forms a second major theme of Head Office activity in creating the professionalised campaign model.

Drawing from the research interviews, this chapter begins by defining campaign strategy as a plan of action towards a goal. This definition echoes that of Polsby and Wildavsky whose survey of US Presidential campaign strategies defines them as 'courses of action consciously pursued towards well-understood goals' (Polsby & Wildavsky, 1984). Thus defined, a campaign strategy contains two critical elements: the identification of the goal and the selection of the action or path towards that goal. The goal, almost universally, is identified as electoral victory: these are vote-maximising, catch-all parties. But the prescribed course of action varies according to contingent factors such as the electoral environment and the availability of campaign resources. At their simplest, strategies require an integrated process of 'tracking' and 'targeting': using market research to gather and analyse intelligence about the electorate and on this basis to formulate a strategy, and using various forms of communications media to implement the strategy by disseminating relevant messages back to the electorate (Mills, 1986). In fact the research

interviews suggest a strategic process consisting of seven distinct but interrelated elements or sub-tasks. Four of them - intelligence gathering, identification of strategic pathways, message development and resource acquisition - constitute the phase of *developing* the plan of action. Two more - message dissemination and targeting - constitute the phase of *implementing* the plan of action. A final, post-election, task involves *reviewing* the plan of action and lesson-learning for the future. The interviews also suggest the campaign director is responsible for all these stages of the strategic process. They can be thought of as an overlapping sequence, though in practice may take place in a different order or with some key tasks repeated. They are undertaken over an extended period, beginning with the outcome of the previous campaign, extending through the entire electoral cycle; the development and implementation phases culminate in the campaign period proper, while the reviewing phase extends beyond voting day into the following electoral cycle. These are outlined in this Chapter, with reference to specific examples drawn from Australian campaign practice and from the research interviews.

### **Strategy as a Plan of Action**

For the party officials interviewed for this research, strategy forms the foundational element of campaign management. As Bitar put it, 'in a campaign, strategy is everything'. Strategy is both the first and the most important task of campaign management: it is the overarching *plan of action* designed to achieve the party's goal or purpose. A strategy thus incorporates two claims: it identifies the organisation's goal and prescribes the necessary course of action to achieve the goal. Many of the party officials used similar language to conceptualise campaign strategy; in keeping with the aspirational or contingent nature of planning, this is frequently expressed as a set of questions:

What is required to win the election and what do we have to do? Answering that question is the strategy (Loughnane).

Your strategy at its core is: who will decide the outcome of this election? Where are they? What matters to them? How do you communicate with them? That is the starting point. ... Strategy is basically a hypothesis and you keep refining it, that's what you're seeking to do. The overriding objective is to win more seats than your opponent. So you start by working out where can you win. So, that's my point about who's going to decide the outcome - seats, and voters within those seats - and then driving it from there (Crosby).

Strategy is the high art form. ... (It says) this is the problem and this is how we're going to get there (Gartrell).

In all these statements, the twin claims concerning the goal and the prescribed action are inextricably linked. A goal without a pathway would be unattainable; a pathway without the goal would be pointless. For the campaign officials interviewed in this research, there is complete acceptance that their appropriate goal is electoral victory. This is not an incidental or temporary goal, but constitutes the party's legitimate, inherent and permanent - or at least recurrent - goal; its commitment to it does not vary. There is of course debate about whether this is a *sufficient* statement of the party's purpose, but there is no quibbling about the *necessity* of electoral victory as a precondition for the subsequent implementation of any more long-term goal such as policy implementation. In McMullan's phrase, a party 'should be aimed at changing the society, but you have to win the election to do it'. Moreover, where policy implementation may be the responsibility of the parliamentary wing, making it possible by securing electoral victory is unqualifiedly accepted by the officials as their distinctive responsibility.

In outlining 'what we have to do', the strategy lays out a program of actions selected, from a broader range of potential programs, as offering the best available pathway to attain the goal:

(Strategy) is the base of absolutely everything you do. Everything should be linked to the strategy. This is where campaigns go off the rails, when they're not linked back to a core strategy. So most important thing in a campaign is strategy. I put everything down to

strategy. It doesn't matter what organisation you're running, you've got to be working from a strategy if you want to be successful (Bitar).

Thus the plan of action is not only a *prescriptive* one - a statement of the actions that the organisation must undertake to achieve its goal and not 'go off the rails' - but also an *exclusive* one, in the sense that these are the only actions that may be undertaken; anything else will not be contributing to the goal. It deploys, in the most efficient manner, the available resources of the organisation to achieve its goals.<sup>34</sup>

In asserting the centrality of strategy, the party officials simultaneously assert their claim as campaign director to lead the process of planning the strategy:

(My role) was mainly about getting the broad strategic framework right, around the research, the parliamentary party's priorities (McMullan).

I personally - probably appropriate for a Federal Director - but I am personally better, my strength is more at the strategic side than the tactical side (Loughnane).

They acknowledge that this process is a consultative and collaborative one, where ideas can be tested from many potential party sources. But while contributions from others may be inchoate and inadequate, the campaign director has the special insights required to formulate the emergent strategy and, finally, to document it. A written statement of the complete strategy provides the campaign director with the authorisation to proceed and forms the basis for internal communication and coordination of implementation:

My way of doing it was to try to get a discussion going with the best people in the room and get to a point that way. Hear what everyone had to say. Bring a few of my own ideas. ... Strategy is best done in a conversation, with some smart people with different skill sets and competing personalities. ... Everyone's got a strategy; it's all in their head. ... It has to be written down at some point. In '04 we never really wrote it down. I actually got an email from just a party member afterwards (who) said, 'Why don't we write our strategy down? We write everything else down'. I was about to say, 'Of course you don't write it down, because the Libs will get hold of it. Piss off', but I thought, no, that is actually a good point for people inside. There is a (British Labour Party strategist) Peter Mandelson quote, 'If it is not written down it doesn't exist'. So out of all that would emerge some one- or two-page summary. ... Sometimes it might just be an email exchange between a few people and that nails it (Gartrell).

We had a strategy committee chaired by the Prime Minister which I as director was effectively the person who supported and basically drove, in terms of organising meetings, organising the agenda, and having different items of business to be discussed ... What I always try to do is write a, work on a document that sets out where we are now, where we want to be, and what we've got to change, basically, and work through it. It is not more scientific than that basically. ... So you spend the twelve months beforehand understanding what voters are thinking, why they're thinking it, helping put your party in a position to be able to compete competitively in the campaign. That involves writing a campaign, constantly monitoring its implementation, working with the ... advertising team, ... direct mail campaign, the various component campaigns, communicating to all the participants in the campaign, the state directors, bringing them in regularly, workshopping what needs to be done (Crosby).

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<sup>34</sup> David Plouffe, campaign manager for Barack Obama's 2008 Presidential campaign, makes a similar comment: 'In politics, your two main pillars are your message and electoral strategy. What are you offering voters in terms of vision, issues and biography? What is your most accessible path to a winning vote margin? ... In any organisation, you have to determine your pathway to success and commit to it. There will inevitably be highs and lows. But you have to give your theory and strategy time to work. Maybe it won't. Many endeavours fail. But without a clear sense of where you are headed, you will almost certainly fail' (Plouffe, 2009).

It's not a solo thing. The National Secretary starts a draft and consults the assistant secretary, and consults the leader's chief of staff and consults the leader and it's a collective thing. ... You go down to Canberra today and you talk to every minister. Every minister will tell you in his head how we can win the next election, and every shadow minister. I reckon you're lucky if one of them has got it written down. That's no reflection; it's not their role, their role is to think and feed it into the process. That's where the national campaign director should be sitting down talking to these people (Bitar).

Having written the strategy, campaign officials must ensure it remains confidential. Confidentiality is essential for competitive reasons: the campaign plan should not be revealed to one's opponent. It is also essential for presentational reasons. In the words of a campaign manual provided by a party Head Office to local campaign managers for a recent federal election:

If you don't write it down, you do not have a strategy. Your campaign strategy should not be discussed with anyone outside the campaign team, especially the media. Any public discussion of the campaign strategy and tactics takes the focus off your candidate and detracts from your message to voters (Australian Labor Party, 2007).

While developing a strategy is a long-term project, implementing it will require various short-term expedients or manoeuvres; these subordinate actions contribute to the strategy as 'tactics' or 'mechanics':

I'm a great believer that strategy is more important than tactics. ... A lot of the mechanics of the campaign can be tactical (Loughnane).

A campaign is not a time for much original thought – it is a time for tactical manoeuvring and carrying out plans and procedures developed in an earlier, more normal climate (Robb, 1996b).

The distinction between strategic planning and tactical implementation reflects a temporal distinction between a long-term process and a shorter, more intensive period which includes the campaign proper. As Blewett (1973) records in his aptly titled record of the Labor campaign – 'Planning for Victory' – Young scathingly dismissed the ALP's three month campaign for the 1969 elections as 'virtually a last-minute effort', and its seventeen-day preparation for the 1970 Senate election as 'ludicrous'. His strategic planning for the 1972 campaign began more than a year and a half before polling day, arguing in a March 1971 memo to the federal executive that:

Victory in 1972 depends on many things, but a properly prepared campaign would give a huge boost to our chances (cited in Blewett, 1973: 94).

Eggleton applied the same discipline to the Liberal Party campaigns of the 1970s:

I am a very strong believer in winning elections before an election. I would start planning an election – if I had any knowledge of a likely election date – a year in advance. This was the minimum time to start planning for an election. To activate the advertising agency, to start our initial thinking, to begin our research and our focus groups and to make sure everyone in the Secretariat knew what job they would have and how they would be doing it (Eggleton).

### **Strategic Development: Intelligence Gathering**

If strategic planning involves answering Loughnane's questions – 'What is required to win, and what do we have to do?' – then the first task must be an intelligence gathering exercise. The strategic planner requires information about the external environment, in order to design a plan whereby the party can influence that environment and thus secure victory. This information covers many elements: the location, strength and intentions of opponents, supporters and the uncommitted; the nature and trend of opinion; and the relative resources of the opposing forces.



The foundational nature of this intelligence gathering process – research – is confirmed by party officials:

Before you can work out where you want to go to, you have to know where you are. Research is about telling you where you are. Then it's up to you to work out where you want to go. If you make a bad decision about where you want to go, it's not the pollster's fault, it's your fault (McMullan).

You start out very broad, looking at where we are and where we need to be, then you start to identify through your research program weaknesses to fix and opportunities to exploit (Crosby).

It was apparent from the context that 'research' here refers to 'market research' conducted through quantitative or qualitative means. But before considering this vital element of intelligence gathering, it is appropriate first to note that much of the information that campaign organisations require for strategic planning can be gathered without the use of survey tools and is indeed publicly and freely available. From media reports and parliamentary records, and from continuing interactions with members of the public, party officials gain intelligence about their own standing and that of their opponents – their views, policies and voting records. Before party officials began routinely to have access to market research in the 1970s, their principal source of information about the behaviour of voters over time was provided by voting statistics. Head Offices of both parties spent considerable time and effort gathering and analysing electoral results at a national, state and electorate level, and comparing them with results of previous years (Wyndham, 1966b; Burns, 1993). Hancock records the efforts of the Liberals' research officer Bengtsson to use 1946 voting results to forecast the makeup of the House of Representatives after the proposed 1949 redistribution which expanded the number of seats from 74 seats to 121. Bengtsson concluded Labor would have a majority of 22, and that more of its seats would be 'safe' i.e. with a majority in excess of 6000 votes (Hancock 2000, p90). Such analyses gave officials vitally important albeit approximate information about the location and strength of each party's support, and the support of significant minority parties such as the Democratic Labour Party. They could estimate the efficiency with which party support translated into parliamentary seats. They could also track the shifts or 'swings' in voter behaviour from one election to the next.

But the strategic utility of this data was limited. Because it was based on primary votes, party officials lacked any real capacity to track preference allocation (and electoral officials only distributed preferences where necessary). Malcolm Mackerras, a former research officer of the Liberal Secretariat (1960-67) turned academic, provided a breakthrough to this problem in 1972 with the publication of *Australian General Elections* (Mackerras, 1972). Mackerras correctly recognised that most electorates were won by one or other of the major parties on primary votes or with a majority of preference votes. By aggregating primary and preference votes he produced a single measure of voting strength which he termed the Two Party Preferred (2PP) vote. Mackerras could then calculate the swing required for any seat to change hands, providing a reliable means of classifying electorates as 'safe', 'fairly safe' or 'marginal'. Further, he ranked electorates according to the swing required to change hands at the forthcoming election in a simple tool known as the 'pendulum', which has become a staple of campaign journalism and public comment.

However electoral returns remain by definition retrospective and episodic. Market research provided party officials with a means of understanding and measuring voter's opinions in real time, throughout the electoral cycle. Further, market research allows them to probe behind the voting decision to consider voters' underlying opinions, values, attitudes, motives and their future intentions. From the emergence of the Gallup Poll in Australia in the 1940s, and with greater intensity from the 1970s, newspapers have published polling data on public opinions in relation to current issues and attitudes to political leaders and policies (Mills, 1986, 1999; Mills & Tiffen, 2012). The plebiscitary ethos of the Gallup polls was intended to help inform policy makers and improve standards of governance. But because of this, and because they were made available to



Figure 1: O'Neill, Ward (1997), 'Liberal Party director Linton (sic) Crosby consulting a map on his way to the next election, May 1998'; National Library of Australia Ward O'Neill collection ref nla.pic-vn3564956

This image, by newspaper artist Ward O'Neill and published in the Fairfax press, acutely describes the strategic role of the national campaign director. Lynton Crosby, dressed in suit and tie, stands next to his car in a dry outback landscape somewhere 'Back of Bourke'. The two-door sedan is a Liberal *Director* with personalised number plates ('LC 97'), and it is showing numerous dents from the potholed winding road; the muffler lies abandoned in the road behind. Crosby has spread a road map out on the bonnet of the car and is consulting it, pondering. Behind him, a sign on a fence states 'Only X months to the next election'.

The image suggests that in conditions of adversity and uncertainty, the campaign director performs the strategic tasks of locating where the Liberal vehicle is relative to its chosen destination, and selecting how it needs to proceed to reach that destination. Consulting a map is a vivid representation of the strategic task described by several campaign directors, including Crosby. Crosby states that he 'drove' the party's Strategy Committee. 'I always try to... work on a document that sets out where we are now, where we want to be, and what we've got to change'.

all via newspaper publication, they did not satisfy the need of the party organisations for campaign-specific advice. Intrigued, parties made several early efforts to conduct their own surveys, thriftily using party members and volunteers (Whittington, 1961; Mills, 1986: 97). Predictably, these in-house efforts produced misleading results, and the parties came to see the wisdom of commissioning professional survey organisations to conduct their own polls on scientific principles including random sampling and independent interviewers. By 1954, the pioneer of the Gallup methodology in Australia Roy Morgan was feeding 'private information' to the Liberal campaign organisation (Hancock, 2000: 145) and the national Head Office became a regular subscriber.

From the 1970s, the 'marketing revolution' (Plasser & Plasser, 2002) saw both parties adopt the techniques of commercial market research to acquire campaign intelligence. Campaign market research would typically begin with a large-sample survey to establish 'benchmark' voter attitudes to relevant issues and leaders; subsequent waves of 'tracking' polls could use smaller samples to track short-run, typically overnight, shifts in mood. Survey methodology was progressively refined to improve sampling and weighting and to transition from labour-intensive face-to-face surveying to the cheaper and faster telephone survey and, more recently, to on-line surveys.

The 'hard' nature of survey data has meant it can be readily incorporated into digital databases. Hartcher was an early convert, hiring mainframe computer time in the late 1960s and early 1970s to analyse demographic data.<sup>35</sup> Both parties have developed such databases by combining survey results with voting returns provided by the Australian Electoral Commission, and census data gathered by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The ALP's data base, gradually built up from 1986 by Gray, during McMullan's and Hogg's terms, was called *Polfile* (later, *Electrac*); the Liberals' responded under Robb with *Feedback* (the name deliberately echoing the policy platform Fightback). Since voting returns are linked to voting booths, and census data to local collection districts, these data bases have highly localised information about electoral behaviour and demographic make-up. Along with their own quantitative survey results, parties feed in information about individual voters derived from telephone canvassing, doorknocking, and other grassroots face-to-face contacts. These data-intensive and location-specific data bases are used to send correspondence ('direct mail') to selected voters in target seats, carrying personalised messages built around what the party understood as their interests and preferences (Mills, 1993a; van Onselen & Errington, 2004).

Valued for the scale, precision and comparability of its 'hard' data, *quantitative* research yet remains expensive, and is limited to a closed-end questionnaire method. It can also be difficult to see the wood from the trees. Robb recalls when he first arrived at the Liberal Secretariat leafing through 'hundreds of pages' of privately commissioned quantitative market research without being able precisely to establish why any particular opinion had shifted:

It used to really annoy the hell out of me. You'd have research which you'd spent a lot of money on, but it was done every month - if that - maybe every two months or three months ... You'd go through it, and you'd say 'Well we've slipped back two points in the polls'. (But) you couldn't really tie (this back to the underlying events).

The emergence and intensification of *qualitative* market research - in-depth moderated conversations with selected 'focus groups' - marks a transformative moment in intelligence gathering. Focus groups are not drawn from random samples and remain essentially unrepresentative of the broader population; critics condemn their lack of methodological rigour, former Labor leader Bill Hayden reportedly describing them as 'séances' (Tingle 2010). Yet they provide party officials with richly detailed and dynamic 'soft' insights into voters' deep-seated attitudes and values, expressed in their everyday language. Labor's focus groups in the 2007 elections asked 'what kind of fathers' the rival party leaders Howard and Beazley would make, or how a 'Labor factory' would differ from a 'Liberal factory'; voters were also asked to describe their

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<sup>35</sup> I am grateful to Chris Hartcher, NSW Minister for Resources and Energy, for this recollection of his father.

hopes and fears for their children's future, as a way of assessing whether they thought the country was heading in the right direction (Jackman, 2008: 37, 101). In a 2008 public speech, Crosby said market research allowed parties to discover 'not just what people think but how they think' (Snow, 2008).

The campaign application of qualitative data was exemplified by Robb's 1996 election campaign strategy had as its centrepiece two (hypothetical) voters, 'Phil' and 'Jenny', who had been assembled by Liberal pollster Mark Textor from his accumulation of attitudinal data. This 'psychograph' of typical middle-Australian swinging voters, created more than a year before the election campaign, was used by Robb to help Liberal candidates in marginal seats identify and communicate effectively with the voters they needed for victory; he would ask the candidates: 'Have you spoken to Phil and Jenny lately?' According to Pamela Williams' authoritative account, 'Phil' and 'Jenny' became 'the subjects of endless discussion in party meetings, the template family every Liberal candidate needed to know about (and) a code for the entire campaign' (Williams, 1997: 65).

Robb also pioneered a method of combining the rigour of quantitative polling with the insight of the focus group – a process he described as 'quantifying the qualitative'. In the lead-up to the 1996 elections, Textor developed a set of 22 descriptors from focus group discussions, expressed in 'the vernacular of the qualitative research'. They covered issues ('Who's the best to make the hospitals work?') and leaders ('Who's the most arrogant and out of touch?'). In weekly quantitative surveys, Textor measured on a sliding scale the changing responses to each of the descriptors. Thus when Keating launched his concept for an Australian republic, the Liberals were able to ascertain with some confidence and precision that the Prime Minister's 'leadership' measurement, indicating his 'arrogant' and 'out of touch' measurements, 'went through the roof', Robb said. He was proud that, in developing this technique on their own, they had surpassed their Labor rivals in an area of critical campaign importance:

The Labor Party wasn't doing this. They were doing quite a lot of research, but not as consistently and they hadn't quantified the qualitative which was something that Mark Textor really developed. It was innovative and highly productive for us.

### **Strategic Development: Identification of Strategic Pathways**

Having acquired intelligence, from public sources as well as their own market research, campaign directors are faced with the challenge of interpreting the data, in order to identify and develop the pathways that lead to a majority of seats in the House of Representatives. The most basic set of campaign pathways derives from the party's status as Government or Opposition. Gartrell suggested that in identifying pathways, campaign directors can draw on their knowledge of generic strategic 'prototypes' or 'basic strategies'. But these playbooks always need to be modified to meet the specific circumstances of the current situation:

There are some basic prototypes: opposition versus government; long-term government versus short-term. State and federal is different. And then there is, what is your opposition like? Is your opposition a risk? Popular? Or not known at all? And there are some basic strategies around that. But the rest is circumstances. So you do often play, talk about, previous campaigns, campaign history, when you're approaching a problem. But you never fully replicate something that's been done before. But you certainly know where the disasters lie. Like the *Fightback!* (strategy) is one of the ones that everyone goes, 'Shit, we don't want to do that', still to this day.

Of 25 Australian federal elections between 1946 and 2007, only six have produced a change of government. No incumbent has failed to be re-elected at least once.<sup>36</sup> Against this, the 'normal' Australian election result sees a swing against the incumbent, though not sufficient to unseat it;

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<sup>36</sup> In 2010, the incumbent Labor Government failed to secure re-election at its first attempt; it was returned to power as a minority Government with the support of minor parties and independents.

support for minor parties and independents has increased over this period (Tiffen, 2008: 111). Yet typically, incumbent parties enjoy significant campaign advantages. Their control of the Treasury benches provides opportunities to implement party commitments, command media attention, and direct international activities. Having a majority of parliamentarians means they have more resources, such as staff and communications allowances, which can potentially be put to campaign purposes. Incumbents also determine – via advice to the Governor-General – the date of the election and the duration of the campaign, creating the opportunity to seek re-election at a time of favourable economic conditions or to catch the opposition unprepared; in some circumstances, incumbents can force recalcitrant Senators to the polls in a double dissolution (Tiffen, 2008: 117).

Yet an incumbent strategy poses several difficult questions. A critical choice is to determine whether, and if so how, to defend the government's record. In 1987, for example, Hawke sought endorsement for, and continuity of, his performance in delivering economic and social reform; his policy speech sought 'to kindle emotions of confidence in his government since he had no major promises' (P. Kelly, 1992: 350). In 2001, likewise, Howard campaigned as an incumbent not just on his 'old' agenda but a 'new' agenda of national security (P. Kelly, 2009: 613). Yet governing parties can find themselves relatively constrained, compared to Oppositions, by their record and their incumbent responsibility for national wellbeing. As Loughnane affirmed:

There is no use trying to impose a strategy or develop a strategy if the senior parliamentary team don't want to go in a particular direction. That's one of the areas where in government there may be things that are electorally appealing but from a governmental point of view are difficult to do. It's a bit easier in opposition for example - *Q: So you could have a winning strategy that would not necessarily be acceptable?* *A:* Yes, and also once you've been in government for a period of time you have a history, so you can't pretend to the electorate that you can't do something today that's different to what you did yesterday, just because that's the electorally convenient thing to do.

Further, the apparent incumbency advantage of controlling the electoral timetable through political calculation has produced surprisingly frequent miscalculations. Hawke's desire to capture a decisive political advantage with an early election in 1984 backfired, as McMullan recalled:

We thought we would win two elections at once. We thought we could win it by so much that they couldn't catch us the next time.

Partly because the election timing included provision for an unusually long (nearly eight weeks) campaign, the 1984 campaign turned out to be:

the worst campaign I ever ran. ... We bloody nearly lost. ... We could not get on strategy (McMullan; see also Kelly, 1992: 137).

Likewise in 1982, Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser's attempt to finesse the electoral calendar around an economic upturn was deferred until early 1983, at which time the decision became driven by desire to take advantage of leadership turmoil in the Labor opposition; this backfired with disastrous results (P. Kelly, 1984: Ch20). On the other hand, an early election in 1968 to take advantage of leadership turmoil in the Labor opposition could have saved Gorton's Prime Ministership (Freudenberg, 1977: 139); equally, Rudd ignored the opportunity for an early poll in 2010 with terminal consequences for his own leadership (Cassidy, 2010: 76).

But compared to these incumbency problems, the strategic choices faced by Opposition parties are more challenging still. They may choose a positive strategy of promoting their own policies, as Whitlam successfully did in 1972 (Freudenberg, 1977). But more typically, Oppositions are pragmatically cautious about promoting their policies, preferring to attack the incumbent. Opposition negative campaigns include the Liberals' long campaign of 'electronic insurgency' against the Chifley Government and its bank nationalisation plans in 1949 (Mills, 1986; Crawford, 2004). Hayden's period as opposition leader combined 'political aggression and electoral caution' (P. Kelly, 1984: 146); Robb and Howard embarked on a series of positive but policy-free 'headland

speeches' designed to 'keep the Liberals a small political target for as long as possible' while launching 'an all-out attack on the government's record and on Keating himself' (P. Williams, 1997); Labor under Beazley in 1998 and 2001 adopted a similar 'small target' strategy but without success (P. Kelly, 2009: 614). Positive Opposition strategies are vulnerable to Government 'scare campaigns' portraying them as risky or inexperienced. Eggleton, with a regretful tone, recalled the Liberals' research-driven negative campaign against the Labor Opposition in 1980:

A lot of the basic approaches to television advertising were pioneered in my era, for instance the balance between positive and negative. We ran some very hard hitting negative campaigning for the Turn on the Lights campaign (in 1975) - the Dark Days of Labor and Whitlam and all these kinds of things - while keeping a balance with positive messages. The worst campaign for me was in 1980, when we did some very harsh negative campaigning and only just got over the line, when a Labor shadow minister was unwise enough to talk about taxing people's homes. We were well behind in the polls in the second week of the campaign according to Morgan, and we just threw everything into full-page ads about taxes, and that got us over the line. It's a campaign which I look back upon with some reservations. Well we won, and I'm happy that we won, but it was such a negative campaign. I did not feel great pride in it.

Labor's 1993 campaign stands as an even starker example of a negative-incumbent strategy. Facing his first election as Prime Minister, Keating was advised by McMullan not to seek endorsement of the Government's record (Edwards, 1996: 504). Instead he attacked the Opposition's *Fightback* tax reform policy:

Our major strategy in the campaign was to make the (Goods and Services Tax), and all that related to it, the main issue, and at the same time (to) negate the wishful thinking that the GST would create one new job. ... To win this election, we had to turn the rules on their head. We essentially ran on their policies (Hogg, 1993 (24 March)).

Of Gartrell's 'prototypes', then, strategists in both incumbent and opposition campaigns tend to choose attack over exposition and to present values and aspirations over issues; 'programmatic campaigning' is in decline (Tiffen, 1989: 140-4).

Further variations in campaign strategy arise from the length of tenure of incumbents. Hawke (1987, 1990) and Howard (2001, 2004) campaigned as experienced and capable incumbents. But protracted incumbency carries a progressively greater risk of being seen as tired and out of touch. Long-serving Governments need to consider pathways of renewal, including through leadership change: Holt (1966) and Keating (1993) presented themselves as new faces of established governments. But lengthy incumbents ultimately fall to persistent oppositions pushing for victory on a 'time for a change' theme, as with the Liberal opposition in 1946-49 and the Labor opposition in 1969-72. Yet Opposition Leaders do not have unlimited time to wear down an incumbent and are themselves vulnerable to leadership change, as toppled leaders Hayden, Peacock, Howard, Hewson, Downer, Beazley, Crean, Latham, Nelson and Turnbull can attest since the 1980s.

A further set of strategic pathways is derived from Australia's system of preferential voting. Just as the Menzies Government had consistently wooed the second preferences of DLP voters, so in 1990, the Hawke Government made a successful pitch for the second preferences of green-leaning Democrat and independent voters (Papadakis, 1990). With the ALP's primary vote declining, 'devising a strategy wasn't all that difficult,' according to Environment Minister Graham Richardson, the former New South Wales state secretary:

The environment had risen from twelfth to second place in surveys of issues of public importance. ... We had to talk about the economy as little as possible, focus attention on (Opposition Leader Andrew) Peacock as much as we could, and use the environment preference strategy to help push us over the line (Richardson, 1994: Ch16).

We ran the last part of that (1990) campaign targeting the third party voters, and we got 80% of the preferences of 20% of the voters, which was 16% on top of our 39% (Hogg).

For party strategists, and such 'prototype' strategies can only provide a template; they must be adapted and refined to suit the prevailing circumstances. Ultimately, campaigns involve methods of persuading individual voters, as Crosby explained:

You are dealing with people. They have hopes and aspirations, and you need to influence the way they behave, taking into account those hopes and aspirations, to achieve the objective you want - which is to get them to support you, or not support the other mob.

Market research provides strategists with the critical intelligence to do this. Parties use research to identify key voter blocs and devise strategies to reach them; in Crosby's simple phrase (expressed in a public speech):

In any campaign you have your base, your swing and your enemies. You have to lock in your base, persuade your swingers and neutralise your enemies (Snow, 2008).

In Walsh's words, the challenge for Australian political parties was

to get to the people who wish they really didn't have to vote, and try and give them a message that might carry them through to polling day (Walsh).

A critical turning point came with the researchers' discovery and description of 'swinging voters'. From the mid-1970s and through the 1980s, Labor's pollster Rod Cameron is particularly associated with this development. Cameron's focus group reports damningly portrayed swinging voters as the selfish, uninvolved, ill-informed products of mass market commercialism (Mills, 1986: 22-26); their descendants were portrayed in the 1990s by Mark Textor as 'Phil' and 'Jenny', doing it tough in the suburbs and resenting special handouts to minorities. The discovery of the swinging voter had far-reaching consequences for campaigning (Tiffen, 1989: 138; Manning, 2009). Lacking partisan attachments, the swinging voters occupied strategically contestable ground, yet lacking political interests they were difficult for campaigns to reach and motivate; they vote because they must (in a compulsory voting regime) not because they care.

The solution developed by parties was to appeal to contestable voting blocs using intensive emotion-based television advertising. To the extent that this meant parties no longer promoted their policies to core supporters, this represents a landmark in the emergence of the 'catch-all' electoral strategy. As Hogg has said of Cameron and his business partner Margaret Gibbs:

(They) played a critical role in transforming the ALP's approach to campaigning from one of political instinct and prejudice, to one based on knowledge of the voter. .. They supplied critical information that assisted us in our many campaigns (Tingle, 2010).

Robb expressed the same sentiment in relation to Textor. He was able to bring 'strategic insight' and to 'translate' the research into persuasive strategic analysis about 'points of leverage':

I think it's one thing to have the research, it's another thing to get across the results of it in a way that's persuasive and can influence strategically how people respond. He seemed to have a strategic insight. A lot of the researchers can tell you what's in people's minds very accurately and very well, but they can't translate that very well into strategy and to see the points of leverage. This is where Textor stands apart from most of them, he's got an exceptional strategic (mind) - he's a brilliant fellow.

By contrast, the pre-market research sources of intelligence - informal political intelligence from branch members and local MPs - could be dismissed as the 'gut feel' of 'wily operators' (Robb) or 'instinct and prejudice' (Hogg). It did not provide party officials with the insights they needed to select strategic pathways or, as we shall now see, to develop appropriate campaign messages.

## Strategic Development: Message Development

Intelligence gathering is central to campaign strategies, not only because it reveals the party's strategic pathways but also because it shapes how the parties exploit those opportunities. As already noted, Crosby defined the electoral challenge as understanding 'who will decide the outcome of this election, where are they, what matters to them, how do you communicate with them?' The research interviews make it clear that the campaign director's strategic plan of action will ensure that the input received from intelligence gathering drives the communications output - what parties say, to whom they say it and how they say it:

The next stage is communications. You make (the) strategic decision, then you get the communications task of convincing people that from where you are, the place you want to take them is where they want to go. That's it. It's not very complicated (McMullan).

(My background was in) developing and executing campaign strategies on the basis of research, that are to be communicated (Walsh).

We did focus groups and that's how we'd decide on the nature and scope of the communication, how to pitch the advertising in order to sell this particular product, and how minimise the potential negatives (Eggleton).

You use focus groups to inform your strategy and your communications, knowing that you want to achieve something (Crosby).

Strategic planning thus seeks, and has perhaps attained, a very wide mandate to shape, control and limit electoral discourse. The party officials did not, as noted earlier, describe playing a role in managing the campaign's messaging via the 'unpaid' (news) media. But they do claim a broad mandate over campaign communications in general, based on their strategic intelligence. An example of research-driven campaign communications was recalled by Hogg from his days as state secretary of the Victorian ALP in the late 1970s. It is atypical only in that the strategic intelligence is provided by census data rather than market research. Through a contact in a Melbourne university, Hogg and a group of ALP members were able to access census data, which had hitherto not been used for explicit campaign purposes.

We burrowed into the Monash University Geography department, which was headed up by Mal Logan. Mal said, 'We've got the new census material'. I said, 'Let's use it'. So of a night-time they would run off all the stuff we needed. ... We started to do profiles on the electorates. And when we did that we got the candidates in and started educating them about their electorates. ... (We'd) say, 'Well it's no good wandering around (your electorate) talking about the aged pension when there's no one over 40. But there are 38-year old women there, with 2-year old kids, with no child care facilities, so start talking about child care facilities'.

Here the party organisation identifies through research a pathway towards the 'hopes and aspirations' of voters, and exploits that opportunity by directing what local candidates should 'talk about'. In this logic, campaign communications respond to the 'demand' of voters (as understood by demographic factors) rather than the 'supply' of the party's platform or the candidate's judgements. This voter-driven approach to campaign communications is strongly facilitated by market research. In its depth and range, its reliability and nuance, market research has become the essential tool in determining the content of campaign communications – both what is said, and what is not said. As Robb recalled, Textor's research on Prime Minister Keating's 'leadership' measures following his republic speech, discussed above, persuaded the Liberal campaign *not* to discuss the issue:

The Labor Party believed all along that ... Keating on the republic was a winner for them. ... We said nothing. We just let them go. We didn't talk about it, and we just let them talk about it. We didn't try to rebut it or engage. It was a negative for them all the way



through. And it helped our targeting. We didn't talk about it – we might say, we're concerned about jobs, not the republic.

More typically, of course, campaign communications are voluble and prolific, notably in the form of paid commercial television advertising. Campaign advertising has been well documented (for example C. Lloyd, 1990; P. Williams, 1997; S. Young, 2004). Young notes that TV advertising has become more prominent in the overall communications mix, and ads have become shorter in duration, simplified, personalised and 'deliberately vague about policy details' as to reach swinging voters (Young, 2004: 34-8). Advertising messages are regarded as most effective when style and content are consistent across all media outlets and when complementing messages disseminated in the 'free' media through news reporting, talk-back radio and entertainment channels, as Walsh suggests:

It's important that you keep moving with what technology offers you, but ultimately what's most important is constructing a core message, and the messages that hang off that, in a way that actually works or works as well as they can for you. Trying to get as much as possible of what you do funnelling back to focus onto those things. So it's more about discipline and focus.

Concepts, themes and slogans aimed at implementing the campaign strategy are devised by advertising agents. The advertising strategy for Labor's 1972 campaign was proposed, in a submission from the Hansen Rubensohn agency, as a two-phase campaign to launch the 'It's Time' slogan and use it to promote policy proposals (Blewett, 1973: 14; Oakes & Solomon, 1973: 103-6). Ted Horton and Mark Pearson, advising the Liberals' campaign in 1996, presented Robb with a 'we and them' strategy which was then expressed in 'every' campaign advertisement (Williams, 1997: 158-9). Neil Lawrence devised an advertising strategy based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs to formulate consistent and effective advertising for Labor's 2007 campaign (Jackman, 2008: 78-81).

Advertising agents are selected by Head Office and work within the campaign strategy devised by the campaign director. Pamela Williams' account of the 1996 election campaign describes Robb having 'mapped out' the critical elements of the Liberal Party's strategy on a single sheet of paper, on which he had 'translated' his strategy into simple diagrams 'using dialogue bubbles to sum up the key points':

At the centre of the Coalition page was a bubble labelled, 'I'm going to teach Paul Keating a lesson by giving John Howard a go.' This distillation of swing-voter sentiment was the crux of the Liberal campaign (P. Williams, 1997: 100).

This 'distillation' of the research was not itself intended for external communication, but it formed the basis of the party's advertising and other campaign communications. In 1996, Robb's 'dialogue bubble' was captured in the Liberals' twin slogans of 'For all of Us' and 'Enough is Enough' (Williams 1997). Other notable campaign slogans have included 'Australia Unlimited' (Rawson, 1961: 31), 'It's Time' (Blewett 1973), 'Turn on the Lights' (Eggleton), and 'Kevin 07' (Jackman 2008). Jingles or anthems, regarded in the 1970s and 1980s as a mandatory element of campaigns, were also designed to summarise the campaign message in emotional and memorable terms; Labor's 1987 anthem 'Let's Stick Together', produced by John Singleton, was among the last of this genre (Hawke, 1994: 399-400). More subtly than either slogans or jingles, focus group research has also been increasingly used to provide specific words and phrases for incorporation into paid advertising or other media communications. Labor's advertising adviser Lawrence commented admiringly that 'the shortest political contact line in this country is Mark Textor to John Howard'; he was impressed with Rudd's quick adoption of suggested description of Howard as a 'clever politician' (Jackman 2008: 78,83). Equally, Rudd's repeated invocation of 'working families' arose from market research conducted for the Australian Council of Trade Unions, and picked up by Labor, by polling firm Essential Media Communications (Megalogenis, 2008: 343).

In all this, the campaign director acts as facilitator to bring together party and parliamentary actors with research and advertising specialists to collaborate on the campaign's plan of action and to create a single united campaign effort. As Eggleton recalled of the Liberal Party in the 1970s:

We'd have the researchers sitting in the same meeting as the advertising agency with me and others (such as deputy director) Nick Minchin.... The agency quite liked having, welcomed having the research people present, and they threw the ball around between themselves in terms of how best to develop the advertising. Occasionally people like (pollster) Gary Morgan would propose particular types of research. The advertising and research teams came in with ideas all the time in response to the party's strategies and objectives.

Eggleton also recalled the need for flexibility and speed in developing campaign communications – an adaptation of normal commercial practices to the dynamics and exigencies of a political environment. His analogy with news gathering perhaps reflects his own background in journalism and public relations:

The thing that I encouraged with advertising was being fast on our feet. Not just developing a number of ads and saying, 'Here are our ads for the campaign'. ... We'd start with some ads in the can. Then we'd create new material a bit like a news agency: we'd actually develop new ads day by day, to respond to the changing circumstances, both press and television. With (the agency) Masius, they helped us evolve this fast response strategy it, and they were really very good at it. They would turn an ad around in about twelve or thirteen hours. Something could happen on Monday and by Tuesday we're actually running ads that picked up on a mistake by Labor or developing a new initiative for ourselves.

Improved production technologies, particularly the transition to digital technology, have reduced Masius' 13-hour turnaround time considerably, as Loughnane confirmed:

You can cut a TV advertisement, or change a TV advertisement, in 30 seconds these days, so you can do endless iterations.

In discussing campaign communications, party officials repeatedly placed boundaries around the influence of market research, insisting that it did not, and indeed should not, determine the policies presented to voters at the election. Instead, market research is acknowledged only as shaping how the party's policies, separately agreed and determined by the parliamentary party, are communicated:

You took them under advisement, but you still went your own way ... because what they could find today could change tomorrow if something happened (Wyndham).

We did use slick marketing techniques (in 1972), and did package Whitlam to a certain extent. But we were only able to do that because there was something to be presented to the electorate. The policies had been hammered out over a number of years both in public and in the party (M. Young, 1986).

If I'd gone to Malcolm Fraser and said, 'I'm going to do research to tell you what to think,' I would not have got a very good reception. If I'd said to Malcolm, 'I am going to do this research to see how your proposal and your philosophy and your policy is going to ride and how people will react it to it,' he'd say, 'Good'. And that is really what we did. We did focus groups and that's how we'd decide on the advertising. So how do we need to pitch the advertising in order to sell this particular product? and what were the likely negatives? so what do we need to start doing in order to counter the negatives? (Eggleton).

The purpose of conducting major market research campaigns is to gain the maximum information on the issues influencing the likely election outcome and on the most effective presentation of the policies that the Party has decided to adopt (McMullan, 1984)

Keeping the Labor Party with a long-term strategy is very difficult, and is getting harder and harder. Everything is so immediate and it's bullshit, over-reactive. ... You can't run federal Government on the one-liner for the day, you run it on long-term policy (Hogg).

Crosby described market research as a 'navigational tool' to help the party reach its policy goal, and cited the example of Howard's GST policy:

If you believed in focus groups, you would not have introduced a GST. .... Knowing that John Howard wanted to implement a GST, how do we need to communicate it to get people to support it? That's what you use it for. It's a navigational tool. It doesn't tell you your destination. It assists you in getting there. If you're using a focus group to tell you what your destination is, you should not be in politics because you do not believe in anything.

Of the events leading to the 2010 election campaign, Bitar also downplayed the policy influence of research:

You look at any call we made during the (2010) election campaign. No call is made purely on research. A lot of people will tell you about the (Emissions Trading Scheme), and how the ETS was ditched based on focus group research. Nothing could be further from the truth. It's a load of crap.

Despite these comments it seems clear that research, and strategic considerations generally, do underpin the selection as well as the communications of campaign policies. There are plenty of documented examples of policies being modified or withdrawn in the light of market research, including the Hawke Government's abandonment of the Option C tax reform (Mills, 1986) and the removal of food from the *Fightback!* GST package (Megalogenis, 2008: 75). Even the admitted use of market research as a 'navigational tool' implies a significant impact on the nature of the policy debate during an election campaign: unpopular policies can be downplayed or 'buried' so as to deflect attention, and attractive but minor aspects of minor can be highlighted. Increasingly, indeed, market research permits parties to emphasise their connection to policy values - Labor on public education or the Liberal Party on strong defence for example - while making few specific policy commitments: campaigns are reduced to competitions of parallel themes rather than debates about alternative policy prescriptions. David O'Reilly is surely correct, too, in emphasising that in electorally successful parties such as the ALP of the 1980s and the 'new Labour' party of Blair and Brown, campaign skill sets complement policy innovation: 'Party management, government tactical positioning, electoral judgement, market research, policy development and promotion and media management are all integrally interwoven' (O'Reilly, 2007: 68).

### **Strategic Development: Resource Acquisition and Campaign 'Know-how'**

Strategy must be matched to the capabilities and resources of the organisation for which it is prescribed. A strategy that effectively deploys the organisation's available resources or which acquires new and relevant resources may lay the basis for a sustainable competitive advantage; on the other hand, a plan of action based on resources that are in fact unavailable must fail (Lynch, et al., 2006). If for example a campaign strategy proposes intelligence gathering through the use of market research, the organisation can only pursue the strategy if it has sufficient relevant resources - such as the money and skills to commission, and the specialist consultants to conduct and interpret, market research. In developing campaign strategy, then, the campaign director must marshal the party's existing resources and ensure their sufficiency to deliver the strategy; in practice, this means progressively adding to the stock of existing resources to meet the increasing requirements of the professional campaign model.

Fundraising – securing the financial ability of the party to conduct campaigns – is a *sine qua non* of campaign strategy. As their research interviews make clear, campaign strategists are intensively preoccupied with the tasks of raising funds and spending them on campaign activities. The issues surrounding political money are so fundamental to the work of the party officials, and so problematic given the increasing cost base of the professional campaign model, that they will be considered separately in the following chapter. Yet it is true that money constitutes just one of – albeit one enables the acquisition of – a broader range of relevant campaign resources, tangible and intangible. Many of these resources can be accurately regarded as campaign ‘know how’ (Littig, 2009). These principally comprise resources attached to the ‘party as organisation’. Officials of both parties speak of hiring external consultants for market research and advertising, of building coordination forums with state party units and campaign consultants, of recruiting to Head Office on a cyclical basis in the lead-up to election campaigns, of creating marginal seat units within the Secretariat, of conducting media monitoring, of setting up and managing ‘war rooms’ or campaign headquarters during the campaign, and so on. For Gray, these constituted a:

general ‘skill-set’... defining your campaign, positioning your enemy and maximising opportunities for yourself, monitoring the media and being able not only to respond to what the opposition was doing but picking up some insignificant comment that might have been made by a backbencher ... and making it an issue for the senior minister ... The sort of stuff we became masters in by 1983. ... There was also a range of polling things. We were very, very clever in terms of what we called our profile (*sic* – read, Polfile) program and direct mail program (O’Reilly, 2007:75).

Organisational strategists are also increasingly influential in the acquisition of resources attached to the party in office, such as policy and leadership. This is borne out by a study of the actions of three party officials – Young, Robb and Gartrell – in building their parties’ long-term resources and deploying the short-term resources (Mills 2012). In the lead-up to the 1972 election, Young built the long-term organisational resources of Head Office with new hires of specialist campaign staff and new consultants in research and advertising. But questions of leadership and policy issues were beyond his remit as campaign director. In contrast, in the lead-up to the election of the Howard (1996) and Rudd (2007) governments, both Robb and Gartrell undertook extensive organisational capacity-building as well as becoming involved, during and after periods of turmoil in the parties’ parliamentary ranks, in the selection of leadership and policy (Mills, 2012b).

As these examples suggest, resource acquisition is conducted by officials from different parties in essentially the same way. In the professional campaign model few resources have a distinctively partisan character. However party officials reported significant differences in the resources available to governing parties compared to opposition parties. Governments typically have greater resourcing than oppositions; but these are typically allocated to the ‘party in office’ rather than to the ‘party organisation’. As the example of Young, Robb and Gartrell suggest, officials in opposition may exercise greater influence within the party and greater control over the party’s diminished resources:

The Leader of the Opposition is very dependent on the party organisation for resources, the Prime Minister is not. The PM has got more resources than the party (McMullan).

In Opposition, the Federal Secretariat is one of the key resources that the party’s got, in policy development, all sorts of things, and the reliance on the research, and it’s just in every capacity. Probably the power of the Federal Director is a bit greater in Opposition because of that lack of other senior people around. After the leader and the deputy leader, you’ve probably got the next level of veto and power on certain things (Robb).

There are pluses and minus about being in opposition. More minuses than plusses, there’s no doubt. But (in opposition) the focus – I guess from a strictly campaigning point of view obviously – it means a large focus is political. ... Everyone’s much more attuned to the next election. ... Equally when we’re in government, having done both roles, I’ve got to – a

Federal Director has got to - understand that the political demands on the senior ministers are much greater or more complex (Loughnane).

I think when you're in Government you do have access, quite properly, but you still have access to more resources than you have when you're in opposition. And if you're in opposition everywhere, the risk you have (is that) you can't raise the same amount of money, and so you lose a lot of the institutional knowledge or the access to professional expertise (Crosby).

In assembling these resources, campaign directors are drawing on diverse sources, including external consultants, state party colleagues, 'fraternal' parties offshore, and – not least – one's partisan rivals. Campaign know-how can be transferred across boundaries of party, state and nation:

Looking at what goes on overseas is interesting. ... But you're also borrowing from the commercial advertising guys who are experimenting. We looked at what the unions had done in the early 'Your Rights at Work' stuff. And some of what the British Labour Party does. ... Just trying to keep an eye on some of those overseas developments is pretty important and they were the main ones. ... You do watch the other side. You've got to be careful because when the other side win people say, 'You should just do what they did'. .... So yes, there are some things you do around the place, some from the other side, some from overseas, and some from marketers (Gartrell).

While Gartrell is speaking of the 2007 campaign, the practice of borrowing across party lines is long-established as Combe and Robb affirmed of campaigning in the 1970s and 1980s:

Tony Eggleton had taken over as Federal Director of the Liberal Party and (in 1975 ran) ... a very good campaign. It changed the way a whole lot of things were done, such as having a media centre that was constantly monitoring and constantly responding to what was happening, not on a day-by-day basis but an hour-by-hour basis, preparing clips to be fed easily into the electronic media. So by 1977 we had to have the same (Combe).

I think 50 per cent of it (sources of learning) was looking at our opponents. They had a history of centralised control of campaigns, ... in '87 they had a lot more sophisticated data base, and their ability to target – which is what it's all (about), if you have got limited resources you've got to target. And their market research capacity I think was better developed (Robb).

Party officials also need to monitor emerging communications, digital and other technologies

We just applied our brain to the fact that there was both the technology change that allowed you to do ... old things in new ways. Some were self-started, some we learned from the states, some we learned from other countries, sometimes we'd try things in campaigns and they wouldn't work, so we'd try a new way of doing it next time (McMullan).

As Gartrell noted, fraternal parties in the United Kingdom and the United States have long been mined for new campaign resources. As early as 1960, the Liberal Party sent officials on fact finding missions to the British Conservative Party and to observe the Kennedy-Nixon presidential contest (C. Porter, 1981: 81; Hancock, 2000: 255). By the mid-1980s, both Australian parties were acquiring skills in market research, television advertising and market research from the United States (Mills, 1986). Robb was a frequent visitor to the United States in the 1990s and took a further step in hiring US Republican Party campaigners for the Liberal campaign in 1993:

I spent a lot of time going to the US, to Washington, and I brought out two Republican young guys who – well, early 30s, but each of them had about 60 campaigns under their belt – because often they'd run 6 or 7 (campaigns the same time). ... I got them out for 18

months to 2 years to again be campaign officers ... (in) the lead up to '93, and they stayed on for 9 months. ... These young blokes, they'd look at the research, and the research said this, well you'd do that: it's just automatic; they knew that was ... what you'd say in response to something the research was throwing up.

Party officials caution however that borrowing or hiring specific skills is easier than integrating them and adapting them to the requirements of the Australian electoral context:

All political cultures and structures are different so you can't just take an idea and apply it in another. But you can take it and learn from it. 'Oh, that's how they did that. Well we can adapt that to our circumstances'. We did start to do that. ... We studied what was going on in the US, UK, Canada and New Zealand because they're the most comparable democracies. ... Each state innovated a bit and you could learn and adapt (McMullan).

In the US it tends to be more the technical things that come through. I think in campaigns Australian culture is more aligned to British culture than it is to US culture, because we've got a Westminster system. ... But what the US does have is the big money and the marketing and all the rest (Gartrell).

Resource acquisition is a relentless task, taking place in contexts of technological change, evolving commercial marketing practice, frequent election campaigns at state, national and international levels, and intense partisan contest. The object of this aspect of campaign strategy is to equip the party with resources that are superior to the competitor's. Campaign directors are thus engaged in a constant process of innovation and experimentation, based on observation of and learning from observed practice, incorporating new skills with existing proven practice and incrementally adapting new practices to the existing disciplines and structures of the electoral contest:

Each time you try and do something new. If you're not innovating you're going backwards (McMullan).

### **Strategic Implementation: Message Dissemination**

From considering the formulation of strategy, we now shift to considering the second phase of strategic development, in which the plan of action is implemented. This involves the two sub-tasks of message dissemination and targeting. Strategy will fail if it cannot be implemented, and a strategic message that does not reach its intended recipients cannot begin to influence their behaviour. The transition is described by Crosby in different words, as a shift from the 'message' to the 'mechanics' of the campaign:

(There are) two elements of a campaign, message and mechanics.

Crosby initially asserted that 'message matters most, because it doesn't matter how well organised you are, if it's a crap message you're not going to be able to influence voters or achieve the outcome you want'. Later in the interview he qualified this view:

Message matters most, but you need the mechanics to carry the message.

This distinction was also recognised by Gray, who described his role as campaign director less as a creative task of message development than a logistic or mechanical one of implementation:

(I'm) not the campaign guru. Not the person who would sit in a corner of the room and think up flash lines. But if you actually wanted the logistics of a campaign put in place ... As I would put it, 'I'm not the person who would think up the key lines or the creative framework, but in order to allow the creative process to work you need to know the trains will run on time. You need to know that when we have determined the message for local consumption, I've got a system to deliver that. You need to know that I am a general who runs an army'. I am a logistician not a strategic leader.

In considering message dissemination, much of the scholarly and journalistic discussion has focussed on the technical methods employed. Successive waves of innovation in broadcasting and digital technologies have provided campaigns with the means to broadcast on radio, advertise on television, send computer-generated direct mail, and conduct web-based campaigning. These new vehicles of dissemination have reduced parties' reliance on face-to-face campaigning and on print-based communications in pamphlets and newspapers, allowing them instead to infiltrate their messages into the homes of voters by exploiting the national reach and immediacy of television and of the personal computer as they grew from exotic luxuries to common staples. In selecting communications vehicles, pragmatic considerations of effectiveness and cost come to the fore:

What you're really talking about is are there new techniques or approaches that can make a campaign more effective? I think even if one goes back, technology has just made it easier to connect with people, so that's an important change and so things like the internet – the internet is a valuable campaign tool because it is a very low cost way of connecting with people (Crosby).

Thus when Young and Eggleton inaugurated the 'national campaign' as their party's first national campaign directors, they did so by securing control over television advertising. For all their successors, managing the television advertising campaign has been an enduring priority. Its visibility, symbiotic linkages with market research, and high cost, ensure that television advertising remains a salient element of any campaign strategy. In the last decade, party officials such as Gartrell, Crosby and Loughnane have broadened their campaign dissemination activities onto the World Wide Web:

The internet is a valuable campaign tool because it is a very low cost way of connecting with people.... I don't think it has ever been exploited to its full value in Australia as it has elsewhere (Crosby).

We were influenced a bit by what (US Democratic Presidential candidate) Howard Dean had done. ... We'd done it in previous campaigns but it was always a tokenistic thing, whereas this one (in 2007) was fully integrated. That's why we had the Kevin 07 slogan and all the things we did with that (Gartrell).

We've got a small but growing IT (team in the Federal Secretariat) which would not have existed 12 years ago. It existed in very small shape 8 years ago but it's growing bit by bit. Our major site element is broadly what you'd call a campaigning site, which between elections is pretty small, which is really about providing support to our incumbent members of parliament and then, as we preselect candidates, providing support to them and coordinating through our state divisions support for our candidates (Loughnane).

Yet while acknowledging them as necessary elements of the contemporary campaign, party officials are at pains to downplay the importance of such technological developments. While conceding that new technologies have increased the efficiency or effectiveness of campaigning, they insist that, in Crosby's words, the 'basics never change'. In making this argument, Crosby cited and summarised a campaign plan written by a group of Whig organisers in Illinois in 1840; one of the signatories was Abraham Lincoln (Lincoln, 1953):<sup>37</sup>

'Essentially, find out who's soft and who's not, find out where they live, find out what matters to them, divide the state up into Whigs and Tories, ... find out those who are capable of persuasion, find out what matters to them and who is influential.' ... In this

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<sup>37</sup> The campaign plan was obviously a favourite in the Liberal Head Office as it was also discussed by Robb in a speech to the Sydney Institute (Robb 1996). Robb's summary of the plan ran as follows: 'Organize the whole state, so that every Whig can be brought to the polls, divide their county into small districts, and to appoint in each a sub-committee, whose duty it shall be to make a perfect list of all the voters in their respective districts, and to ascertain with certainty for whom they will vote. Keep a constant watch on the doubtful voters, have them talked to, place in their hands such documents as will enlighten and influence them. On election days see that every Whig is brought to the polls.' Robb commented that 'not a lot has changed'.

Abraham Lincoln quote, you would go out and interact with people. Once it was knocking on the door. These days it's hard to find people at home because they're all working or have other interests and activities, so you're constantly looking for new ways to directly connect with a voter. The internet is one, phone calls are another. Direct mail letters are another. ... That process has never really changed. Next to prostitution, politics is the oldest profession. ... The basics never change.

McMullan makes the same argument:

Everybody who has ever run for election has tried to assess what the opinion or the mood of the public is about the questions. Opinion polling is just a good way of doing it. Television advertising is just a new way – people used to write letters to people, post placards up on walls, whatever it is. It's all just – we've got a message, we want to get it to people as effectively as possible and distil it to its essence and communicate the essence of it. The internet is just another way ... and the technology changes but the essential task stays the same.

The 'basics' or 'essential task' may indeed remain constant in the eyes of the campaign directors. Yet this view surely downplays the significance of their adoption of marketing technology. Campaign strategies are able to survey voters' opinions and attitudes and use that information to design televised or digitised campaign messages of maximum effect. As the party officials acknowledge, this has empowered them in a sort of gatekeeper role in which they can include some voters in the campaign process and ignore others. This is achieved through targeting, the focussing of message dissemination strategies on selected electorates and, within them, on selected voter groups and at selected times of the campaign.

### **Strategic Implementation: Targeting**

The strategic logic of targeting relies on the recognition that, to win a parliamentary majority, parties will rely a combination of 'safe' seats, where its candidates win comfortably, and contestable or middle ground seats. At the level of the individual voter, likewise, some voters are 'rusted on' adherents but parties also need the support of the persuadable 'swinging' voters. Party officials rationally devote most of their campaign resources to those contestable seats and persuadable voters. The logic is reinforced in Australia's compulsory voting rules which relieve parties of the task of mobilising their core loyalists. Party officials must therefore identify the contestable seats and the swinging voters, develop dissemination strategies to target them, and concentrate campaign resources so as to actually deliver those messages to the selected voters, employing the most appropriate technologies of intelligence gathering and campaign communication. McMullan affirmed:

Going back as far as I can see, people have always tried to work out where the election was going to be won or lost, and put their effort there.

Marginal seat campaigning in Australia can be traced back to 1951 (see Appendix Two). But the critical development in the emergence of targeted campaigning was the emergence of market research. Rather than relying on previous voting behaviour and assuming uniform swings, campaign directors used market research to improve their ability to identify marginal seats and to reveal groups and individuals *within* those electorates who might be susceptible to party communications. McMullan recalled:

I think we started to get better at marginal seat campaigning. We started to focus down more on what to do to influence seats literally at the margin.

As Labor's campaign director from 1980, McMullan identified 'the 27 key seats' which he believed would provide the basis for Labor's victory in 1983. He asserted the right of the national secretariat to intervene in state campaigns to 'shore up any deficiencies' in the campaign efforts for those seats, assigning national staff to 'descend on their electorates – mostly in Western



Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory – and teach the local branches how to run good local campaigns’ (Barton, 1981; Summers, 1982).

Head Office’s capacity to target central campaign resources on to key local campaigns was further strengthened in 1987, with McMullan’s designation of Gray as the secretariat’s marginal seats organiser. Gray was quick to deploy the then-emerging technologies of computerised data bases to target automated and personalised direct mail to voters:

I was fortunate in that by 1987, the capacity of personal computing had moved to the point where you could buy basic systems that were affordable. For less than 20,000 in 1987 dollars you could buy a machine, an 8086 chip as it was in those days, which had a capacity to store a federal electorate data base and from which you could print targeted direct mail. We began building systems to do that. It was by no means the first use of direct mail in a campaign ... but it was certainly the first substantial localised use of it. We only used it in 11 seats.

Centrally funded, the computer was physically located in the office of the marginal seat candidate:

In those days \$20,000 was a lot of machinery to pay for. The laser printers printed at 4 pages a minute so it took you five days, day and night, of laser printing to print an electorate-wide mailing. Then you had to get it folded and stuffed which was a whole other story. But it meant that campaign logistics were a very different beast (Gray).

Gray emphasises that this new dissemination strategy was effective because it was integrated with and reinforced the campaign’s broader strategy and message:

We established in ’87, I would argue, the best political communications framework we had had, which was the combination of the Singleton agency driving the overall message, the focus that Bob (Hawke) had as leader, the hunger that Paul (Keating) had as Treasurer - it was the first time the country had seen the destructive capacity of Keating at his best - and it was the first time anyone had seen anything like the campaign machine that we put together. It resulted in the complete restoration of the party’s political position ... It was a victory of a political philosophy, of a political capability, a prodigiously capable cabinet, and a political machine that matched it.

By the 1990 campaign, Gray ensured that Labor’s marginal seats data base management system, Polfile, was available for use in all the targets seats; and by 1993 he had ‘massively expanded’ the system again. By this stage however, Labor had had to respond to perceived increases in voter volatility and disenchantment by stretching its definition of marginal seats - from those needing a swing of 3.5 per cent to 5 per cent and then to 6 per cent and by 1996, to 8 per cent (Williams 1997: 127-8). Previously, identifying marginal seats was a relatively straightforward process:

You’d be looking at those on the swing chart – defending your own and challenging the others’ – a band 5 per cent either way plus those on a wish list that could jump the queue because of demographic shifts (Hogg).

You tracked enough seats to give you a picture of what was going to happen in the seats that you wanted to win. *Q: Selected how?* A: It’s an informed decision. What do we need to win? It’s got to be broadly nationally representative – that is you need to know what is happening in each state. ... It is marginals, both ones you hold and ones you need to win. (Crosby).

By 1990, Labor as a long term incumbent government had started to alienate some of its core base and faced the need to defend more of its hitherto safe seats. Hogg recalls ‘broadening’ the targeting beyond marginal seats to include more of Labor’s traditionally safe heartland seats:

Signs had appeared in the preceding state election in New South Wales where we lost 60% Labor seats (i.e. seats where Labor candidates would receive 60% of the vote). So in the lead up to 1990 I didn't just have a marginal seat meeting over in Parliament House, but I insisted on Eric Fitzgibbon (MP for the safe ALP seat of Hunter) and sundry other geniuses coming to these meetings. They couldn't believe it. ... So we broadened the targets to prevent damage occurring. So we got ahead of it I suppose. That was a change – targeted seats as opposed to marginals.

In the wake of their defeat in 1987, the Liberals were quick to absorb these lessons of central responsibility for local campaigning. Joining the Federal Secretariat at that time, Robb recognised that previously:

the states had run and been responsible for how they ran their campaigns in individual seats – anything on the ground really. As I saw it, the Secretariat had run the national advertising campaign, and had developed themes and messages and things, but they had no capacity to impose those, and they certainly didn't have any direct involvement in the strategies that were adopted in each seat, influence over the candidates or anything.

Becoming federal director after another defeat in 1990, Robb concluded that the Liberals had to

centralise some of the activities, the coordination at least of the on-the-ground activities. ... (A)lso there was a view that we need to make a leap in the use of sophisticated techniques and data bases and all of that. So I took it that a lot of my charter was to take the organisation, the campaign side of it, to another level. ... The ALP had a lot more sophisticated data base, and their ability to target – which is what it's all (about). If you have got limited resources you've got to target. And their market research capacity I think was better developed.

Crosby described how improved market research allowed the Liberals to develop more localised campaign strategies, in the quest for the critical 'seats and voters within those seats' who could determine the outcome of the election. During the 1980s, the party's research had provided insights about overall voting intentions and Prime Ministerial approval ratings; this led to campaign strategies that could be focused to the state level. By the 1990s, the party's national and state-wide polling had given way to polling on selected marginal seats:

I have seen the (research) that was done then (in the 1980s). It was overall party and preferred Prime Minister. You did it by state but you never did it by seat. ... We do the polling now – but you didn't do Australia-wide poll, you didn't do state-wide polls, you only did a bunch of seats. You tracked enough seats to give you a picture of what was going to happen in the seats that you wanted to win.<sup>38</sup>

In developing marginal seats strategies, the Liberals used market research to select seats that were vulnerable – 'both ones you hold and ones you need to win' – and nationally representative – 'that is, you need to know what is happening in each state':

You have one or two (marginal seats) from each state. ... You need 2 or 3 in SA, 3 or 5 in WA, so that you can tell what's happening in the states as well. It's not enough to just have big blocks of marginals, you've got to have geographic representation as well (Crosby).

Within these target seats, Crosby noted the development of research techniques to describe those voters who were to be specifically targeted – those voters whose numbers and attributes were

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<sup>38</sup> Crosby described targeting as 'Focussing on the seats that are critical, focussing on the people within those seats who are critical, and focussing on the critical issues within those seats'(Bathgate, et al., 1996).

responsible for the seat being a marginal one. He noted of the 'Phil' and 'Jenny' profiles prepared for the 1996 Liberal campaign:

The other thing that we focussed on was the caricature of the target voters. ... 'Phil' and 'Jenny', which Tex (researcher Mark Textor) wrote, was essentially a short narrative about the sort of people. It happened to be that ... they were over-represented in marginal and regional seats. When we were trying to get candidates, and the Leader, to think about the people – a seat is a geographical thing, but who is in it as well is important – then there was that narrative as well. It was seats but it was also people.

Robb's attempt to buy the cooperation of the state branches in the national campaign effort, described in chapter Five, was designed to ensure national campaign priorities were implemented 'on the ground' in these strategically significant seats, and directed to the groups who had to 'shift' to 'win the seat'. Robb strengthened these efforts by employing a team of eight 'campaign officers' to assist local campaigning in the 1993 election campaign. These officers, centrally funded, were dispatched to the traditionally weaker or under-resources states of Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia. Each campaign officer was responsible for two or three electorates:

It was an interesting exercise. In '93, they all lived in the seats and would come occasionally to Head Office, and in the main they went native – you know, they started to get embroiled in the local factional issues. They started to get the anti-Head Office view, and it wasn't as cohesive a campaign.

For the 1996 campaign, Robb raised the stakes:

I realised I just had to put the money in, so in the two years before the '96 (campaign) I had people out on the ground, mainly in those states ... I'd bring them back every second Friday, they'd have to come in Thursday night, spend time as a group together, so they built an esprit de corps among themselves and with Head Office, and we would workshop ... all day Friday. (We looked at) different seats and ... at the research, jointly discussed it, how do we get coordination. ... You know, the seats were different so you'd have different policy emphasis. You know it might be child care is really important in one seat, in another it's environment. But how do we run the same themes through these different issues. ... It worked very well.

When Crosby joined Robb as his deputy, they extended the Liberals' on the ground campaign capacity into television advertising. In the 1996 campaign the Federal Secretariat started funding television advertising in support of individual candidates in key marginal seats:

We ran ads that were very specific about the local candidate. The party centrally did the polling, conceived the ads, did the ads. I went with a cameraman out of Canberra and the ad guys, and we went to all these places, and we filmed the local Liberal candidate, because we wanted to raise their profile. So we did two things. We had a centrally conceived and executed for the first time positive campaign in support of each of the candidates, and we actually ran negative ads (Crosby; see also Crosby, 1996; I. Ward, 2003).

As director in his own right, Crosby continued and expanded this practice in 1998 and 2001 (Crosby, 1998 (23 October); Peake, 2001). Robb also spoke of fine tuning the Liberals' direct mail campaign and its purchasing of air time for television advertising, so as to further increase the precision with which the Liberals were able to target specific voters in specific campaigns.

Efforts to target marginal electorates and swinging voters were originally complementary to the blanket coverage achieved by high-cost high-profile nation-wide television advertising. Towards the end of the century however the thirty-year dominance of TV advertising was waning as

audiences fragmented, as channels multiplied on cable services, and as internet access increased. As Walsh commented of the 2001 election:

Already the audience was fragmenting; you couldn't get them all at the 6 o'clock news. These national efforts were beginning to lose their effectiveness.

Further, as Crosby observed, television advertising at that time was both too expensive for local candidates and, in the political circumstances of the 1970s-80s, not necessary; local contests were won on the back of the national broadcast campaigns:

Once TV came into its own, very few (local candidates) could have afforded (television advertising), and the technology wasn't available to be able to do (that). ... (In the) late 60s, 70s and 80s, you get a strong leader and a good national advertising campaign, that would probably do it for you (as a local candidate). People (i.e. voters) were still very heavily influenced in that way. But not anymore.

From the mid-1990s, Crosby argued, campaigns needed more integrated dissemination strategies:

The campaign has to be run top down and bottom up, and completely integrated.

'Top down' campaigns are disseminated by nationally-driven television broadcasts, and must be complemented by and integrated with 'bottom up' campaigns of localised electorate-level dissemination. Campaign strategists also express this as a combination of the 'air war' with the 'ground war'. Like many other phrases in campaign strategy, this concept draws on the language of warfare to make the metaphorical distinction between the campaign strategy that relies on a single pervasive electronic broadcast of television advertising across large media markets (an 'air war'), and one that relies on multiple intensive personalised face-to-face campaigns in single electorates (a 'ground war').<sup>39</sup> Where the air war disseminates the broad national campaign themes, often centred on the party leader, the ground war emphasises the local candidate and local issues. The rationale for a ground war is that voters still desire and respond to a personal relationship with the individual candidate seeking their vote. Accordingly in the ground war, the candidate seeks high local visibility through activities such as doorknocking, distributing literature at train stations, running street stalls, attending workplace meetings, visiting nursing homes and schools, building networks through local community organisations, and promoting petitions about local issues. Ground campaigns draw on the community organising model which has also inspired social movement campaigners (Rose, 2010) and trade union campaigners (for example, the 2007 Your Rights at Work campaign, (Muir, 2008)). In Crosby's description, this is:

a battle where what was happening on the ground, in local communities, on local issues, involving local identities would be more important than the usual commentary on national issues and the unrealistic application of notional nationwide swings (Crosby, 1998 (23 October)).

It is important that the 'ground war' not be misconstrued as representing a return to an earlier era of candidate-driven pre-television 'street corner' campaign. In the contemporary ground war, local activities are designed and driven by Head Office, as elements of a larger marginal seat strategy; they often deploy centrally-funded communications technologies and campaign staff. Marginal seats candidates execute a local plan according to central guidelines and under central scrutiny. This approach aims at, in Ward's apt phrase, 'localising the national' campaign or, alternatively, at centralisation with differentiation. Reviewing the 1996 campaign Robb said he had endeavoured to

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<sup>39</sup> I am grateful to an anonymous party official for providing me with this metaphor in a personal communication. Crosby has employed a similar metaphor to describe the same campaign distinction between 'aerial bombardment' and 'guerrilla warfare' (Speech to National Press Club, 1998). A more prosaic metaphor is drawn from accountancy, referring to campaigns that are 'above the line' campaigning - i.e. the visible campaign involving the leaders and the advertising - and 'below the line' campaigning, Journalist Michelle Grattan described the latter as 'the hand to hand combat in individual seats where voters are bombarded with direct mail target to their demographic, leaflet and phone canvassing ... most of it away from the gaze of the national media or of voters in other seats' (Grattan, 1990).

'ensure that our national campaign was locally relevant' (Robb, 1997; I. Ward, 2003). Local deviation from the centrally approved plan can be costly, as dramatically highlighted in the final days of the 2007 campaign when Liberal supporters in the seat of Lindsay distributed racist leaflets; leaked to the media, the affair became a national scandal and swamped the national campaign's final days (Jackman, 2008: 220-5).

Indeed, so far from the 'ground war' representing a revival of locally-directed campaigning, campaign directors emphasise that the candidate's selection and endorsement is itself increasingly a function not of the party members in the local community but of the central campaign<sup>40</sup>. Echoing Kennelly's search for 'horses for courses', Andrew Robb said of the Liberals 1996 campaign, 'candidate selection is critical, especially in regional seats' (Robb 1997); during the campaign Robb successfully pressed the Queensland division of the party to deselect the endorsed candidate for the seat of Ipswich, Pauline Hanson (Williams, 1997: 246-9). Crosby also affirmed that in contemporary campaigning:

the impact of individual candidates has really become more important. ... You really have to connect with the seat you seek to represent, and if you do it's worth a lot. ... I was in the party at the time they started to discover marginal seats, and holding candidates to account for performance, and all those things, so I've seen that transition.

Candidate selection is of course one of the traditional functions of the parties state branches and divisions, and the national campaign directors sometimes have trodden warily in 'holding candidates to account' for their campaign effectiveness. Yet as McMullan also acknowledged, a candidate 'audit' function, driven from the centre, has steadily increased in intensity:

It was my task in the campaign first of all to make sure on the ground we were ready. That is mainly the state secretaries' jobs, they endorse the candidates and whatever – though I'll comment on that in a moment. (I sent) people around ... starting to say, 'How is the campaign going?' in the key seats and making sure it is OK. It is more of a national role than that now, people going around and doing these campaign audits. Well, we didn't have the resources to do that. But we did something that approximated it. I can remember saying to some candidates, 'Well if you don't lift your game you're not going to be the candidate'. The truth is that I had no authority to achieve that, but if I'd demand it I usually got it and people did lift their game.

This focus on performance applied to Members of Parliament as well as to first-time candidates, particularly where long-term incumbent governments were fraying the loyalties of traditional core voters. Hogg's decision in 1990 to target 'safe' Labor seats as well as 'marginals' was accompanied by a blunt interrogation about the performance of the MPs from those safe seats:

I (asked) how much they spent on their previous campaign. They said, 'Two hundred dollars'. I said, 'That'd be right. You don't talk to your electorate, you don't service them, and they're beginning to wake up to it. They're getting the shits, and unless you pull your finger out you could get 30 per cent of the people voting for the Greens or Independents or Democrats, and anything could happen.

Hogg delivered the same message to another group of backbenchers by teleconference:

Geniuses like [MP name suppressed], who couldn't blow their hat off if their brain exploded. He asked what would happen if we don't do this? I said, 'Nothing much. You just won't hold your seat. You lose'.

So far in this section of the argument, targeting has been presented in its geographical context. Targeting also has a temporal context which plays an important role in the implementation of

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<sup>40</sup> More recently, local primary elections are being trialled, from the centre, to return some preselection control to local party members and supporters (Miragliotta, 2011).

strategy. Just as campaign directors complement their 'air war' with 'ground war' dissemination strategies, so we see 'long war' strategies built around the full campaign cycle complemented by intensive 'short war' dissemination focused during the election campaign and, increasingly, on the final days of the campaign. US communications scholars emphasise the desirability of sequencing messages 'as the modern political campaign passes through relatively discrete stages' such as 'pre-primary, primary, convention' and general election' (Trent & Friedenber, 2004). Australian parties similarly orchestrate their campaign communications. Before the campaign, campaign directors conduct various communications activities such as the mini-campaign (ALP in 1972: Blewett, 1973), the headland speech (Liberal in 1996: Williams, 1997: 98) and the launch of a new leader (ALP in 2007: Jackman, 2008: 84). During the campaign, messages are built around major set-pieces such as the first day, the leaders' debate, the policy launch and the leader's final message in the National Press Club speech.

'Permanent' or long-term communication strategies are based on a view that most voters needed time, and repeated exposure to the campaign, to absorb policy issues and to become familiar with the party's leaders – campaign elements too complex and important to be left to the short intense burst of activity in the campaign proper. Eggleton insisted that he was:

a very strong believer in winning elections before an election.

Yet the orthodoxy behind such long-term communications strategies has been steadily challenged by evidence that voters' attitudes are becoming more volatile. Increasing numbers of voters are 'potentially available for conversion during the election campaign, with major consequences for how election campaigns are organised and conducted' (McAllister, 2011: 101). Data from the Australian Election Study suggests that late deciders, either 'calculating' or 'capricious', represented nearly a quarter of the electorate in the 2007 campaign; in 1998 more than 10 per cent of voters the electorate made their minds up on polling day itself (McAllister, 2011: 104).

Campaign strategies must therefore be structured to grab the attention of late deciders. Despite laws requiring television and radio advertising to cease on the Wednesday of the final week of an election campaign (Orr, 2010), party officials are increasingly adept at stepping around this 'blackout' and continuing their campaign right up to polling day. Gartrell noted with pride that:

the marketers are good when it comes to the electronic ban, the blackout, because they know all these other ways of advertising. There's a good photo of a Rudd ad being played in Retravision (television sale and hire) stores, because you can advertise in Retravision stores... on the Friday before the election. We put it into 48 Retravision stores, so when people went in to buy televisions they had the ad.

Telephone canvassing is not caught by the electronic blackout, and this too provides party officials with opportunities to persuade the undecided voters on the eve of polling day. Gartrell noted that in the 2004 campaign the Liberals had used 'robocalls' – automated phone messaging – to disseminate a message from Prime Minister Howard on the Friday of the campaign; despite anecdotal evidence that these can annoy as many voters as they persuade, Labor emulated and improved on the idea for the next campaign:

Lynton Crosby has claimed it changed things. I think it probably helped him a bit, with a message from Howard, because it was all about the local candidate. What we did in '07 was take that technique, but we used a last minute robocall about WorkChoices. We used a WorkChoices victim, a young woman, and we had her dial-in to hundreds of thousands of homes the night before, when the electronic blackout was on.

The final stage of campaign dissemination occurs at what Bitar refers to as the 'point of sale': immediately prior to the voter entering the polling station. He recalled Labor's 'brilliant strategic campaign' in the by-election in 2000 for the Queensland state seat of Woodridge to which, as the NSW state party organiser, he was seconded to work. The challenge facing the Labor candidate,

Mike Kaiser, was that a field of independents and minor candidates were directing their preferences away from Labor. In the state's optional preferential system:

we had everyone running against us, and we had to exhaust all these preferences that were flowing against us. The night before Election Day (we) didn't sleep. We spent the whole night putting Just Vote 1 stakes and posters right through the electorate. ... There were Just Vote 1 posters over this entire electorate. We got about 20 Young Labor people from New South Wales to drive up for the by election and they gave us a hand. ... We totally exhausted all the preferences against Mike and (he) just got up.

Having absorbed the lesson, Bitar went on to provide training for Labor's local campaign volunteers on the need to place posters near polling stations:

Point of sale marketing. It's really critical that you get up at 4 in the morning and put up your posters. ...The (local volunteers) would just think, 'This is a joke, why? I'll just get up at quarter to eight and whack them up; the posters aren't going to make a difference'. When you put them through a training course and say to them, 'This is why it does make a difference, and 25 per cent of people don't decide who they're voting before they get to the polling booth'. In point of sale marketing the last thing they remember, if it's your message, when they hold that ballot paper they're more likely to vote for you than for the others.

### **Reviewing the Campaign**

The final sub-task of strategic planning – reviewing the campaign – occurs outside the timeframe of the election campaign proper. Reviewing is the process of appraising the campaign strategy at a time when, after the results of the election are known, its strengths and weaknesses can be properly assessed and the reasons for its success or failure can be understood. Campaign directors review campaigns in order to improve the effectiveness of future strategies and to shape the environment within which future strategies are formulated and implemented. Reviewing can highlight lessons that need to be learned by the campaign organisation, pitfalls avoided, successes replicated. Similarly it can provide a basis for credit and blame to be allocated among members of the campaign organisation and decisions made about future membership of the campaign team. Reviewing can thus make a critical contribution to the party's resource base of campaign 'know how', improving its organisational and campaigning skills and personnel. Reviewing can also shape external perceptions about the campaign organisation. This can be directed at regulators, with a view to influencing how future campaigns may be regulated. More broadly, reviewing can be seen as a continuation of the campaign by other means, directed at underlining public perceptions of the strengths of the campaign organisation and the weaknesses or vulnerabilities of its rival. Whatever its purpose, the campaign director is central to the review process.

At a basic level, reviewing involves personal reflection and lesson-learning by campaign directors. As noted in chapter Three, party officials have been selected into their Head Office role as seasoned campaign practitioners with extensive experience as campaign managers. Several of the research interviews suggest that experience-based reflection and learning has been a valuable source of improved campaign know-how and hence future performance. Experience, particularly the experience of defeat, is a respected teacher:

I think you learn your most from losses (Robb).

What I will say is, the more campaigns you've been through the better. You learn a lot from your mistakes. In campaigning you learn a lot more from your mistakes than through your victories. Because, as I said, I've seen this on election night, everyone says it was this pamphlet that won it for us, it was this ad, this speech – when you lose, that is when you have real reflection (Bitar).

By way of example, Robb said he learned from the 1993 campaign experience where the Liberal Party was defeated after having released its Fightback! tax reform policy.

That was inexperience by (party leader) Hewson, and Reith who was deputy, and myself. We had all this pressure from the Government: 'Where's your policy'? If we'd put the same (policy) out three months before the election I've got no doubt that we would have won quite comfortably. The same (pressure) happened in '96. ... But I had the experience. I really had to be strong with people and put up with a lot of abuse. I was quite green (in 1993). We had ... advanced a lot of the technical side (of the campaign) in '93. But on the politics, the judgement side, that's when I learned a whole lot of things that didn't work.

Robb further describes the process of learning the distinction between, and the importance of combining, campaign 'science' and 'judgement':

I did learn that judgement was important. But you had to have the science and the judgement. The science had to come first. Then trying to predict what you do about the issue – that's when the nose came in, the experience. I became in the end, I did see great need for the judgement, but in combination.<sup>41</sup>

Gartrell also learned from his experience of defeat in the 2004 campaign:

In '07 I made that (strategic planning) group really small. It was effectively about six people ... In '04 I found it very difficult because I was trying to be as consultative as possible, but with a national organisation like that to have any sort of effective discussion is impossible. ... What happens is everyone goes and grandstands and the party officials are very defensive and it's to be tolerated and endured rather than be useful. The small group is really very useful.

Loughnane concurs, drawing on his business career experience as well as his parliamentary and campaign experiences:

I'm lucky that I had time in business, so that helps me with the CEO role. And I also worked in Parliament House as a chief of staff so that was very good. I've absolutely grown in the time. The experience has mattered. Going through the full campaign in 2004 and then '07, the experiences of campaigning have been very important. The nature of campaigning has evolved. You can't say it has changed radically but it has changed, and being able to adapt to those changes has been important. In a sense it's a 'learn on the job'. I think being a campaign director, you can be prepared for it, but doing the job itself there is no – you can't be 100 per cent prepared for it.

There is of course a limit to the extent to which this process of reflection and learning should be indulged; generals must not equip themselves to fight the last war. As McMullan noted:

You can't look back. You've got to look forward. It's very hard. We are all self-critical people, it's a human trait: 'If only I'd done something different in 84 we might have done better'. So you spend all your time fixing that up when, in fact, the problem's changed, so you've got to discipline yourself to look forward not back.

A second, more formal and overt, form of campaign review takes place within the forums of the party organisation. The campaign director typically conducts a post-election review at the behest of the party's national executive. These internal reviews are typically conducted in private and findings not made public. These internal reviews date back at least to the 1949 campaign, when

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<sup>41</sup> Robb made a similar comment in his speech (1996) to the Sydney Institute: 'You can introduce sophisticated technology and scientific method and still get it hopelessly wrong if your judgement is faulty.'



Kennelly appraised the reasons for the defeat of the Chifley Government, and became institutionalised by the 1970s. Eggleton recalled the nature and purpose of his post-campaign reviews:

After every election I did a detailed report for the Federal Executive drawing attention to the strengths and weaknesses of the campaign. That then was discussed with me and my team so that we could identify areas, based on the experience of the last election, where we could do better. It was often not so much policy but the way we had structured the campaign and how we could make campaign headquarters work more effectively.... So we structured those sorts of lessons we would learn.

An example of a post-campaign report is McMullan's report after Labor's close-run success in 1984. McMullan reviewed the performance of party officials, the advertising agency, the market research and the minister, recommending a new two-tier structure of the national campaign committee and closer coordination by the parliamentary party with the party's agreed campaign. McMullan's report was supplemented and informed by post-election market research conducted by ANOP (McMullan, 1984).

In the wake of its unhappy performance in the 2010 election campaign, Labor's National Executive commissioned a review – not by the national secretary but by a panel of party elders – to which Bitar was invited to make recommendations. He recalled addressing the party's financial indebtedness:

A number of (my recommendations) were adopted, where there's got to be some checks and balances on going in to debt. If you are going to go into debt you have to at least run it past the National Executive. There has to be checks and balances on the party organisation as well - and on the leader by the way.

In contrast to the private nature of these review processes, party officials also participate in a number of public reviews and inquiries. This third stream of reviewing, centring on the Joint Select Committee on Electoral Matters (JSC<sup>42</sup>), shifts the focus from the internal forums of the party organisation to the public forums of the 'party in office'. JSC, an all-party committee of Members and Senators, is required to review each federal election. Campaign directors provide written submissions and give evidence in person at public hearings. Some of the issues they raise are of a routine procedural nature for example concerning the operations of the Australian Electoral Commission and interpretation of the Commonwealth Electoral Act; JSC has become a 'useful vehicle' for resolving such technical issues (N. Kelly, 2011). But other matters raised by the party officials are explicitly partisan. After the 2001 federal election, for example, the Liberal Party's submission by Lynton Crosby dealt with the powers of booth officials to prevent distribution of 'misleading' how to vote cards, while also canvassing 'push polling' and 'false' radio advertising by the ALP; the ALP's submission by Geoff Walsh called for tighter disclosure of party donations and of 'inappropriate' Government advertising. Committee members, who are themselves 'appointed to look after their own party's interests' (Kelly 2011: 106), reciprocate with sometimes partisan sparring with the rival party official.

Colin Hughes has observed, 'the rules of the game do matter' (C. A. Hughes, 1990: 154). The involvement by party officials in these parliamentary forums provides Head Office an opportunity to intervene in the legislative and regulatory campaign environment. In any campaign, of course, the 'rules of the game' - covering electoral boundaries, compulsory voting, preferential voting, campaign advertising, public funding and so forth – are given; campaign strategies must take them into account. Such rules however are products of previous decision making by legislators – a process in which accusations of 'offensive partisanship' form a 'recurring theme in the history of Australian electoral reform' (Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Reform, 1983). This active shaping of the state's support for the party system is a defining characteristic of the cartel model as proposed by Katz and Mair (1995).

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<sup>42</sup> From 1983 to 1987, the committee was titled the Joint Select Committee on Electoral Reform (JSCER).

Finally, party officials also seek to shape public perceptions about their campaign performances. Since 1993, both the winning and losing campaign director have, separately, made post-campaign speeches at the National Press Club.<sup>43</sup> Victors crow and losers explain. In the same vein, party officials have also acted as informants to post-campaign narratives and analyses by journalists (for example Williams 1997, Jackman 2008) and academics (Blewett 1973). They have collaborated in a number of academic studies of Australian election campaigns (Clive Bean, et al., 1997; Simms & Warhurst, 2000; Warhurst & Simms, 2002; Simms & Warhurst, 2005; Simms, 2009a) and participated in other conferences (for example, Young 1986) and public forums (Robb, 1996b). In all public statements the partisan element is never far from the surface. Eggleton regards this as a recent development where the party official 'spins' the outcome to partisan effect – in effect, a continuation of the campaign after polling day:

If you happen to win, and even if you only just scramble over the line, the media are inclined to look and say, 'You must have done everything right' and 'Aren't they clever'. And if you lose, no matter how good a campaign you might have fought, because you've lost, you've lost. You've just got to wear it. It's resulted in something that was not really on the agenda in my day. I am speaking of spin after an election, attempting to spin the outcome - whether it's spinning to say, 'How great we were, we did all of these marvellous things', or spinning to denigrate your opponent's campaign.

Campaign reviews emerge from a complex set of motivations, including personal lesson-learning, organisational improvement, allocation of credit and blame, regulatory reform and partisan advantage. The role of the campaign director in conducting the reviews and communicating their outcomes is itself a further indication of the increasing prominence of this position in the party and in the conduct of elections in this country. In contrast to the one-off candidate-based campaigns of the United States, Australian campaign directors are participants in party-based campaign contests that stretch back for decades and that stretches ahead as well. Campaign reviews are therefore important in building organisational capacity for future campaigns. The capacity of party officials for reflection and learning is a defining characteristic of their role as campaign professionals. Their willingness to participate in the interviews of the present research is further evidence of this.

### **Discussion**

In their text on political campaign communication, Trent and Friedenberg insist that election campaigns must be understood as 'campaigns of communication':

It is communication that occupies the area between the goals or aspirations of the candidate and the behaviour of the electorate, just as it serves as the bridge between the dreams and hopes of the voter and the actions of the candidate. ... Communication is the means by which the campaign begins, proceeds and concludes. It is ... the epistemological base (Trent & Friedenberg, 2004: 15).

This approach recognises the ubiquity, variety and prominence of communications in election campaigns. But it errs in confusing what is merely visible in a campaign with what is strategically important. Campaign communications do not exist as autonomous phenomena; as this chapter suggests, communications emanating from a political party are designed to express an underlying strategy. Just as looking at a motor car will not reveal the complex process of designing, manufacturing and marketing that lies behind it, so looking at campaign communications will only show us a finished product. To acquire an informed understanding of campaign communications it is necessary to examine the process of design which lies behind them. That is, we need to focus – as suggested in this thesis – on the production of election campaigns, not just their consumption, by shifting our attention from the visible activities of candidates and voters to penetrate the strategic intentions of party officials in Head Office. This chapter has addressed the central aspect of the party officials' work relating to campaign strategy.

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<sup>43</sup> In 1990, only the winning campaign director, Labor's Bob Hogg, addressed the National Press Club.

Strategy is an insufficiently explored aspect of election campaigns. This is in part because of its confidential status: strategy formation takes place behind closed doors, and strategic documents are closely held by party organisations. The findings outlined here help redress that shortcoming. They suggest that party officials perform strategic work as understood in the much more extensive literature on strategy in business and other fields. Strategy is understood by party officials as a plan of action towards a goal. For these party officials, the goal is electoral victory. Strategy development and implementation is the particular responsibility of the party officials in their capacity as campaign directors and, since the strategy forms the prescriptive and exclusive rationale for all the activities of the campaign organisation, party officials occupy positions of extraordinary influence. In developing the strategy, party officials make use of their experiential knowledge, as seasoned practitioners, to select strategic pathways that best suit the needs of the party. More importantly, campaign directors are informed by market research, which provides essential intelligence about the campaign environment which the strategy seeks to influence. Research intelligence thus also shapes the development of the campaign's messages, identifying the needs and opportunities in the electorate which communications are designed to address and exploit. Beyond this foundational contribution to strategic development, research also shapes strategic implementation, highlighting for party officials the most effective methods of message dissemination and targeting. The logic of targeting recognises the need for campaigns to appeal to marginal seats and swinging voters in pursuit of a parliamentary majority; campaign directors also target messages at different times in the campaign cycle. Beyond development and implementation, campaign directors are also responsible for reviewing the strategy as a basis for learning, accountability and rule shaping.

Campaign strategies must be matched to the organisation's resources, and can only succeed if available resources are efficiently allocated or new resources acquired. Underpinning the sustainability of a party's electoral success, deploying and acquiring resources forms a vital part of the campaign directors' strategic role. Resources broadly defined include, as this chapter has set out, the intangible skills-set or 'know-how' which are essential to the conduct of the professional campaign model. Resourcing must also be understood to include financial resources. The high cost of the professional campaign model imposes on campaign directors the responsibility to raise sufficient funds to implement their strategies. This will form the theme of the next Chapter.

## Chapter Seven

### 'If I Had Another Couple of Million Bucks': Head Office and the Funding Imperative

'There's nothing wrong with the operations of any political party that another three or four million dollars wouldn't solve, in my view, to be very frank. ... If I had another couple of million bucks a lot of my concerns would be alleviated.'

'We didn't have much money after the '93 election. I had to run a very lean campaign. That was part of the problem: we couldn't put as much money into qualitative research as I would have liked.'

'It was quite a tortuous process where you had to get the states to agree to spend a certain proportion on the marginal seats, and to pay a certain proportion to the Feds to fund the central campaign. ... Anyway we decided to change the law.'

'How do you run an organisation, how do you employ officials, how do you run training programs, how do you develop pamphlets, brochures, how do you train people in campaign techniques, how do you develop a professional organisation when you've got no money? I think that's one of the biggest challenges organisations have. You are trying to run a professional organisation with no money whatsoever. ... It is real Struggle Street.'

**P**olitical money – raising it, spending it and accounting for it – has become a major preoccupation for national party officials. Karl Bitar 'spent most of my time fundraising' to clear the ALP's debt; his opposite number Brian Loughnane believes one of his 'key jobs' is 'allocation of scarce resources'. It was not always thus. In both major parties, primary responsibility for handling funds lay originally with the state units of the party and subsequently, with national actors other than the party officials: the Liberal Party co-opted well-connected business leaders while the ALP adopted a curious hybrid involving the parliamentary party and an external consultant. Both these contrasting models of party financing were flawed. The shift to centre stage by the national party officials was led by the ALP national secretaries, who in the early 1970s took control of party funding, placed it on more rational and secure footings, and set about the task of raising new funds.

It is no accident that these developments coincided with the emergence of the professional campaign model, with the national campaign director at its centre. As we have seen in previous chapters, this model required the centralisation of campaign responsibility in the hands of the national campaign director and then that director's assumption of responsibility for formulating and executing the campaign strategy. These twin imperatives were directly associated with a third: the national campaign director required a cash flow sufficient to fund the operations of the professional campaign model. This funding imperative forms the subject of this chapter. Specifically, following from the discussion in the previous chapter about non-financial resources, this chapter focuses on money. Expenditure questions are relatively straightforward: the campaign director needed to be able to purchase the elements of the professional campaign, especially television advertising. The revenue questions are much more complex: how much is needed? and how and from whom is it raised? The national party officials, it emerges, were central to the national parties' efforts to, first, free themselves from their mendicant position *vis a vis* the states, gain control of party expenditure for campaign purposes and seek new sources of party funds.

This chapter makes no effort to estimate actual revenues or costs for any specific campaign. Given the parties' determined confidentiality about their own financial affairs and their readiness to speculate about their rival's affairs, the inadequate enforcement of disclosure and the opaque nature of key cost drivers such as the market for television advertising, reliable information is

scarce. Besides, in the absence of context (and a suitable deflator), reference to, say, the ALP's 1975 overdraft of \$250,000 or its 2007 campaign debt of \$8 million is somewhat meaningless. In the argument of this chapter, party finances involve questions that go beyond the numbers; raising and spending campaign money deals with questions that are inherently political: Who donates? Who lends? Who raises the funds? Who controls the spending? And who is accountable?

The chapter begins by describing the parties' initial funding methods. Drawing on the research interviews, it then turns to the interventions by national secretaries Young and Combe in the 1970s to take control of the ALP's funding, to boost campaign spending and to locate and develop new sources of party funding. Labor's introduction of public funding in time for the 1984 election brought both parties a new source of funds, though this soon proved inadequate to fund continuing campaign expenditure. Financial crises engulfed both parties in the 1990s leading to a further call on taxpayer support. The Labor Party built and then dismembered a property portfolio, and under Gray started competing effectively for business donations. The Liberal Party under Robb and Crosby experienced a resurgence of long-standing federal-state disputes about fundraising and campaign spending. In this narrative, while the Liberal Party's financial resources were initially much superior to those of the ALP, the ALP officials - perhaps because of their greater need - were the more innovative in mobilising new sources of funding. Yet in the new millennium, spending ever-increasing sums of new cash, both parties - notably the ALP - continued to struggle with debt.

### **Federal Problems of Party Finance**

As in so many other respects of party organisation, the financial arrangements of both major parties were shaped by their federal structure, which protected the financial base of the state party units to the early disadvantage of the nascent central offices. All key sources of funding flowed in the first instance to the state level. Members paid their dues to local branches which are affiliated in turn with state branches/divisions; there is no concept of party membership other than via a state branch. Financial flows from the key interest groups and institutional supporters of both the party of Capital and the party of Labour were also typically retained at the state level. Trade unions, with roots pre-dating the Federation, were and remain affiliated with Labor's state branches. Private enterprise too, naturally gravitating to the anti-Labor political entity, operated in markets that formed around capital cities and built their earliest ties with the state-based elements of the conservative forces; in any event these parochial fragments only organised into a truly national structure with the creation of the Liberal Party in the 1940s. These familiar problems of federalism helped ensure that in both parties it was the state branches/divisions that held the parties' purse strings.

In the Labor Party, the state branches paid levies or 'sustentation' fees to the Federal office, which were to be paid to the Federal Secretary<sup>44</sup>. But in practice these funds were often late and never adequate. Crisp notes that the federal elements of the party were 'starved' of regular income, drolly asserting that the Federal Executive lived for thirty years on a budget 'which would have shamed an outer-suburban football team'. The Federal Secretaries received meagre honoraria; their offices were 'austere to the point of dinginess'; they handled 'little cash and less patronage (and) in these circumstances ... apparently wielded very limited influence' (Crisp, 1955: 78; C. A. Hughes, 1963: 654-5). Chamberlain's 1961 proposal to create a full-time national office in Canberra would have required a quadrupling of state levies, and was shelved (C. A. Hughes 1963: 655).

On the conservative side, political organisation was fragmented and dispersed. The United Australia Party was entirely organised and funded at the state level by 'shadowy' finance

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<sup>44</sup> The ALP's Federal Executive Rules of 1915 stated: 'To meet the general expenses of the Executive, each State shall pay to the Secretary not later than the 31<sup>st</sup> of January each year a sum of £2, and towards defraying the expense of each Interstate Conference the State Executive shall every third year pay a further sum of £5 each' (Weller and Lloyd, 1978: 5).

committees, made up of 'small coteries of big business interests' in the various state capitals (C. A. Hughes, 1963: 647; Watson, 1979). The new Liberal Party insisted that it would 'raise and control its own funds (and) in this manner be free of any possibility of control from outside itself and would determine its own destiny' (cited in Starr 1980: 81). There was much initial optimism that the federal party could fund itself through voluntary subscribers. Federal President Tom Ritchie envisaged the Party funding its Secretariat with an annual budget of £1 million, rising to £2 to £3 million, from member and corporate subscriptions. Such aspirations were never attained – though his successor, Richard Casey, did raise very large sums from the business community in support of the Liberals' anti-bank nationalisation campaign before the 1949 elections (A. L. May, 1968).<sup>45</sup> In the event, however, it was federation that thwarted the national party's financial aspirations. As Katherine West (1965) has described, South Australia refused to contribute anything, the other smaller states failed to meet the agreed *pro rata* formula; and ultimately the two wealthiest states, New South Wales and Victoria, proved unable to carry the whole structure themselves. Turning to business, the national party launched a Federal Fund in 1952 (Hancock 2000:131). The initial list of target donors - individuals and companies in Victoria and New South Wales - gradually grew longer and more inclusive; by 1958 the party's Federal Treasurer, Sydney stockbroker Stanley Utz, proposed that the federal office become the sole collector of donations from any company that operated across interstate borders, keeping what was needed for the federal secretariat and only then distributing the balance among the states. As West records, the proposal led to an explosion at the 1959 Federal Council – 'though not in the columns of the press'. Out of need, smaller states backed Canberra while the well-off Victorian and New South Wales divisions bitterly opposed the Federal incursions into their local networks (West, 1965: 237-243). Andrew Robb's frustration (described in chapter Five) at being unable to access state division records for the purposes of direct solicitation was only a late manifestation of deeply-entrenched jealousies surrounding the national organisation's efforts to raise funds within the state divisions.

### **Contrasting Models of Centralised Funding**

Each party developed a different approach to dealing with these state-based constraints on their national activities. From its foundation, the Liberal Party vested responsibility for raising and controlling its funds in the 'party organisation'; Menzies insisted the 'party in office' not be beholden, as the UAP had been, to extra-organisational financiers (Menzies, 1967: 291-2). This became an article of faith in the Liberal Party, cited favourably in 1975 by Malcolm Fraser, who wanted to insulate himself and the parliamentary party from contact with, and even awareness of their identity of, donors (Oakes 1976: 270), and in 2011 by Peter Reith in his post-election review (Reith, 2011: 20). It was not the Federal Director however who carried primary responsibility for fundraising. The closest Willoughby got to fundraising was 'lobbying' the government on behalf of donors and discretely recommending them for Imperial honours (Hancock 2000: 130). Responsibility lay instead with the party's Federal Treasurer. This is an honorary position on the Federal Executive that has been filled by a series of twelve businessmen drawn from either the Melbourne or Sydney business communities.<sup>46</sup> According to the Federal Directors, their relationship with the party Treasurer was one of their most important relationships. Robert Crichton-Brown, in the words of Eggleton, was part of 'a great duo' with party President John Atwill. They:

had confidence in the Secretariat. If ever we needed money they made sure it was available.

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<sup>45</sup> According to the well-connected journalist Don Whittington (1961), this was as much as £1 million, including £100,000 from business connections in England; Casey's biographer W J Hudson (Hudson, 1993) put it at a perhaps more realistic but still impressive £250,000.

<sup>46</sup> Sydney-based Treasurers were B. F. Dargan (1949-56), Stanley Utz (1956-62), Sir Robert Crichton-Brown (1974-85), David Clarke (1987-89), Malcolm Turnbull (2002-03), Mark Bethwaite (2006-08), and Michael Yabsley (2008-11). Melbourne-Based Treasurers were Sir William Anderson (1962-98), Sir Charles McGrath (1968-74), John Elliot (1985-87), Ronald Walker (1989-2002), and John Calvert-Jones (2003-06).

John Elliott was also in Eggleton's words 'very successful at raising money. Elliott's role in luring Eggleton back from London in 1974 with an 'offer I couldn't refuse' has already been noted. Elliott went on to play a critical role, as Federal Treasurer (1985-1987) and President (1987-1990) in funding the Federal Secretariat through the wilderness years in opposition. In the immediate aftermath of the 1987 election defeat, Elliott and Eggleton met in Sydney (Ramsey, 2009); quizzed by Elliott as to his needs at the secretariat, Eggleton recalled:

(He) said, 'We'll increase the budget and expand your staff, and get you people in that you want'. It was in that context that I got in Andrew (Robb) ... as deputy.

Another Melbourne businessman, Ron Walker, became the party's longest serving Federal Treasurer (1989-2002). Walker, who simultaneously served as co-treasurer of the British Conservative Party, was critical in restoring the Party's fortunes after the debacle of the 1993 defeat, both through fundraising from the business community and in negotiating an overdraft with the party's bank, the National Australia Bank (Williams 1997: 84-88). Walker appears to have been excessively thrifty in denying Eggleton his financial entitlements after his resignation (Gordon, 1991), but as a fundraiser he was, in the admiring words of Andrew Robb, 'in a league of his own':

He had the relationships at the 'top end of town', where he could extract more than anyone else. He was talking to his peers. Often there'd be all sorts of other things – he had relationships in a commercial sense and they'd all have their charities. He'd be giving them I think from his own company to their charities – you know. There'd be six deals going on, one of which was the Liberal Party. Nothing improper about it, he just had relationships.

Taking a diametrically opposite approach, the Labor Party's fundraising model had the parliamentary leadership performing the central role. Elected party leader in 1935, the former journalist John Curtin recognised the electoral importance of, and the expense of, the emerging communications media such as radio broadcasting and display advertising in the press. Curtin persuaded the party's Federal Conference to establish a new fund which would hold campaign donations from state branches, trade unions and other donors. Formally established as the Special Publicity Fund, and known informally as the Leader's Fund, it was under the legal control of three trustees one of whom was Curtin and his successors as party leader. As Federal Secretary, McNamara was appointed one of the first trustees, but over time the other trustees were appointed from the party caucus. In any event the fund in practical terms was at the disposal of the party leader (Overacker, 1952: 284-5; Crisp, 1955: 68, 88-92). Chifley and Evatt succeeded Curtin as prime controllers of the Fund; journalist Alan Reid reportedly claimed that Chifley had, 'during an election campaign', carried £32,000 in cash to a bank and deposited it in the Trust Account (recorded in Cameron, 1990: 482). In the 1950s, Rawson notes that the Fund's 'size, sources and use' was known only in general terms, though it had been attacked by the Democratic Labor Party during the Split as a 'slush fund'.

Labor's approach to fundraising, and the role of the Leader's Fund, cannot be fully understood without a critical evaluation of the party's relationship with Sim Rubensohn. South-African born, Rubensohn was educated in Sydney, and after working in the Sydney-based Goldberg Advertising agency, established his own advertising firm Hansen-Rubensohn<sup>47</sup> in 1928. The ALP engaged Rubensohn at both the New South Wales and national level in the late 1920s or early 1930s and – with the notable exception of his switch to Menzies in 1949 – he remained Labor's advertising consultant until 1974. As Rawson makes clear, the Leader's Fund while complex in its sources of income, was simple in its disbursement: it was devoted to paying Hansen-Rubensohn for campaign advertising.

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<sup>47</sup> The firm was established as a partnership but though Rupert Hansen departed within the first year his surname survived. In 1959 Rubensohn sold the firm to an American multinational to create Hansen Rubensohn-McCann Erikson and became governing director of the new company (Goot, 2002)

On advertising grounds alone, such a relationship would be significant. Access to a skilled commercial advertising agency improved Labor's campaign skills far beyond its preparedness to spend and the capacity of its few, overworked, staff. Rawson suggests Labor probably got better value for money from Rubensohn than it could have acquired any other way (Rawson 1961: 75-6). The corollary of course, which Rawson does not spell out, is that from a commercial point of view the Labor account was unprofitable for Rubensohn. Wyndham acknowledged that Rubensohn 'carried' Labor, not charging commercial rates for the advertising services and permitting late payment: 'he didn't push for the money' (Wyndham). Rubensohn himself confirmed that he 'carried their debts for years at a time on his books, as well as writing off expenses with which normal clients would have been charged' (Braund, 1978: 286).<sup>48</sup>

But Rubensohn's generosity came with strings attached. Rubensohn played a double role, unique in Australian party politics, as both advertiser and fundraiser for Labor. That is, he was the principal recipient of outflows from the Leader's Fund while also acting as a major conduit for inflows. Given his agency was 'one of the largest businesses of its kind in Australia' (Rawson 1960:76), whose clients included the government-owned airline TAA, NSW statutory corporations, and private companies including Caltex Oil, Philips Electrical Industries and Marrickville Holdings (Goot, 2002), Rubensohn's links into the Australian business community were valuable and rare for a union-based Party with a still-meaningful commitment to a socialisation objective. Certainly Labor parliamentarians and officials themselves lacked the business networks that drove fundraising in the Liberal Party. As Wyndham commented of Opposition Leader Arthur Calwell's fundraising abilities:

Private donors? Well, Arthur [pause] didn't have the pulling power.

The Rubensohn connection was a witch's brew of potential – if not actual – conflicts of interest. Rubensohn candidly acknowledged that his relationship with Labor – a 'combination of friendship with fundraising' – allowed him not only to advise the Labor Party but 'also to complain' (Braund 1978: 285). The phrase is discreet yet carries a clear implication. Enjoying a close campaign relationship with Labor leaders including Prime Ministers and Premiers over four decades, Rubensohn was able to use his political access to promote the interests of his clients, in exchange for campaign donations; in turn, Labor parliamentarians were electorally reliant on his fundraising and campaign skills and moreover were responsible for disbursing funds to him from a confidential trust account. A striking example of the overlap between political and commercial interests is provided by Marrickville Holdings, a margarine manufacturer whose business prospects were limited by Commonwealth and state government protection of the dairy industry. After Marrickville lost its High Court appeals against the quotas, the company's managing director and then chairman, Dick Crebbin, engaged Rubensohn in the late 1960s to plan a television advertising campaign to lobby for change: the ads, which featured a margarine-buying housewife 'Mrs Jones' drew significant public attention to the cause. Meanwhile Crebbin or, as Wyndham recalled him, 'the margarine man', became an active financial donor to the ALP – presumably via Rubensohn. While it is hard to establish direct causality, both the Whitlam and Wran Labor Governments did move to phase out and abolish quotas on margarine production.

These contrasting models of centralised fundraising – one built around the party's honorary Treasurer and the other built around the parliamentary leader – were both flawed. The Liberal Party could not resolve tensions between the state divisions and the centre while Labor found itself poorly funded and severely conflicted. By one estimate in 1961, the Liberal Party employed between 60 and 70 full-time staff in well-appointed offices around Australia, in addition to as many as 40 full-time field organisers and incurred large telephone and printing costs. By contrast the ALP organisation was 'weak in the extreme, largely because of lack of funds' (Whittington 1961; see also C. A. Hughes 1963: 655).

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<sup>48</sup> The quoted words from Rubensohn in this section are reported in indirect speech by Braund, who interviewed Rubensohn in December 1977 for her thesis. Braund is the daughter of Rubensohn.



### **ALP: Reforming Internal Funding**

It is no coincidence that the organisational breakthrough in party fundraising came in the Labor Party, through the intervention of the first national campaign directors. The cost of the new style of campaign management, with its paid staff, market research and national television advertising, gave first Young and then Combe the incentive, as national campaign director, to overhaul Labor's finances. The party's relationship with Rubensohn was the first to be challenged. Young's research-driven and emotive communications style of the 'It's Time' campaign was at odds with Rubensohn's more rational appeals to voter interests (Mills 1986: 95). Moreover, Rubensohn's willingness to 'carry' Labor's debt from one campaign to the next was being seen in a different light – less an act of generosity than of capture. After Young was elected national secretary in 1969, he noted that:

we still owed many thousands of dollars to the advertising agency for the 1966 election and the 1967 Senate election, and we had yet to commence raising funds for the 1969 election (M. Young, 1986: 96).<sup>49</sup>

He later boasted that the 1972 election was the 'first time in decades' that the ALP had finished a campaign free of debt; his criticism of both Rubensohn and Wyndham is implicit but clear:

This was achieved by strict financial discipline by the campaign committee. Because of our appalling history of always finishing previous campaigns in debt, the first decision our committee took was to spend only what we raised. Strict instructions were given by me to the national advertising agency Hansen Rubensohn-McCann Erikson, that under no circumstances were they to commit us to any expenditure without my written authority (M. Young, 1986: 98).

Combe took the next step, shifting responsibility for Labor Party fund-raising out of the parliamentary wing and into the organisation and, specifically, into Head Office. He advanced on several avenues. In regards to the Leader's Trust Fund, he negotiated an agreement that the proceeds of the Fund would be directed to campaign purposes, ensuring that final decisions on its disbursement would lie with the Secretariat not the parliamentary party. As late as 1974, Combe recalled this fund remained the recipient of 'most of money raised for the election', and while Whitlam as Prime Minister had ceased to be a trustee, ownership of the Fund essentially remained with the parliamentary party:

A lot of money had been raised through what was called the Leaders Trust Fund ... by Gough (Whitlam) in Opposition ... and was allocated at the discretion of the leader. ... So there was some fairly robust discussion between Gough and myself about to whom that money really belonged. I must say that at the end of the day he accepted the argument, that the money was given for campaigning purposes and it had to go towards the cost of the campaign.<sup>50</sup>

This breakthrough in turn allowed Combe to finally sever the relationship with Rubensohn. He identified the agent's fundraising role for the party, and the party's chronic debt to its agent, as the interrelated triggers:

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<sup>49</sup> Young was blunter in his 1971 report to the National Executive regarding fundraising for the 1969 Federal election: 'The (national campaign) committee was charged in the first instance with raising \$25,000 to pay outstanding accounts from previous campaigns. Not a very inspiring way to start the campaign off, to say the least' (Blewett, 1973)

<sup>50</sup> The Fund continued to be a source of controversy within the parliamentary party following the defeat of the Whitlam Government. Clyde Cameron was one MP who frequently probed around the edges of the fund, asking questions about its signatories, cash flows and purposes and even puzzled as to whether there was more than one fund. Cameron objected to paying the legal expenses Whitlam incurred defending himself against the Sankey conspiracy charges 'while he persisted in his refusal to allow the Party to know what the funds were still in the account or accounts he controls' (Cameron 1990:481-2).

Since 1949 the party had used Sim Rubensohn. It had never been able to do otherwise because Sim had also raised the money for election campaigns, a lot of which came from people seeking abolition of margarine quotas. But there was always a residual debt left to ... Hansen Rubensohn-McCann Erikson at the end of an election campaign - which in effect meant you couldn't change agencies. After the 1974 election campaign, we got ourselves in a situation where we paid out the advertising agency completely, which then gave us the opportunity to go into a selection process of the appropriate advertising agency (to) conduct the next campaign. How was this done? ... It was really, as I recall, the transfer of that money (from the Leader's Trust Fund) that enabled us to pay out Hansen Rubensohn-McCann Erikson and be debt free, which then enabled us to go to market and choose an advertising agency we wanted to work with.

For his part, Rubensohn professed to have 'retired' from political advertising, refusing to play second fiddle in Labor's now-enlarged and market research-driven campaign team (Braund 1978: 287n).

Combe's ambitions to expand the financial base of the Secretariat were broader still. Having broken the party's debt cycle, he embarked on the national party's first attempt to escape the cash basis of party operations, with its attendant volatility and reliance on state branch support:

The only sources of income were from the state sustentation fees and from the sale of publications. There were times - I'm sort of joking - when we had to step up selling publications to pay our wages because the sustentation fees just hadn't rolled in.

Among the 'publications' for sale was the 1974 Platform. Combe put a \$1 price tag on this previously-free document and made a healthy profit after getting it printed in his home state of South Australia (Oakes, 1981). But his most substantial fundraising initiative was to acquire a portfolio of income-earning properties. Labor's state branches had pointed the way: the New South Wales branch earned income from its investment in the union-owned radio station 2KY; unions also owned radio stations in Newcastle and Melbourne (Rawson 1961: 117; Hughes 1963: 651). But Combe had his eyes on becoming a landlord. The then-National Capital Development Commission provided low-cost leases to national organisations to encourage them to build and occupy their national headquarters. In October 1973 Combe secured National Executive approval to build on the ALP's block in the Canberra suburb of Barton, and to borrow \$1.5 million from the Commonwealth Bank for this purpose; by mid-1974 the foundation stone was laid on John Curtin House:

Of course at a time of escalating interest rate costs, costs blew out, and by the time we finished realistically we ended up with a building that cost about \$2.6 million of which we borrowed 2.5.

Combe's plan was for the building to earn funds in two ways: through rental income (tenants from 1976 included the Commonwealth Bank and some other Commonwealth agencies) and as equity which could be mortgaged to generate campaign funds:

We had the tenancies in place to guarantee that, provided we continued to occupy as small a proportion of it as possible, we would have an income stream in a relatively short period of time. The concept was that as we built equity in it, it enabled us to use that equity to borrow against for election campaigns, giving us an orderly time frame within which to repay the cost of those election campaigns.

Labor's property investment was on a scale larger than any other party.<sup>51</sup> The Liberal Party had directly or indirectly owned its national headquarters in Barton since 1965. But Menzies House was fully occupied by the Party itself and never earned rental income; moreover the Party's constitution forbids it being mortgaged. A closer model for Combe's strategy was provided by the

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<sup>51</sup> This paragraph draws on the Royal Commission report (Hunt, 2004: Ch 6).

then-Country Party which had erected its national headquarters, John McEwen House, in Barton in 1968 and leased it to various Commonwealth agencies in 1973-1976 and 1983-92. But Combe's vision was broader still. John Curtin House was and remains considerably larger than any other party headquarters, a substantial three-storey building with a net lettable area of 4240 square metres; R G Menzies House, enlarged and refurbished in 1994, stands two-storeys high with a net lettable area of 845m<sup>2</sup>, while John McEwen House, refurbished and enlarged in 1996, is a three-level building of 2071m<sup>2</sup>. Combe envisaged further property acquisitions as well, also designed to earn rental income and build up an asset base for the party; by 1980 he had engineered Labor's purchase of another commercial building, in the Canberra suburb of Braddon:

At my last Executive meeting before I handed over to Bob (McMullan), we got through the purchase of another building. In other words the whole idea of the John Curtin House Limited entity was it would continue to become an aggregator of property.

Taken together, these fundraising initiatives allowed Combe to regard his financial restructuring as his 'single biggest achievement', because it placed:

the national entities of the party on a very solid financial footing which made the party much wealthier than its opponents, and created a situation in which it was capable of planning an election campaign budget which it was able to borrow for, against the equity in a real estate property. A real estate portfolio: that was the vision. We got to that, but it didn't last very long.

Combe also represents this legacy in terms of the centralising imperative: it improved the national party's position relative to the states:

I inherited an organisation where the Federal entities were the poor relations, dictated to by the states. In accordance with the principle of, 'He who pays the piper calls the tune', you're at the mercy of the big states who could withhold their sustentation fees if you didn't do what they were telling you to do. When I left, the party had become much wealthier at the national level than its rivals. I believe today that the federal party in terms of assets is substantially better off than pretty well all the state branches, which is a huge turn around. It should be much better off again but probably mistakes (were) made along the way there.

Again, the purpose is to improve campaign funding:

I think that gave the party the opportunity to plan much more sensibly for elections, setting budgets knowing that you could go into debt which could be covered by the equity in its property portfolio. That was a major change.

Notwithstanding these initiatives, however, Labor's finances remained under severe pressure, notably after the dismissal of the Whitlam Government given the challenge in 1975 of fighting its third Federal elections in three years. At the beginning of the 1975 campaign Combe and Whitlam agreed to a suggestion, from the former Victorian state secretary Bill Hartley, that they negotiate through an intermediary to secure a \$500,000 loan from the Iraqi Ba'ath Party. Assured that a substantial loan had been promised, Combe increased Labor's advertising spend as the campaign progressed. When the promised funds failed to appear, Labor ended the campaign owing a substantial sum to its new advertising agency, Mullins Clarke and Ralph, which faced bankruptcy as a result (Oakes, 1976: 270-95; Cameron, 1990: 26, 28, 83). Combe attributes this 'act of madness' to the financial pressures facing the party at the time:

There is another story about '75 that I don't want to go into now, but it's the whole paying for the campaign, the Iraqi gift affair. You look back on it and you say how could one be so effing stupid to embrace that? How could two allegedly sensible people like Whitlam and Combe embrace a proposal from an idiot, a known idiot, like Hartley? What people don't recognise is the pressure we were under and the beliefs that we had at that time. We had

no money to run a campaign, there was none forthcoming, we had a minimum budget we had to meet and most importantly we were – I was absolutely convinced and I think Gough was too – that external forces were involved in the Dismissal and were funding our opponents. To be quite honest I still believe that. Anyway we engaged in an act of madness.

The then-party President, Bob Hawke, chaired a Federal Executive inquiry into the affairs which 'condemned' all three men for their 'grave errors of judgement'. In his memoirs, Hawke says he was 'intensely annoyed' by Combe's involvement, but he was 'prepared to put it down to the thoughtless reaction of a Secretary who was strapped for funds' (Hawke, 1994: 78-9). Combe remained as party secretary through defeats in the 1977 and 1980 election campaigns. When McMullan took over the National Secretariat after the 1980 election, he found Labor's finances in poor shape:

We had no money. David had started to professionalise the fundraising. But we really had been in Opposition a long time and we had pre-75 not much in the way of modern – what we call modern – fundraising. So we didn't have much dough.

### **ALP: Promoting Public Campaign Financing**

Labor Party officials were also closely associated with the introduction of the system of public funding of party election campaigns. Elected to the House of Representatives in 1974, Mick Young used his maiden speech to call for a system of Government funding and auditing of election campaign costs. Young described the estimated \$5m cost of the 1972 and 1974 campaigns as 'socially wasteful' and said it should be 'rationalised as a matter of urgency', while political fundraising – 'stomping around the country drumming up funds for election campaigns' – was an 'obnoxious political chore':

There is something demeaning about having to hawk the principles of your political party in this way. ... No matter how bluntly you insist that there are no strings attached, it is impossible to escape completely the feeling that you put your party under some sense of obligation (M. Young, 1974: 234-8).

With campaign spending already dominated by television advertising – and with costs set to rise further with the introduction of colour television – Young called for 'a rational set of laws governing campaign spending'. The Whitlam Government did legislate to limit campaign expenditure and compel disclosure of campaign donations, but the bill was twice rejected by the Senate in 1975 (Whitlam, 1985: 681-3). In 1983, as Special Minister for State in the new-elected Hawke Government, Young revived the push, with McMullan also keen to 'organise a system in which the party does not have to go cap-in-hand to its rank-and-file members or to the corporate bosses for donations every time an election is called' (O'Neill, 1984). Parliament amended the Commonwealth Electoral Act<sup>52</sup> to pay parties for their campaign costs according to their primary vote (where they obtain at least 4% of the total formal first preference votes). This ensured that the two major parties would always take the lion's share of the public funds (Table 6, below); in exchange, parties were compelled to disclose campaign donations above a certain threshold (Beazley, 1983: 2213). The new system of public funding took effect in time for parties and candidates to receive \$7.8 million after the 1984 campaign.

This was not an initiative with bipartisan support. Despite welcoming the inflow of funds from the taxpayer, the Liberal Party had opposed the legislation fearing the disclosure provisions would deter its corporate donors; Young, while avoiding partisan commentary, probably knew this could be the case. As Robb and Crosby explained:

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<sup>52</sup> Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, as amended by the Commonwealth Electoral Legislation Amendment Act 1983.

The price of transparency was a lot less money. A lot of people just didn't want to be (involved) (Robb).

As disclosure intensified – it came in and then intensified – some corporate donors no longer donated obviously, for a whole range of reasons (Crosby).

While under the legislation public funding was allocated on the basis of votes received by candidates, the actual payments were not made to the candidates or the parliamentary party but to the party organisation. Party officials are prominently involved in the administration of public funding and are responsible for all compliance activities: lodging claims for public funding payments, receiving the payments and furnishing details of the party's campaign expenses and campaign donations. The legislation specifies that the party 'agent' was the only person who could perform these tasks on behalf of a party (Australia, 1984; Australian Electoral Commission, 1986: 2-3). But there was a twist to this rule. Campaigns may have been increasingly managed on a national basis, but the parliamentary electoral process itself is organised around electorates within each state (Australian Electoral Commission, 1991: 7; 1995: 9). So although this was Commonwealth legislation providing national funds in relation to national election campaigns, the legislation required 'agents' to be state not national party officials.

In terms of the three-face two-level framework of party structure set out in Chapter One, such payments strengthened the party organisation at the expense of the party in office - but within that organisational face, strengthened the state units at the expense of the central office. From the point of view of the national officials, this was unacceptable: deep-seated problems of federal coordination resurfaced in both parties and the authority of the national office – and of the national campaign structure – was weakened. Who in the party really controlled the public funds? Would state branches share public funds with the national office? Would they accurately report their campaign costs? How could the national office recoup its national campaign spending?

**Table 6: Major Party Receipts as a Percentage of Total Public Funding**

<b>Federal election</b>	<b>Total election funding \$</b>	<b>ALP receipts</b>	<b>Liberal receipts</b>	<b>ALP + Lib as % of total</b>
<b>1984</b>	7 806 778			
<b>1987</b>	10 298 657	4,759,413	3,495,954	80.1
<b>1990</b>	12,878,920	5,300,868	4,612,260	77.0
<b>1993</b>	14,898,807	7,098,641	5,697,592	85.9
<b>1996</b>	32,154,801	12,856,382	12,489,503	78.8
<b>1998</b>	33,920,787	14,010,512	11,488,881	75.2
<b>2001</b>	38,559,409	14,917,024	14,492,349	76.3
<b>2004</b>	41,926,159	16,710,043	17,956,326	82.7
<b>2007</b>	49,002,639	22,030,460	18,133,645	81.2
<b>2010</b>	53,163,385	21,225,869	21,097,860	79.6

Source: Australian Electoral Commission Funding and Disclosure Reports

Over the first decade of the legislation, covering the federal elections in 1984, 1987, 1990 and 1993, both parties experimented with various methods of dealing with this problem (Appendix Three, Table 9). State parties were able to lodge an 'apportionment statement' with the Australian Electoral Commission after each campaign in which the national secretariat outlined its own campaign expenditure within each state; invoices or auditor's certificates were required to demonstrate their apportionment. The funds were still paid to the state branches, but these branches had essentially acknowledged the national origins of this portion of their campaign expenditure. The ALP proved faster at achieving national coordination: in 1990, all the ALP state and territory agents lodged nil returns while the national office under Hogg claimed responsibility for 100 per cent of the spending.

Yet this raised new accountability concerns in the national office. In 1991 Hogg was charged with failing to disclose \$2.2 million in small donations to the ALP in the party's returns between 1987

and 1990. He pleaded guilty, claiming he had misinterpreted his obligations under the legislation, and received a good behaviour bond without conviction (Campbell, 1991). At the National Press Club after the 1993 election he said he was 'a little bit concerned' that as national secretary he might be personally responsible for data provided from deep within the party organisation – 'what may happen at the Koo-wee-rup branch?' – which he could not monitor or control. He said party officials 'deserved a clause in the sort of way than an auditor does, or an accountant does, 'to the best of their endeavours' et cetera' (Hogg, 1993 (24 March)). The same issues concerned Liberal Party officials too. Crosby was concerned that the state divisions might play 'funny buggers' with information which the Federal Office had to disclose. Around 1999 he sought changes to the party Constitution 'to make sure they had to give you the information':

They balked at it, so they voted against that. In the end there has never been a practical problem, it was just potential.

As we shall see, problems of federal coordination continued to dog the Liberal Party for the remainder of the decade.

### **ALP and Liberal Party: Funding Crises of the 1990s and Beyond**

Despite the high hopes espoused by its Labor Party founders, public funding failed to cap electoral expenditure or to provide financial certainty for either party. By the 1990s both parties were experiencing significant financial crises. Hogg's first campaign as national secretary – the successful re-election of the Hawke Government in 1990 – came at a significant financial cost. Campaigning costs, especially the cost of television advertising, had risen through the 1980s and Labor was also rolling out its Polfile data base management system to marginal electorates. Public funding receipts covered a shrinking proportion of campaign expenditure (Hughes 1990: 151 citing AEC data). In Hogg's words:

After the '90 election we were quite broke. Public funding had helped but it was still relatively modest compared to the outlays.

With a campaign debt of some \$5 million and facing rising interest rates:

we had to find basically \$20,000 dollars a week just to stop the debt getting out of control (Gray).

Gray was appointed as assistant national secretary with specific responsibility for fundraising, with a brief to tap new sources of funding through corporate donations. Setting up a program of visits to corporate headquarters, he solicited donations using the argument that companies should make 'moderate even-handed donations to both sides of politics (which thereby) guarantees the strength and integrity of our party system' (Gray, 1996: 50).<sup>53</sup> But the funding crisis forced more extreme financial restructuring. Combe's legacy, John Curtin House, was partly sold to the Australian Council of Trade Unions to help repay its debt. Hogg also embarked on a new property development to generate longer-term rental income. Like John Curtin House, land for a new property was available for national associations but tenants were restricted to other national associations or government agencies (Hunt 2004: 15). Labor's new headquarters was to be owned by John Curtin House Ltd and, in the party's centenary year, was called Centenary House. Unlike Labor's first foray into property development, the Centenary House transaction became deeply controversial, leading to long-drawn out partisan attack over the generous rental agreements signed with two Commonwealth agencies, the Auditor-General and the Australian National Audit Office. Two Royal Commissions were set up, by the Keating Government and then the Howard Government, to investigate the deal (Morling, 1994; Hunt, 2004). Hogg insists:

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<sup>53</sup> Gray was not the first Labor official to seek corporate donations but did so on a more systematic basis. Young had driven fundraising targets for the national campaign committee in 1972 and took a 'prominent' role in fundraising (Blewett 1973: 13). In the 1980s, with former New South Wales state secretary, then Senator, Graham Richardson, acting as 'bagman', the Hawke Government secured large donations from a new generation of corporate entrepreneurs and financiers (Wilkinson, 1996).

There was nothing wrong with it. I kept the parliamentary party remote from it because we were in Government, and so that no questions could be asked. Two Royal Commissions ensued. The issue was rents and the rental escalator being out of kilter with the market. We built it on the basis that it had to pay its way like any commercial enterprise. We were paying 13% on a \$22 million building, so we struck the base rate of rent plus the growth factor. Every smartie said interest rates would not fall, but when they did the rent escalator looked obscene ... I was cross-examined in public for many hours. I structured it totally at arm's length from the Government.

Commissioner Hunt did find the terms of the lease were 'excessively favourable' to the ALP. But both Morling and Hunt were satisfied with Hogg's probity, Hunt stating no criticism should be levelled at him, the ALP, or John Curtin House Ltd.

The property strategy was vigorously pursued by Hogg's successor Gray who, as we have seen (p36), identifies building the party's asset base as a defining characteristic of his role as national secretary. But Gray's efforts to build a national party in part through underwriting property purchases by fiscally weak state branches carried financial risk, as he discovered in late 1994 when the New South Wales branch found itself 'financially distressed'. A commercial property development was planned which would allow the branch to trade out of its difficulties; it involved consolidating two sites in Sydney, containing an Australian Workers Union-owned building and an ALP-owned building to develop a single high-rise block. According to Gray, the New South Wales branch would be able to:

take the development profit to repair the finances of the NSW branch and we (the Federal office) get a drink on the way through. It was exactly the right plan, no doubt about that. The problem is, to do commercial property development in the CBD Sydney you've got to have deep pockets, and we didn't have deep pockets. ... To the extent we had deep pockets we had one, it was mine, and the NSW branch had its hand well and truly in it. That was my decision supported by the board of John Curtin House.

John Curtin House Ltd had provided a \$1.7 million guarantee to the project:

But when the guarantee got called in, it ended up costing us \$1.7 million. That one big hit had substantial implications for John Curtin House, that really meant I had to cut my cloth.

Alongside these promising but turbulent initiatives, Labor continued to target donations from the business community. Gray's fundraising proved effective, diversifying Labor's revenue streams from its reliance on trade union funding, and opening up a new front in party competition. The Liberals felt their superiority in corporate fundraising was being eroded, as Robb acknowledged:

Gary Gray in particular spent several years, even when he was deputy to Hogg, or assistant or whatever they call it, he went around a lot of the board rooms around the country and basically said, 'I see you've given \$140,000 to the Liberal Party and you gave us 20. We're not asking for any more, we just think you should be giving the same'. That put the fear of God into a lot of companies who progressively started to give the same. They might give 160, but they'd give 80 each instead of 140 and 20.

Nor were the Liberals able to counter by targeting Labor's long-standing stream of funding from affiliated trade unions, resulting in what Robb described as a funding advantage to Labor:

The unions give on average \$5 million a year to the Labor Party, so in any three-year term the Labor Party would have a \$15 million advantage over us before we went to business.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> This became a regular point of contention with Labor officials denying any such disparity – see for example Gray 1996: 49 'We do get a lot (of money from trade unions) but nowhere near the figures that get bandied about.'

As national secretary Gray introduced a binding 'Code of Conduct for Fundraising' into the party Platform in 1994 (Australian Labor Party, 1994). The Code emphasises that it is the 'organisational wing' that is responsible for fundraising – specifically, that the national secretary is the 'National Director of Fundraising' – and forbids the party from accepting funds intended to obtain ALP support for specific actions, attitudes or public statements.

Corporate donations are volatile and driven in part by donors' assessments of the party's likely success in the forthcoming election. The Liberal Party's corporate funding dried up under the unsuccessful Downer leadership (Williams 1997: 17), while for the ALP at the turn of the millennium resources – both staff and donations – were also volatile:

I guess the extra resources come when it looks like you're going to win and people want to get on board. So in early 2001 people were getting on board (but) by mid-2003 ... people (were) getting off-board. ... Clearly this was a party going through some pain and adjustment, and they're not the circumstances that attract support (Walsh).

Both parties, at the state and national levels, have become ever more sophisticated and elaborate in wooing corporate donations. Efforts include inviting company representatives to party conferences where they are able to meet senior parliamentarians in specially designated 'business centres', or to attend private dinners, breakfasts or cocktail parties which serve as fundraising events. Many of these meetings are managed through fundraising arms such as (at the state level) the Liberal Party's Millennium Forum and the ALP's Progressive Business entity. Close to half the parties' revenues are channelled through 'associated entities' – such as the Liberals' Greenfields and Cormack Foundations and the ALP's Labor Victory Fund - which arguably exist to cloak the identities of corporate and other external party donors (S. Young & Tham, 2006: 18-9).

A third Labor initiative 'precipitated' by its 1990 debt crisis (S. Young & Tham, 2006: 107) was a short-lived effort by the Hawke Government to impose a legislative cap on campaign expenditure. The *Political Broadcasts and Political Disclosures Act 1991* banned paid television advertising during election campaigns proposing instead to supply parties with free air-time. Challenged in the High Court by a group of television networks, the legislation was struck down as being in breach of an implied Constitutional freedom of political communication (Orr, 2010: 169-70).

In any event, such initiatives did not provide Labor with an adequate war-chest for the 1993 campaign, dubbed 'unwinnable' because of the longevity and unpopularity of the Labor Government. As Hogg recalls, lacks of funds forced him to cut back spending on both market research and television advertising:

I had to run a very lean campaign. That was part of the problem. We couldn't put as much money into qualitative research as I would have liked. ... I remember coming to Singleton's (advertising agency) and saying, 'We need a very hard hitting ad campaign, but there's no money for production. Think of simple ways of doing it'. And they did. It was quite simple – and effective. We couldn't afford lavish production – not on film but video.

In the same period, the Liberal Party was also experiencing financial crisis. Shattered by the 1993 defeat, the Party also had to deal with a debt of around \$5 million. Robb was proud of having saved '\$600,000' by selecting his own advertising team in 1996 in place of the full service agency George Patterson. According to Crosby, the federal party was 'pretty skint financially and had to get bank support'. The managing director of the National Australia Bank, Don Argus, was 'pressing' for security in the form of a mortgage over the newly-refurbished Menzies House (Williams 1997: 17). The party's constitution however forbade this course, so the party Treasurer, Ron Walker, opted to give Argus a personal guarantee. After the 1996 election victory, when the party could not repay the loan, that guarantee was called in. In circumstances that later became the subject of scrutiny by the Australian Electoral Commission, Walker paid out the debt. He later denied having received donations from any third party to do so. He then assigned the debt to a charitable trust, the Greenfields Foundation, which insisted that it was not associated with the Party and therefore



had no disclosure obligations. Quizzed in a parliamentary committee, Crosby defended the arrangement as legal:

He (Walker) met his obligation as a guarantor by paying out the remaining indebtedness of the Liberal Party to the National Australia Bank. It was not a gift to the Liberal Party: he responded to his obligations under law. It was not a loan to the Liberal Party, because it was an indebtedness which he subsequently assigned to the Greenfields Foundation. The Labor Party constantly says there is a loan in place and so forth. The fact is that there is not. We have made that point consistently (Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Reform, 1999, 22 June 1999: 197) .

The Australian Electoral Commission expressed concern about the potential of transactions such as this to circumvent the disclosure provisions of the public funding legislation. The AEC also noted that Greenfields treated its debtor the Liberal Party 'in an uncommonly favourable manner', not charging interest and insisting on modest annual repayments (Australian Electoral Commission, 2000: Part 5).

These financial crises led the parties to cooperate in a substantial new call on the taxpayer. Negotiations between Hogg and Robb led to 1995 legislation that lifted the value of each Senate and House of Representatives vote (Millett, 1994; Wright, 1994).<sup>55</sup> Public funding payments arising from the 1996 election were more than double the amount of the 1993 campaign (Table 6). The Australian Electoral Commission noted that most of the major parties had been able to retire debt and restore their profitability in the subsequent, 1998, campaign (cited in Johns, 2006: 52).

As had happened after 1984, the ALP was far more efficient at ensuring the public funds were centralised in the national Head Office. Replacing the cumbersome apportionment process, Labor state and territory offices lodged 'redirection agreements' with the Australian Electoral Commission which essentially instructed it to redirect their entitlements to the national office. Thus after the 1996 campaign, Labor's entire public funding receipts of \$12.8 million were paid in the form of a single cheque made out personally to the ALP's national 'agent', national secretary Gary Gray.<sup>56</sup> For the Liberal Party however the new funding led to a revival of squabbling between the Federal and state divisions. After winning office in 1996, the party appears to have strongly decentralised its public funding receipts. For the three election campaigns of 1996, 1998 and 2001, state and territory divisions claimed and received all public funds. Both Robb and Crosby recall 'tortuous' negotiations with the states to redistribute the funds with the federal office:

We would negotiate each time, how much of the public funding went to the Head Office and how much (went to the states). ... Usually what went to the states reflected the agreements we had already struck back on seat-by-seat (negotiations) [as described in chapter Five] (Robb).

There used to be an agreement with the states, where the states would agree a certain expenditure from the public funding money. That included an amount that the states were supposed to pay to the Federal Secretariat to cover television and radio advertising and so forth. ... The Feds, to ensure they could run an advertising campaign, negotiated with each state - and it was quite a tortuous process where you had to get the states to agree - to spend a certain proportion on the marginal seats, and to pay a certain proportion to the

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<sup>55</sup> By 1993, inflation adjustment had lifted the payment rate for each House of Representatives primary vote to 100.787 cents, and for each Senate vote to 50.393 cents. The 1995 amendments lifted the payment rate to \$1.50 for both House and Senate votes. The new legislation also substantially eliminated the obligation on parties to disclose details of their campaign expenditure (Young and Tham 2006: 99).

<sup>56</sup> The Australian Democrats party also put in place a similar centralised arrangement from 1996 where all payments were made to a 'principal agent'. The Commission became concerned, 'particularly given the very large amounts of funding now being paid to individuals as agents of political parties' that party officials were not legally required to hand over the funds to the party. A Commission official told one newspaper reporter that a party agent could 'still walk into their local bank and get it bunged into their own personal account. You never know, \$12 million is going to make even an honest person think twice.' Payments were thereafter made to parties not individuals (Australian Electoral Commission, 1997; Dore, 1998 (14 March))

Feds to fund the central campaign. That was always a negotiation with the Feds always – you were on the back foot, you were mendicant (Crosby).

Robb recognised this solution was managed 'not as effectively as the Labor Party', and both he and Crosby recognise that some states managed to retain public funding at the expense of the federal party:

I knew that they (the states) weren't just pocketing it. A little of that went on. But ... by the end of it the resources were somewhat more certain, and the distribution of them between the Feds and the states was certainly more certain. The Feds had a better base. ... (But financial relations with the states) still took up a huge amount of time. You'd get one state that says 'I'm holding on to a million. Come and get it' – which happened – six months later it was still negotiating. So the financial side was probably the biggest frustration (Robb).

The public funding money was seen by a lot of the states as an income source to protect their position, and they'd try to make a profit out of it. So the money wasn't always acquitted on campaigns in the way it was intended. ... There were times when there were fights with the Victorians, for example, who didn't want the Feds to be involved at all, when Victoria very much was the machine, the Liberal machine (Crosby).

Indeed Crosby recalled that he himself, in his earlier role as state director of the Queensland division, had withheld public funds from the federal office:

because we were broke, and so the state executive and the president in particular Paul Everingham said, 'We're not going to give it to the Feds when we're broke. It came to us and we'll keep it, thanks very much'.

In Canberra, however, Crosby had a different perspective, giving rise to what he called 'one of the most significant changes' in the party's handling of public funds. In advance of the 2001 election, Prime Minister Howard got 'jacked off' by the 'rear-guard action by some of the states' and moved to amend the public funding legislation in Parliament. The Commonwealth Electoral Amendment Act (2002) ensured that the Liberal Party's public funding entitlements would be paid to its Federal Secretariat rather than its state divisions:

As the Federal Secretariat of the Liberal Party is responsible for federal election campaigns, it is appropriate that all or part of the public funding be paid to the agent of the federal secretariat (Slipper, 2001).

The new arrangements thus gave the Federal Office effective control of the funds, reversing the previous position where it had been 'on the back foot ... mendicant' (Crosby). The achievement did not come without public gloating from Labor: the legislation was about imposing on the Liberal Party 'a resolution to its incessant internal bickering about the disbursement of public funding within their party', while the ALP had used the 'simple mechanism' in the existing legislation – the redirection agreements – to manage the internal allocation of its public funding (Faulkner, 2001).

Despite the injection of tens of millions of public dollars public funding, the parties' debt crises of the 1990s were succeeded by further campaign debts in the new millennium. Centenary House, built amid furore to earn an enduring cash income, was sold under Tim Gartrell's watch in 2005. Just as John Curtin House had been part-sold to pay the debts of the 1990 campaign, the Centenary House sale proceeds – reportedly more than \$30 million – were devoted to pay campaign costs. Hogg reflected with some disappointment on the sale:

That building – my effort, bluntly, and (Lend Lease) - was sold, paid for two winning state election campaigns and funded the last (2007) federal campaign when they sold it (Hogg).<sup>57</sup>

Even so, the 2007 campaign also ended with the ALP carrying a very significant debt burden, estimated by Bitar as at 'about \$8 million'. This was after receiving public funding of \$22 million.

The Liberal Party post-millennium does not appear to have plumbed the same depths of indebtedness and crisis as Labor. Yet funding problems recur, often as proxies for broader organisational strife. The resignation of party Treasurer, Michael Yabsley, and the leaking of his resignation letter, brought to the surface questions about financial management by Loughnane and of party President Alan Stockdale. Yabsley accused the pair of 'overruns in campaign expenditure that have created a situation where the party's reserves are well below the minimum \$3m required to meet statutory and other obligations' (Savva, 2010). Stockdale responded by revealing that Yabsley, a professional fundraiser, lacked accounting qualifications and had been spared the responsibility of managing the party's accounts (P. Williams, 2011b, 2011a). Former minister Peter Reith sought to replace Stockdale as president, but was defeated by a single vote; Reith's subsequent review of the 2010 campaign damned Loughnane with faint praise as having run a 'good' campaign but proposed the party appoint an in-house fundraiser on a commission basis. Reviving Robb's initiative of the 1990s, Reith advocated this fundraiser undertake high volume/ low value fundraising and issues-based fundraising (Reith 2011).

### **Debt-funded Campaigns: Living Beyond their Means**

From his unique perspective of having worked in Labor's national Head Office both before and after public funding, Walsh observed the changes it wrought in the ALP:

Before public funding (and) before the era of systematic fund raising in the private sector, things had been very tight. You had to raise all that you spent. You got certain affiliation fees from the unions, you got certain levies from the state branches which they reluctantly paid, but it wasn't till public funding really came in - that delivered amounts of millions of dollars in each election - that you had a stable financial base that you could use to professionally staff the organisation and conduct continuous or reasonably frequent polling, and to develop the skills and presentation capacities of your front line spokesmen.

Yet despite receiving tens of millions of dollars in new funding from the taxpayer, parties still lack a genuinely sustainable financial footing. Public funding has not achieved Mick Young's aspiration of reducing socially wasteful campaign expenditure; nor did it save either party from going 'cap in hand ... to the corporate bosses' in McMullan's words. In 2008, public funding constituted only around one-fifth of total receipts by each of the major parties over the electoral cycle; the balance comes through a wide range of fundraising activities involving party members, affiliates, members of the public and corporations (Australian Government. Special Minister for State, 2008: 11-13). Public funding has simply been integrated, by both parties, as one element of ever-expanding campaign budgets. As Gartrell noted, public funding provides a base level of funding for television advertising:

Probably the biggest change for the Secretary's role is that when public funding was introduced, which I think was in '84, (this) basically meant there was always at least some capacity to run a campaign. The asset streams change over time, depending on things like the (Global Financial Crisis) or property and all the rest. But the one thing that's comforting for the modern National Secretary is that you know every three years that there will be enough resources to run the TV advertising.

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<sup>57</sup> Labor won state elections in New South Wales and Queensland in 1995. Since the sale of Centenary House, the ALP's national office has occupied rented premises in Canberra, while sharing accommodation in Sydney with the New South Wales branch.

According to Bitar, public funding is 'factored in' to the budget and fully expended during the campaign. Because public funding payments (and many donations) arrive *after* the campaign, they are used to repay debt incurred *during* the campaign. This was the approach adopted by Combe in 1975 in relation to the Iraqi loans, by Gray in the 1990s, and by Bitar in 2010:

All the campaigns were financed substantially by bank overdraft, and then you paid the bank overdraft back from campaign donations (Gray).

We paid the creditors but it was on the credit card, so our interest payments alone were hard enough to keep up with (Bitar).

This practice of 'factoring in' public funding receipts entrenches a structural reliance by Head Office on corporate and private donations and, ultimately, on bank debt:

Nationally you've got no union affiliation fees, you've got no party membership fees, so pretty much you're relying on the returns on your assets, if the party has any assets, and you're relying on donations from unions and corporates. So it is real Struggle Street.

There may be some Labor-specific factors at work here. Bitar suggested the short terms served by Labor national secretaries was a driver of the debt-funded practice:

There is no long term planning. Most party secretaries are not there long-term, they are not there for 20 years, they take a very short term view of ... what they need to achieve. Because they're not around long term, not many of them think about the budget either. A lot of these people want to go into parliament or want to do something else in politics, so the result that they deliver as party secretary has an impact on the way they're viewed. So unfortunately what that means is, financially you operate from election to election, and usually at every election the party ... goes into debt.

### **Discussion**

The response by party officials to the funding imperative lends some support to the long-standing idea of the ALP as the party of 'initiative' in Australian politics (Simms, 2009b). Graeme Orr (2010: 241) has noted that the ALP 'continues to show a greater interest in regulating political finance than the more libertarian Liberal Party'. Labor's record confirms this, though practical factors loom as large as ideological factors here. The Leader's Special Fund, the conflicted Rubensohn relationship, the audit of Wyndham, the disastrous quest for Iraqi loans, the censure of Combe, the inability to maintain a property asset all suggest a party struggling to manage its finances. Necessity appears to have been the mother of invention. From a nomadic squatter, Labor became a homeowner and a landlord, building a portfolio of property investments - before largely dismantling it. The Labor-inspired introduction of party funding in 1984, its generous bipartisan reformulation in 1995, and the inflation-adjusted increases which by 2010 had lifted the aggregate level of public funds for political parties to \$53 million, have provided both parties with a stable level of campaign funding. Labor's continued union support, its improved performance in raising funds from the business community, and the apparent loss of some Liberal donors because of the disclosure provisions, have also served to elevate Labor to contest election campaigns on a roughly equal footing with its historically better-resourced Liberal rivals. By contrast with these initiatives by the ALP's National Secretaries, their Liberal Party counterparts were caught up in 'tortuous', though ultimately successful, efforts to secure control of party funds from their state divisions. Their only truly innovative fundraising proposal - Robb's plan to harness the party's data bases to run national high-volume low-value fundraising - foundered on these same rocks of federalism.

Beyond such party-specific analysis, however, officials of both parties respond to the same imperative: to fund the professionalised campaign model. None of the officials suggested they were satisfied with the level of party funding; to the contrary, they would agree with Bitar's assessment of the stressful professional challenge to make ends meet:

Financially you're cash strapped, which puts a lot of stress and pressure on the party organisation. How do you run an organisation, how do you employ officials, how do you run training programs, how do you develop pamphlets, brochures, how do you train people in campaign techniques, how do you develop a professional organisation when you've got no money? I think that's one of the biggest challenges organisations have. You are trying to run a professional organisation with no money whatsoever.

Loughnane likewise acknowledged that

one of the key jobs of a director – state director but particularly Federal Director – is the allocation of scarce resources. You've got no shortage of ideas and demands but conserving resources and allocating resources is a very important question.

Bitar declared the ALP existed on 'Struggle Street' and Loughnane sardonically observed that:

There's nothing wrong with the operations of any political party that another 3 or 4 million dollars wouldn't solve, in my view, to be very frank.

Thus from the officials' perspective, the parties only rarely and intermittently experience self-sufficiency and what they believe to be campaign adequacy. The competitive dynamic of campaigning and the ever-expanding range of capital-intensive campaign tools mean parties live precariously beyond their means and frequently in debt. For national campaign directors engaged in a struggle for electoral victory, demand for resources invariably outstrips their availability, spending is preferable to saving, and the certainty of debt trumps the risk of defeat. Thus party finances can never reach a stable point of adequacy. Indeed, ever-expanding campaign needs have prompted deeper debt and greater reliance on public or private cash. Normative aspirations may be held for the parties to operate without reliance on donors, banks, vested interests and taxpayers. But any such notions of financial autonomy have become increasingly out of reach, as the professional campaign model came to dominate Australian election campaigning.

## **Conclusion: Party Officials, Party Professionalisation – and Party Decline?**

**N**ational party officials have existed in Australia for nearly one hundred years, since the 1915 decision by the Australian Labor Party's Federal Executive to elect a Federal Secretary. For three decades, these were honorary part-timers engaged in clerical work; their real energies were focussed elsewhere than on the under-resourced national Head Office. It was not until Cleland's appointment in 1945 as the first Federal Director of the Liberal Party that a full-time national party official was paid. The appointment marked the first step in a professionalisation process that took place within the Australian parties and campaigns over the next seven decades.

The research presented in the thesis demonstrates the critically important contribution of the national party officials to the professionalisation process. Recognising the electoral logic that rewarded parties for mounting coordinated and consistent election campaigns, they centralised, they strategised and they raised funds. Apart from differences of timing and sequence, there is little evidence that professionalisation in the ALP differed fundamentally from professionalisation in the Liberal Party. Overcoming the federalist practices of previous decades in which campaign management had been the responsibility of the states, national party officials of both parties, designated as national campaign directors, set about creating a national approach to campaigning in which they played the central managerial role. They strengthened their Head Offices, co-opted their state colleagues, imposed consistent communications, engaged specialist marketing agencies and generally sought to build the authority of the national party. Having thus established control of national campaigning, they also developed their capacity to plan and execute a campaign strategy. Campaign strategies constitute plans of action that prescribe the necessary path to the party's goal of electoral success. Formulating the strategy and implementing it through an overlapping sequence of interrelated tasks over the entire electoral cycle became the distinctive task of the national party official. These tasks included the use of intelligence gathering through market research, developing and disseminating the campaign message, targeting the message and conducting post-campaign reviews – tasks which required borrowing from and adapting the skills and techniques of commercial marketing within an environment of rapid technological and societal change. To meet the twin imperatives of centralisation and strategy, the party officials needed to confront a third, the funding imperative: they moved to free the national party of its mendicant dependency on the states and set about generating the very large sums of money necessary to implement the campaign strategy. Centralising, strategising and fundraising, these party officials assembled thereby the professional campaign model which now dominates Australian party activities.

In doing so, the officials themselves became campaign professionals. As we see in this research, the qualitative methodology has permitted party officials as expert informants to articulate the core characteristics of the professionalism they constructed in the Australian party context. Paid employees, they occupied a distinctive economic status; highly skilled and experienced campaign experts, they performed distinctive party functions to a high level of competence; and operating within party lines, they delivered a professional service by working to achieve the electoral interests of their client, the party. These economic, technical and ideological aspects of professionalism were not drawn from any textbook, party precedent, theoretical framework or international model. They were created by the party officials themselves, and applied in real time, in the face of competition both from within the party and from the rival campaign.

Taken together these changes constitute the process of professionalisation. Avoiding the trap of technological determinism which has limited the utility of previous models of campaign change, and placing endogenous factors at the heart of the change process, professionalisation is correctly understood as a path dependent process of institutional change. As the historical institutionalist approach suggests, the parties did shape their officials' role and behaviour in enduring fashion. The 'founding moments' of the two Head Offices – the appointment of Cleland in 1945 and the election of Stewart in 1915 – determined the character of succeeding party officials and

constrained their behaviour within party structures. They were in many respects creatures of party. They were party members. They became seasoned campaigners through gaining experience within the party apparatus. They were selected by their parties to high executive office. Significantly, they assumed a professional identity without shedding their partisan affiliation. Indeed partisanship was integrally associated with their professional identity; their work as professionals was dedicated to serving their client, the party, through achieving what they believed was its superordinate goal of electoral success.

Yet the party officials proved to be more than the unwitting subjects of powerful impersonal institutions. Adaptive, innovative and empowered, these human agents challenged many of the existing rules and conventions of their party institutions. The parties' distinctive methods of selecting their officials were gradually modified to accommodate the professional needs of these new party actors. The parties' original intent that the officials should perform administrative or clerical work - captured in titles such as 'secretary' and 'secretariat' - was progressively outmoded as the officials assumed the new title, and the formidable new role, of national campaign director. Election campaigning became a more important, even all-encompassing, party activity based around techniques adapted, by the party officials, from commercial marketing. Head Offices grew in resources, skills and influence, especially at the expense of state branches and inevitably - as the evidence presented here suggests - coming into conflict with the parliamentary wing and party leader. If institutions are, as Sanders (2006) suggests, simply 'rule structures', then professionalisation can be understood in historical institutionalist terms as a process of rules change. Rules developed over decades within path dependent party institutions - for example, federal rules of campaign management, or rules governing the selection of party officials - were found to be inconsistent with the emerging needs of professional campaigning. Accordingly they were gradually supplanted by new practices, conventions and identities - the rules of professionalism - formulated in large part by the emerging campaign professionals. The introduction of these new rules - the process of professionalisation - brought about institutional change.

Historical institutionalism employs 'thick' descriptive narrative to unravel its unavoidably long causal chains. The thesis has used the voices of the party officials, supported where relevant by documentation, to elaborate in some detail the many components and aspects of the professionalisation of Australia's two major parties. The structure of the argument is essentially thematic. However the party officials interviewed for this research constitute a sequence through time; each individual official occupied Head Office for only a short span of what has been a decades-long process of professionalisation. It is possible to recast the thematic material into a chronological narrative. In this sense professionalisation of the Australian parties can be presented as having occurred in three phases.

The first phase (1945-1972) saw the *emergence* of professionalisation. Starting with Cleland's appointment, the Liberal Party created a well-resourced national Head Office and in 1949 conducted an intensive, protracted, expensive campaign of radio broadcasting - the first, though isolated, example of the professional campaign model. Once in government, the Liberal Party continued to take steps towards professionalisation, building the image of the parliamentary leader and subscribing to survey research (1954). But professionalisation in the Liberal Party was held back by its Head Office's continuing subordination to the parliamentary leader and - despite coordinating mechanisms such as the Staff Planning Committee - by its unresolved contests for authority and money with powerful state divisions, which retained control of campaign management, external advertising agencies and fundraising. The ALP lagged much further behind. Efforts to emulate the Liberal initiative of a full-time paid official were repeatedly thwarted by lack of resources and by jealous state control of campaign management; likewise its early (1951) insights into marginal seat campaigning could not be realised. The relatively late introduction of commercial television broadcasting into Australia, combined with early Liberal scepticism about its importance to campaigning, further delayed professional campaigning; the first campaign broadcasts occurred in the 1958 elections. The Liberal Head Office was located permanently its own headquarters in Canberra from 1965. Labor's effort to professionalise its operations with the

appointment of Wyndham (from 1963) and to coordinate its state branches through mechanisms such as the National Organising and Planning Committee (1960s) came to grief with Wyndham's 1969 ouster. Yet from this point Labor's campaign professionalisation increased rapidly and surpassed that of the flagging Liberals. With its survey research-driven pre-campaign (1971), its appointment of Young as the national campaign director chairing a national campaign committee (1972), Labor conducted the first recognisably modern professional election campaign with its emotive 'It's Time' television advertising campaign (1972).

The next quarter-century (1973-2000) saw a second, *intensification*, phase in which both parties pushed ahead on many fronts to consolidate and expand campaign professionalisation. After the Liberals' restructure (1974) and the 'catch-up' appointment of Eggleton as national campaign director (1975), both Head Offices were emphatically recognised as, and operated as, the principal authority for national campaign management. Labor 'caught-up' by establishing its own permanent national Head Office building in Canberra (1974), as part of a broader plan to professionalise its financial arrangements; campaign funding was removed from parliamentary control permitting Head Office to appoint a new marketing agency (1975). Labor confirmed its national character by dropping the word 'Federal' from its titles (1975). Once dominant state divisions and branches were progressively co-opted into the national campaign projects in both parties; parliamentary wings also found themselves dependent on the growing campaign expertise of autonomous Head Offices staffed by a pipeline of seasoned campaign practitioners, especially on the Labor side. Successful insurgency campaigns in 1975 and 1983, in the mould of 1949 and 1972, delivered victory for opposition parties. But unlike the emergence phase, with its 23-year period of Liberal government, the intensification phase saw more regular alternation with both parties enjoying substantial periods in office. It was as governing parties that Labor (under McMullan and Hogg in the 1980s) followed by the Liberals (under Robb and Crosby in the 1990s) brought the professional campaign model to its high point. A critical development was the qualitative market research commissioned by and provided to Head Office by researchers Cameron (ALP) and Textor (Liberal). This research allowed governing parties to link their campaign strategies to disciplined policy development. They also proved adept at identifying and defending their marginally-held seats (notably, ALP 1987 and Liberals 1998), supplementing national television advertising with highly targeted localised campaigns including direct mail driven by early-stage computerisation (mid-1980s) and regional television (Liberals 1998). Working closely with research agencies, commercial advertising agencies were themselves increasingly constituted as party-specific teams. The spiralling costs of capital-intensive campaign machinery drove a diversification of party funding sources and the scandal of the Iraqi loans debacle. This led to the introduction (1984) and expansion (1995) of public funding; parties competed for corporate donations and experimented with property investments and direct-mail fundraising.

From around the start of the new century a third phase of professionalisation has commenced which, while incomplete, can be described as a phase of *diversification and deadlock*. Campaigning remains centrally planned and strategically driven within both parties. But fragmentation of television audiences, expansion of data base capacity and the rise of the internet have created more diverse delivery channels and facilitated even more highly targeted, localised and even personalised communications. Identically motivated to secure electoral success at the other's expense and highly averse to the risk of defeat, each Head Office is locked in a ceaseless quest for competitive advantage with professionalising initiatives by one met and matched by the other. Yet equally available to both parties, such techniques have delivered no decisive advantage to either party; as a result campaigns are increasingly competitive in execution, similar in style and negative in tone. A kind of deadlock has emerged with a number of apparently malign characteristics. In line with the campaign logic of centralised and consistent communications, political expression by voters, members and candidates is severely limited by Head Offices. Market research continues to be the central tool of party strategy but is used less to open up strategic choices than to narrow them; rather than promoting deliberative consideration of policy alternatives by informed voters, parties often choose the less risky path of recycling swinging voters' own values and prejudices back to them, in their own language. Market research has also, controversially, become a routine element of the leadership destabilisation which afflicts both



parties. Where Michels predicted party oligarchs presiding over disempowered members, in this phase oligarchy presides over depopulated branches; party members have simply exited leaving hollowed-out structures. Yet campaign costs continue to spiral and despite taxpayer support professionalised parties appear chronically indebted.

Over these three phases, professionalisation within each party took somewhat different paths, and occurred at different rates. The Liberals' earlier payment of officers and establishment of national headquarters suggest they were better resourced than Labor; Labor was able to use its state branches as a training ground for its national officers, while its practice of internal democracy resulted in contested elections in contrast to the Liberals' more stable appointment methods. Incumbency status emerges as a more important determinant of professionalisation than party ideology. However in considering the professionalisation process, differences of ideology, structure or resources should not be overstated. These rival parties – studies in contrast, created in different ways, at different times, by different social groups, with different structures, policies and practices – developed similar 'catch-all' (Kirchheimer, 1966) responses to their changing relationship with civil society, shedding grass-roots members and coming increasingly to resemble each other as professionalised campaign organisations. Most strikingly, both parties engaged campaign professionals, whose similar methods and goals in strongly empowered Head Offices led to professionalisation of campaigning in both parties. Oddly neglected in party scholarship, party officials emerge in this analysis as playing the central, distinctive, role in the professionalisation process. In thus confirming the hypothesis of this research project, the thesis provides a more complete explanation of the professionalisation process than has been previously available. Political parties are not victims of technological change, and professionalisation cannot be adequately understood as an externally-generated imposition on the parties' otherwise stable structures and attitudes. Rather professionalisation is an adaptive response in which human agents – including, at the centre of the stage, the campaign professionals themselves – seek to arrange and re-arrange institutional structures and rules so as to promote the survival, and the electoral success, of their party.

It perhaps needs to be repeated that the research has focussed on the production not the consumption of electoral politics – that is, on those who claim to 'manage' election campaigns rather than those who participate in them as candidates or voters. Questions of participation, accountability and representation are of course vital and legitimate concerns of electoral studies. But they must not be permitted to crowd out the managerial perspective presented here. The evidence of the interviews reveals party officials as managers, concerned with implementing a set of managerial operations to improve the parties' campaign effectiveness. These operations include, as we have seen, organisational rearrangements aimed at reducing duplication and increasing consistency and coordination through centralisation of control, strategic planning to develop plans of action and implement them through rationally targeted resource allocation and message dissemination, and concentrated efforts to acquire resources, including campaign 'know how' as well as financial resources, to improve scale and achieve sustainability. Understanding election campaigns as managerial exercises also provides a valuable corrective to those campaign studies that prioritise advertising and other campaign communications. In the managerial perspective these activities are the visible and short-run outputs or manifestations of a more enduring, underlying campaign strategy which should therefore be the proper focus of scholarly and journalistic attention. It is of course precisely because of its central importance that the strategy document is closely held by campaign organisations; attention is directed instead to the message which they have constructed for public consumption.

That said, the professional campaign model does not, and cannot, provide any guarantee that voters will actually confer electoral success to a professionalised party. The more important point is that the professional campaign model is believed, not least by those within Head Office, to be necessary and effective. A contest between a professionalised Liberal Party and a professionalised ALP can still only have one winner. But a series of contests is likely to have more even outcomes – a particular characteristic of the deadlocked third phase of professionalisation. That this has in fact occurred is shown by the performance record of the professional campaign model since 1972.

Taking Labor's 1972 'It's Time' campaign as the first of the professional campaigns, the forty years to December 2012 have seen remarkable parity between the two major party groupings. As Table 7 shows, the Coalition won seven of the sixteen elections in that time, and Labor nine. Over that same period, the two parties have governed for almost exactly the same amount of time: Labor for less than 53 per cent of the time (21 years 1 month) and the Coalition for more than 47 per cent (18 years and 11 months).<sup>58</sup> The 2010 election, which produced the historically extraordinary result of a hung parliament, only underlines the delicate balance between the two combatants. By contrast, in the pre-1972 emergent phase of professionalisation the Liberal Party won nine of the ten elections and governed for 23 unbroken years.

**Table 7: 40-year Electoral Record of the Professional Campaign Model (1972-2012)**

Election dates by governing party, and intervals between elections in years and months

ALP		Coalition	
Dec 72 – Mar 74	1y 5m		
Mar 74 – Dec 75	1y 7m		
		Dec 75 – Dec 77	2y
		Dec 77 – Oct 80	2y 10m
		Oct 80 – Mar 83	2y 5m
Mar 83 – Dec 84	1y 9m		
Dec 84 – Jul 87	2y 7m		
Jul 87 – Mar 90	2y 8m		
Mar 90 – Mar 93	3y		
Mar 93 – Mar 96	3y		
		Mar 96 – Oct 98	2y 7m
		Oct 98 – Nov 01	3y 1m
		Nov 01 – Oct 04	2y 11m
		Oct 04 – Oct 07	3y 1m
Oct 07 – Aug 10	2y 9m		
Aug 10 – Dec 2012	2y 4m		
<b>From 1972:</b>			
<i>Won 9 elections (3 from opposition and 6 re-elections as incumbent)</i>	<i>Governed for 21 years 1 month (52.75%)</i>	<i>Won 7 elections (2 from opposition and 5 re-elections as incumbent)</i>	<i>Governed for 18 years 11 months (47.25%)</i>

This volatility can give neither party confidence its professionalised campaign model will deliver electoral success. Yet such is the competitive electoral environment and the aversion to loss, uncertainty only reinforces each side's determination to find a potentially winning advantage. This logic also helps explain why party officials are not always held to account when managing a losing campaign. Commercial marketing campaigns can succeed at the margin – by growing market share or brand awareness for example – and can show clear process of cause and effect. Electoral campaigns by contrast will always generate a clear winner and loser, no matter how close the margin; yet amid the many variables at play, cause and effect is inherently obscure. In the absence of objective evidence and definitive explanations, competent campaign professionals themselves can legitimately disagree, given their subjective perceptions and experiential knowledge. Was it a good campaign strategy poorly executed (perhaps Labor in 2004)? Or was it well conceived and well executed and yet still fell short (Labor in 1969 or Liberals in 1990)? Did it succeed only after mid-campaign shifts (Labor 1974) or last-minute gambles (Liberals 1980) or unexpected wildcards (the 9/11 attacks and the *Tampa* incident in 2001)? Besides, accountability itself is hotly contested in political parties. As Bitar grimly acknowledged, the glory of victory is claimed by the parliamentarians, but 'when things go bad, the first person who gets blamed is always the party official'.

<sup>58</sup> 'Time in government' is counted here as the interval between elections rather than the sitting dates of the House of Representatives.

In discussing the distinctive role of the party officials in the professionalisation process, the thesis has drawn on a three-face two-level framework of party structure. The framework locates the tensions and conflicts between and within each of the faces which have characterised the professionalisation process – in particular, the struggle by Head Office to centralise campaign authority at the expense of state branches and in the contested terrain lying between the national party official and the parliamentary leader. This analysis is borne out by the qualitative research presented here. It is also richly confirmed by Katz and Mair's (1993) prediction of conflict between leaders of these different faces. Yet it is harder to agree with their conclusion, that the central office is losing its 'centrality' and authority to the parliamentary party. Certainly, there is evidence that the party in public office has been strengthened by the acquisition of influential private staff (Walter, 1986; Holland, 2002; Tiernan, 2007), communications allowances, marketing budgets and the like (Peisley & Ward, 2001; Johns, 2006; I. Ward, 2006: 89; S. Young, 2007). Yet the central office has also acquired new resources: in Australia, public funding is directed to the party central office, not (as in Katz and Mair) the parliamentary party; private corporate donations are also typically handled by the party central office. The party central office also controls the commissioning and dissemination of market research which, as we have seen, is central to the party's electoral strategy and not infrequently a tool in the destabilisation of the parliamentary leader – a point not considered by Katz and Mair or for that matter in the model of party leader succession developed by Bynander and 't Hart (2007). Thus reports of the demise of the central office may be not only premature but misdirected. Indeed, as parliamentary leadership itself becomes more tenuous and contested – seven individuals have served as Opposition Leader since 1996 – the central office may well occupy a more not less salient role in party affairs, as a stable repository of organisational memory and campaign preparedness.

More compelling is the confirmation provided in this research of Katz and Mair's broader argument about the emergence of the 'cartel' party as a new, post-'catch-all', model of party organisation (Katz & Mair, 1995; Blyth & Katz, 2005; Katz & Mair, 2009). In this model, parties increasingly behave like members of a cartel, colluding to capture the resources of the state to promote their own electoral success at the expense of new entrants. Cartel parties conduct election campaigns that are 'capital-intensive, professional and centralised' (Katz and Mair 1995: 20-2). The concept of the cartel party, originally devised to explain power sharing in European multiparty systems built on proportional representation, has been applied to the study of parties in many other democratic contexts. In Australia, it has met with significant resistance: Australia's bi-polar party competition and 'winner-take-all' electoral system permit little of the accommodative behaviour of European legislatures (R. Smith & O'Mahoney, 2006: 97-8), while major party collusion does not in fact appear to have excluded minor parties (Goot, 2006). Katz and Mair's contention (1995: 20-2) that democratic elections themselves become little more than state-sponsored rituals for a civil society that is ruled rather than ruling does not appear necessary to the theory. On the other hand, the cartel party thesis is recognisable in the way the major Australian parties, having lost their roots in civil society, have sustained their activities through securing subsidies from the state – notably, through public electoral funding (I. Ward, 2006). Critics have refused to accept this as evidence of cartel-like collusion, arguing public funding was actually opposed by the Liberal Party and does not operate in practice to exclude minor parties. It is true as we have seen that the public funding reform was led by the ALP. However the ready acquiescence of the Liberal Party, and its cooperation in the 1995 increases, suggest its initial reluctance may have been a tactical response, more about the disclosure provisions than with the new funding itself. Indeed, the major parties, cartel-like, have jointly benefitted from public funding and have done so in ways that minor parties cannot. Specifically, public funding allows the major parties to mount capital-intensive professional campaigning; even with public funding, minor parties still cannot afford to do so. It is no coincidence, moreover, that the ALP and the Liberal Party alone are able to employ campaign professionals who are the architects of the professional campaign model and who, as we have seen, are tasked with generating the large sums of money needed to fund it. Driven by the funding imperative, they seek to shape the rules and norms of the electoral environment including the funding regime. To the extent that the officials have captured public funding in this effort, then Australian parties do indeed conform to the cartel model.

The recurring theme of this research is the centrality of party officials in the professionalisation process in Australia. Yet many aspects of the Head Office, its relationship with the broader party structure, and its role in the professional campaign model, remain to be illuminated by further research. This thesis has concentrated exclusively on national party officials and indeed, on those national officials who have occupied the senior-most role in the respective Head Offices. Future research could relax this tight focus to investigate others in the national Head Office who were closely involved in election campaigning, such as the Liberals' long term campaign operative Graham Morris who, in Eggleton's admiring phrase, would have earned enough campaign medals 'to cover his whole chest', and ALP deputy national secretaries Ken Bennett and Candy Broad. State party officials have only received sporadic, individual attention (for example, Hancock's (2006) study of John Carrick); study of the various responses by state officials to the centralisation process described here would further elucidate this important organisational transformation. Moving outside the organisational face, further interviews could include central actors in the parliamentary wing, such as Prime Ministerial advisers Peter Barron and Bob Sorby (Hawke), Don Russell (Keating), and Arthur Sinodinos (Howard). The emergence of political consultants such as Lynton Crosby and Mark Textor and Labor's Bruce Hawker opens the possibility of new arrangements for managing party campaigns. Gender issues – specifically, the puzzlingly complete absence of women from the senior-most party roles – also deserve further consideration. More generally, campaign scholars must develop a more complete understanding of the role of strategy – its development and implementation – in determining electoral and political outcomes. Moving outside the major parties, research of the minor parties such as the Greens could be directed at substantiating the extent to which professional campaigning has penetrated parties whose electoral goals fall short of seeking government. Indeed, research of campaigning by the trade union movement, the voluntary non-profit sector and the emerging social media-based networks might well reveal that the professional campaign model has become the norm for political campaigns of all genres; if so, issues of control, participation and funding will loom large for these organisations as they have done for the major parties.

The starting point of the thesis was to note the centrality of parties to the operation of representative democracy in Australia. The research findings have underlined that fundamental point. To be sure, electoral support for parties may be falling. Party membership is certainly in dramatic decline. Party linkages of participation and representation between citizen and the state may be weakening as a result. But there is no sign that parties are in retreat from their defining role in seeking and attaining political office. To the contrary, they remain entrenched in the legislature and equipped with empowered Head Offices. Their proven capacity to contest elections is undiminished and in important respects strengthened. The research thus challenges the frequent conclusion of party scholars that parties are in decline. For many scholars, especially in the United States, parties have substantially exited the campaign arena and have been replaced by candidate-centred campaign organisations of non-party, commercial, consultants. The rise of the professional campaign model is equated with, almost a measure of, the decline of party. Yet in Australia, the party directs the marketing consultants, not the other way around; and the Head Office is far from surrendering campaign control to the parliamentarians.

'Parties are, if nothing else, survivors' (Dalton, et al., 2011: 14). Indeed, parties are alive and well and planning the next election campaign. Their institutional longevity and continued relevance is a triumph of adaptive response in an environment of change and competition. That response was driven by the party officials in Head Office. To advance their party's central purpose, the pursuit of office, the officials centralised their resources, learned or bought new campaign skills, honed their strategic perspectives and secured new resources to sustain their organisation. In short, they fashioned a new, professionalised, model of party activity and assumed the identity of campaign professionals. Their work is central to the work of parties and they are integral to the character and standing of parties. As parties continue to pursue electoral success, the role of the campaign professional is unlikely to diminish.



## Appendix One

### Party Officials: Biographical Notes

This appendix provides summary biographies of all the officials who were interviewed for this research. Unless otherwise indicated, quotations are from the interviews. In addition, biographies of Mick Young and Bede Hartcher are provided given their periods in Head Office overlapped with the coverage of the interviews. Most of the earlier officials are covered by the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. These include all the Labor officials up the 1960s: Arch Stewart (Love, 1990), Dan McNamara (Cook, 1986), Pat Kennelly (Love, 2007), Matteo 'Jack' Schmella (Cross, 2002) and F E 'Joe' Chamberlain (Oliver, 2007). Among the Liberals, the *ADB* covers Don Cleland (Nelson, 1993). Bob Willoughby does not yet appear and the reader is referred to press reports (Whittington, 1961; Smark, 1967a; Stephens, 1969).

### Australian Labor Party

**Cyril Wyndham:** Born in London in 1930, Cyril Isaac was educated at Kingston Day Commercial College. Joining the British Labour Party's 'Labor League of Youth' as a 14-year old, he was an active schoolboy canvasser for the Party's candidates in his St Helier area of suburban west London. He won a year's trade union scholarship to the London School of Economics, and also saw service (1948-50) in the Royal Army Service Corps. At the age of 17 he was hired as a clerk in Labour's Transport House headquarters. Netta Burns, an Australian who later worked with Wyndham in Canberra, recalled him as 'the office boy who handed me my money every week'; but he was soon appointed as personal assistant of the Party's general secretary Morgan Phillips (1950-53) and worked in the international department travelling extensively in Europe. He was also elected alderman of the local Merton and Molden council. When the British Labour Party hosted the Commonwealth Labour Parties' Conference in London in 1957, Isaac was charged with looking after the Australian delegation: parliamentary leader 'Doc' Evatt, Chamberlain as Federal President and Schmella as Federal Secretary. Chamberlain recalls that Isaac 'did a great job of looking after us' (Chamberlain, 1998); Evatt, evidently equally impressed, invited the 27-year old to come and work on his staff in Australia. Keen to put his London past behind him, he determined in Australia to change his surname, and as Cyril Wyndham he worked with Evatt until his retirement in 1960; when Evatt retired, he was the only staffer taken on by the new party leader Arthur Calwell. By the end of 1960, and with the support of Calwell and Chamberlain, he defeated twelve other candidates to be elected state secretary of the Victorian branch (Reid, 1971; Freudenberg, 1977).

Lacking a factional or union power base, he set out to serve the party as a whole and proved industrious, capable and dedicated. Victoria's electoral record at the time was poor, its failure to win seats having been a critical factor in Labour's narrow defeat in the 1961 federal election. Wyndham managed to secure an unexpected win for Labor in a Liberal seat in state by-election (Broadmeadows, 1962). Wyndham's elevation to the Federal office was confirmed by Federal Conference in October 1963; he commenced duties as Federal Secretary in January 1964, opening federal Labor's first presence in the national capital in 'a small, ratty office suite at the top of the world's most ancient lift' (Ramsey, 1996). His appointment immediately improved the party's administration. Wyndham was an impeccable and rapid shorthand writer and minute keeper (Freudenberg, 1977; Burns, 1993). He analysed federal voting statistics to trace shifts in popular sentiment at national and state level (Wyndham, 1966a). He was also a fluent pamphleteer, articulating the Party's case against communism (Wyndham, 1964) and the National Civic Council (Wyndham, 1965b), both at the direction of the Federal Executive, and promoted the party in lengthy articles in public journals (Wyndham, 1966a, 1968). He became an articulate internal critic of party attitudes and structures; at a speech to the Young Labor Association in 1965 he attacked those who 'prevaricate our policy, indulge in the futile exercise of factional strife, and behave like a collection of political delinquents' (Wyndham, 1965a); in a 1968 speech to the Labor Women's Organisation he reportedly described aspects of the party as 'ridiculous, absurd and criminal'. Newspaper columnists referred to him as 'Cerebral Cyril', Labor's 'Mighty Atom', the Cockney

Sparrow, 'a new broom for an untidy party', 'a professional among amateurs' (Sorell, 1968); a 'frustrated reformer' (Smark, 1967b) and 'the little Englishman, who ... worked like a drover's sheep dog to rehabilitate the ALP' (Reid, 1971: 261).

Yet Labor's 'grand plans for an adequately staffed national secretariat' to support Wyndham were never delivered (McMullin, 1991: 324); in 1967 the full staff complement was 'Cyril plus two' secretaries (Burns, 1993). Wyndham was further frustrated by his inability to make progress on what had become his principal mission as Federal Secretary, to reform Labor's antiquated national decision-making structures. The 'Wyndham Plan' was a wide-ranging proposal to enlarge and reconstruct the Federal Conference and the Federal Executive, provide rank and file members with direct input into the federal party, improve party finances, and broaden the party's appeal to women and young voters. A key element involved including the parliamentary leadership as members of the federal executive, effectively diluting the power of the paid state branch officials, in the wake of the 'faceless men' affair of 1963 (McMullin, 1991: 294). The reforms thus placed Wyndham at the intersection of powerful fissures emerging in the party: between traditionalists and modernisers, led by Gough Whitlam the party's deputy leader from 1960; between the Left faction which dominated the executive and the Right represented by Whitlam; between the party organisation and the parliamentary leadership; and between the state branches and the emerging influence of the federal structure with its full-time secretary. Wyndham's erstwhile promoter Chamberlain, with his power base in Western Australia, his reliance on 'the book' of party rules and his mistrust of parliamentarians, represented the archetypal Left traditionalist who stood to lose from reform. Their relationship soured. Wyndham's reform plan was debated at the 1965 Federal Conference and shelved (Freudenberg, 1977: 90; McMullin, 1991: 309-10). Wyndham attempted to force change on the state branches from below, by directly appealing to the party's rank and file members, but he was 'kept away' from branch members by the Executive (Botsman, 2011). Netta Burns, his secretary, recalled that the Executive barred Wyndham from travelling outside Canberra without permission (Burns, 1993). Labor's electoral debacle of 1966 perhaps further weakened his position. Wyndham's relations with Whitlam, party leader from 1967, also deteriorated following a disagreement about a redistribution proposal in 1968 (Freudenberg, 1977: 151-2).

Led by Chamberlain and the left, Executive 'made it impossible for him (Wyndham) to stay' (Burns 1993) and Wyndham – taciturn, unhappy, exhausted – opted to take up the vacant state secretary's role in New South Wales. He resigned as federal secretary in March 1969. However there was more to come. The Executive commissioned an audit of Wyndham's management of party funds from mid-1967; discrepancies were allegedly discovered. Wyndham was said to have misused party funds, variously to pay a garage bill of his wife's car, or to cover his travel costs while on party business (Burns 1993). Wyndham himself asserts that he 'came a cropper' because he used party funds to help Whitlam pay for a dinner with the Federal Executive on a visit to Sydney:

This is where I came a cropper. Gough - they didn't earn what they do now. Politicians. Nowhere near. He had (several) young children. I remember (laughs) we had the executive to lunch somewhere in Sydney. The meeting was in Sydney. He said to me, 'I suppose I'd better pay for these bastards'. Now I knew he was stretched. So I said, 'OK, I'll go halves with you'. Now I had no allowance, so it had to come out of party funds, and that was half my problem. ... They purported to find that I'd been rifling funds, which I hadn't. I'd been helping Gough out.

The auditor's report was debated at a two-day meeting of the Executive in May to which Wyndham was reported to have provided 'misleading' answers and he was unanimously censured (Anon, 1969; Australian Labor Party, 1969). Refusing to defend himself publicly, Wyndham took himself and his wife to Norfolk Island (Interview) and failed the following week to report for duty in New South Wales. He was dismissed. Yet the extraordinary vendetta continued. Journalist Alan Reid reported that Wyndham's enemies continued to 'feed out' highly damaging material against their former employee; Burns states that scurrilous leaflets about him were circulated at the party

conference in Victoria in June (Reid 1971; Burns 1993). Wyndham's only defender was the controversial journalist Maxwell Newton who, himself the subject of an extraordinary Commonwealth Police raid on his premises on the same day as the Federal Executive meeting, issued a statement that Wyndham had been 'ill-treated, maligned and smeared' by members of the executive (Reid 1971: 263). Politically, Wyndham's career was 'finished' (Freudenberg 1977).<sup>59</sup> Wyndham was offered a job by Newton, and worked for many years as his editorial controller and editor and columnist of Daily Commercial News (Newton, 1993). Wyndham lived in retirement in Newcastle until his death in July 2012.

**Mick Young:** Born in Sydney in 1936 and educated by the Marist Brothers until the age of 15 (McMullin, 1991: 324), Michael 'Mick' Young became a shearer in South Australia. An active and effective organiser for the Australian Workers Union, Young was elected South Australian state organiser of the ALP in 1964, working in the party's 'cramped and shabby quarters in one corner of the Trades Hall' (Blewett & Jaensch, 1971). With 'a golliwog's shock of black hair and a face that was a map of Ireland' (Reid, 1971), Young's 'outwardly jovial, even crude bonhomie masked a sharp intelligence, an openness to new ideas and a voracious appetite for work' (Blewett & Jaensch, 1971). Campaign manager for Premier Don Dunstan's narrow defeat in 1968, he was appointed state secretary in March 1968 and a year later was narrowly elected as federal secretary. Young did not relinquish his full-time role with the state branch; the party's national office shifted to Adelaide and Young 'carried the federal secretariat around in his briefcase for several years' (Brenchley, 1973). At the 1969 Federal Conference, Young won the sympathies of the media for hosting an open bar in his suite of the Chevron hotel (Oakes & Solomon, 1973: 20). After managing Labor's 1972 win, Young promptly resigned and returned to South Australia to secure preselection to the safe House of Representatives seat of Port Adelaide, which he held from 1974 to 1988. In the Hawke Government, Young was a brilliant and savage parliamentary performer as Leader of the House and, as Special Minister for State, oversaw the introduction of public funding of election campaigns. Having tipped off a contact about the imminent expulsion of the Russian spy Ivanov, Young was forced to resign his portfolio in 1983 but was reinstated and later appointed to the immigration portfolio. Young also served as national president of the ALP. He resigned from Parliament in 1988 to set up a business consultancy. He died of leukaemia in 1996.

**David Combe:** Born in Glenelg, South Australia in 1943 to a conservative family, David Combe was educated at Prince Alfred College and the University of Adelaide, where, as a second year politics student in 1962, he was inspired to join the Labor Party after hearing a speech about the White Australia Policy by then opposition frontbencher Don Dunstan. A friendship developed and when after the 1965 election Dunstan became Labor's attorney-general, Combe was hired as his press secretary (Parkin & Patience, 1981); transferred involuntarily to the office of Premier Frank Walsh, Combe rejoined his mentor's staff when Dunstan toppled Walsh. After the 1968 defeat, Young's promotion to the state secretaryship created a vacancy for an organiser; Combe was the first organiser selected from outside the union movement. Young's election as federal secretary likewise created the opportunity for Combe to succeed as state secretary in 1968 and again, when Young resigned as federal secretary, Combe succeeded him in 1973 at the age of 30. He was regarded by headline writers as a 'new look man at the helm' (Hill, 1975) and – thanks to his use of market research – as a 'numbers man' (P. Ward, 1977) and – thanks to his property development role – as a 'Labor entrepreneur' (Oakes, 1981). Combe's eight years as federal

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<sup>59</sup> Combe shed further light on this controversy: 'Cyril left the job under a cloud. It wasn't really a cloud. The presumption (was) that he was a crook. I remember that when I had time on my hands, after I went into the party office at 39 Ainslie Avenue, going through a lot of the old papers and it was very clear to me (that) Cyril was not a crook. He was very careless about money. All his accounts were to the nearest ten shillings, or the nearest pound. ... Which told me one thing: if they want to get you, they'll go for the books. So I would never sign a cheque the whole time I was there that had not been signed by the other two signatories first. I was always the last signatory on a cheque. I don't think Cyril was a crook and it's very sad that he went out that way. Because I think he was a modernising influence who was done over because he was too close to Gough.'



secretary remains a Labor record; he managed four federal campaigns, only one (1974) leading to victory.

Resigning in 1980 and defeated in a rank and file ballot for preselection in New South Wales (Wise, 1982), Combe set up a Canberra lobbying business hoping his political contacts with the new Hawke Government could open doors for commercial clients. Disastrously for him, one of his contacts was a Russian diplomat Valeriy Ivanov, who was exposed as a spy in the early days of the Hawke Government and expelled; Combe was essentially cut adrift by the party and his business imploded (Marr, 1984). Hawke was forced to set up a Royal Commission which investigated the whole affair (Marr, 1984). Labor's National Conference in 1984 passed a resolution noting the 'pain and distress' caused to Combe and his family and noting that there was 'no present impediment' to his dealing with the Commonwealth Government; but his career as a lobbyist was finished. Combe was later employed by the Australian Trade Commission as a trade commissioner in Canada (McMullin, 1991: 422-4).

**Bob McMullan:** Born in Perth in 1947, Robert 'Bob' McMullan attended Guildford Primary School and Governor Stirling High School and graduated from the University of Western Australia with degrees in arts and economics. An activist in the anti-Vietnam war campaign, McMullan in 1968 became the first West Australian to be exempted from conscription as a conscientious objector on political, as opposed to religious grounds (Uhlmann, 1995). An organiser first with the engine drivers' union and then with the prison officers', McMullan was elected the inaugural president of the Federal Labor Youth Organisation in 1971. He was elected assistant state secretary of the state ALP branch in 1973 and, with the absence through illness of the long-term state secretary Joe Chamberlain, frequently acted as the state secretary. He was elected to that post in 1975 and managed three unsuccessful state campaigns; elected National Secretary in 1981, he managed three successful national campaigns (1983, 1984 and 1987). In a 1986 speech to the Fabian Society, McMullan articulated a 'coherent sensible philosophy of power' for Labor based on its Swedish counterpart which, he said, preferred to 'stay in power even if it means taking reform more slowly', with each successive government laying groundwork for the future (Linton, 1985; McMullan, 1986, 13 April). A falling out with Hawke prompted McMullan to resign in 1988. He was elected Senator for the Australian Capital Territory from 1988; in 1996 he shifted to the House of Representatives and held several ministerial and shadow spokesman roles. He retired from Parliament in 2010.

**Bob Hogg:** Born in 1937 in Melbourne, Robert 'Bob' Hogg attended Brighton Technical College and the Caulfield Institute of Technology, where he did not complete a diploma of mechanical engineering. Hogg worked as a project engineer in the food industry in the early 1960s and joined the Caulfield branch of the ALP in late 1962. Active in the anti-hanging and anti-Vietnam war movements, Hogg did volunteer work in the 1966 federal campaign and contested a safe Liberal seat in the 1967 state election. Abandoning his well-paid technical career, he secured appointment as Labor's state organiser. He ran a successful by-election campaign in Bendigo in 1969 and worked on the 1970 Senate campaign, but the left-wing Victorian branch, under siege from Whitlam, was taken over the federal party and the office-holders, including Hogg, were dismissed. Hogg returned to technical work, this time in the printing industry, while working as an unpaid organiser for the socialist-left faction.

Hogg played little role in Whitlam's 1972 campaign. But while some on the left, notably state secretary Bill Hartley, remained isolationist, Hogg began reaching out to the small group of 'Independent' party reformers including John Button, Gareth Evans and Ian Turner and in 1976 secured broad support to win election as state secretary. With the right-wing Graham Richardson the new state secretary in New South Wales, Hogg made an unlikely but effective pair in working with Combe to bring a national perspective to federal campaigns. Likewise Hogg worked at 'convincing the contending factions of the necessity for co-existence' (Walter, 1986: 104) and helped secure the election of John Cain as Victorian party leader in 1981. Hogg managed the campaign that made him Premier in 1982 – state Labor's first win in nearly three decades (Costar & Hughes, 1983). Hogg's preparedness to transcend factions to secure electoral success was

displayed most dramatically in the 1982 Federal Conference where in defiance of his left colleagues he moved a compromise resolution on the party's controversial anti-uranium policy (McMullin, 1991: 405-6).

As state secretary, Hogg worked closely with Cain as Premier and, after Hawke's election, spent three years as a political adviser in the Prime Minister's office. He returned to Melbourne in 1986 to work with Cain again, before finally winning the national secretary's position in 1988. Labor's tenth national secretary, Hogg directed the 1990 campaign for Hawke's fourth victory and, more improbably, Keating's victory in the subsequent 'unwinnable' election in 1993. He retired almost immediately to join advertising agent John Singleton as deputy chairman (Hewett, 1993) and later wrote a newspaper column. Hogg made a brief cameo appearance in the 2007 election campaign as unofficial adviser to his partner, Maxine McKew, in her successful bid to unseat Prime Minister John Howard from the electorate of Bennelong.

**Gary Gray:** Born in 1958 in Rotherham, in Yorkshire in the United Kingdom, Gray migrated at the age of 8 with his family to Whyalla, South Australia, where his father worked with BHP. He was educated at Whyalla High School and joined the Whyalla branch of the ALP at the age of 16, describing himself as an 'active' member. 'An active party member is a person who attends your branch meetings, a person who can be relied upon in election campaigns, and a person who can be relied upon to support the community activities of the party' (Interview). He moved to Canberra to complete an economics degree at the Australian National University, and recalls visits to Parliament House to watch Question Time as a guest of his 'local' – that is, South Australian – member, Laurie Wallis. Advised in 1982 that a job was available with the NT Opposition Leader Bob Collins, Gray got in his car and drove to Darwin in three days (Ramsey, 1993). On a private visit to the UK in 1985, he worked for the British Labour Party for a year, meeting future Blair election campaigners Peter Mandelson, Phillip Gould and others. Gray travelled at his own expense to inspect the campaign capabilities of social democratic parties in France, Austria and Sweden. He returned to Australia in 1986 when McMullan, rebuilding the party after the scare of the 1984 election, advertised for two assistant national secretaries. Gray won one of the posts and worked as a national organiser, then assistant federal secretary, on the successful 1987 and 1990 campaigns with specific responsibility for marginal seat strategies and fundraising. Gray opted not to pursue a parliamentary career – despite the seat of Grey, covering Whyalla, becoming vacant – and, after Hogg's retirement, was elected as national secretary.

The 1996 election campaign in which Labor lost office was marked by acrimony between Gray and Prime Minister Keating (Gray, 1996; P. Williams, 1997). Gray also managed Opposition Leader Beazley's first defeat in 1998. He quit Head Office in 2000 to take up a corporate advisory role in Perth with resources giant Woodside Energy. He was elected to the House of Representatives in 2007 for the Perth seat of Brand and has served as a parliamentary Secretary and Minister in the Rudd and Gillard Governments; he is now Special Minister for State with responsibility for electoral reform.

**Geoff Walsh:** Born in Sydney in 1953, Geoff Walsh was educated at Melbourne's Caulfield Grammar School and graduated with an arts degree from La Trobe University. A newspaper journalist with the *Albury Border Morning Mail*, he was hired into the Canberra bureau of the Melbourne *Sun* by bureau chief Laurie Oakes in 1976 (Oakes, 2008) and later worked in Melbourne for *The Age*. Having joined the ALP in his late teens, he allowed his membership to lapse believing that a journalist should not be a party member; he rejoined upon being appointed in 1981 as National Communications Director for the ALP.

Walsh's career has been a series of short-term appointments within the ALP structure, the public service and business, usually dealing with media communications and political strategy. With the election of the Hawke Government in 1983, Walsh joined the new Prime Minister's staff as press secretary; in 1986 he moved to Geneva with the International Labour Organisation, but returned to Hawke's office as political adviser in the lead-up to the 1990 election. Joining the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) as the Canberra-based head of media, he returned to Parliament

House once more to head Prime Minister Keating's office in 1994 before returning to DFAT as Australian consul-general in Hong Kong, and then in Melbourne.

Walsh had considered seeking the national secretaryship after McMullan left in 1987 (Cockburn, 1987), and with Gray's departure and Labor in Opposition in 2000, Walsh was a strong candidate. He was elected with the support of party leader Kim Beazley. Leaving the ALP's Head Office after the defeat in 2001 (Walsh, 2002), Walsh worked with public affairs consultancy Gavin Anderson (2004-06), Victorian ALP Premier Steve Bracks (2006-07) and, from 2007, with BHP Billiton. He is a director of the Western Bulldogs Football (AFL) Club and was appointed a member of the Order of Australia in 2005.

**Tim Gartrell:** Born in Orange, NSW, in 1970, Tim Gartrell was educated locally and at the University of Sydney. His parents, 'conservative' orchardists, provided foster accommodation to babies and young children, providing Gartrell an early insight into social justice issues. Active at university in the anti-apartheid movement and other social causes, Gartrell joined the ALP's Darlington branch at the age of 19 and entered Labor party politics via Young Labor and the trade union movement. He worked first as a volunteer with the Municipal Officers Association while completing his University studies part-time; he then was employed by the Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union as a research officer during which he was assigned to run a local member's campaign in the 1993 Federal election. Working on the staff of Left-faction ministers Jeanette McHugh and Frank Walker and backbencher Anthony Albanese, Gartrell came to the attention of Gray who invited him to join Labor's Head Office in 1998 – first as a campaign assistant during the 1988 campaign, then as an organiser, until replacing assistant national secretary Candy Broad in 2000. In this capacity he served under Walsh in the 2001 campaign and, with Walsh's departure, succeeded him in 2003.

Gartrell's arrival coincided with a fresh round of turmoil in the parliamentary leadership, with Simon Crean replaced, without having led the party to an election, by Mark Latham in 2003. Gartrell managed Latham's disastrous 2004 election campaign, in which the Howard Government won majorities in both Houses of Parliament (Gartrell, 2005). Latham stood down and was replaced by Beazley for his second stint as Opposition Leader; Beazley in turn was replaced by Rudd in late 2006. Gartrell directed the successful "Kevin '07" campaign (Jackman, 2008; Hartcher, 2009) but resigned from Head Office shortly afterwards. He joined market research company Auspoll as CEO; he has subsequently headed two community campaign organisations, the indigenous advocacy group Generation One and then You Me Unity, which campaigns for constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

**Karl Bitar:** Born in 1971 in Sydney, Bitar spent six teenage years in his family's native Lebanon and attended an international American high school in Beirut. Amid the worsening civil war and in 1989 with 'bombs landing literally around our house', the family returned to Australia. Bitar completed HSC through Bankstown TAFE, and then an arts degree at the University of New South Wales, majoring in economics and research methods, statistics and computing. He was also working part-time, first with the Commonwealth Employment Service in Marrickville then in the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs as a labour market researcher in skills shortages.

Motivated by opposition to the Liberals' *Fightback* program, Bitar joined the Labor Party in 1992. He quickly became engaged in factional politics in Young Labor on behalf of the right, rising to senior-vice president and performing intensive 'foot soldier' campaign work throughout Sydney. Bitar's effort to secure preselection for the state seat of Canterbury in the mid-1990s was thwarted in a branch stacking row with the right's veteran warrior Leo McLeay MP – 'probably one of the biggest blues in the history of the party in NSW' – but, mentored by assistant state secretary Mark Arbib, he turned the tables on McLeay by winning election as state organiser in 1999. Bitar coordinated ethnic advertising in the 1999 state campaign and target seats in the 2003 campaign and, when Arbib became secretary in 2004, Bitar filled his slot as assistant secretary. He was Arbib's deputy campaign director in the 2007 state campaign and succeeded Arbib as NSW state

secretary in December 2007. He played a key role in the struggle between party and government over power privatisation which brought down Premier Morris Iemma, and promoted the appointment of his replacement Nathan Rees. But he served only ten months in Sussex Street, moving quickly when Gartrell's resignation was known to secure elevation to the national secretary's role in October 2008. Bitar was reportedly involved in the leaking of internal party polls that brought about the downfall of Prime Minister Rudd in mid-2010, and managed Labor's 2012 campaign which produced the hung parliament. Bitar quit the national Head Office in 2011 and has taken up consultancy work for Crown Casino, part of the Packer empire.

### **Liberal Party of Australia**

**Bede Hartcher:** Born in Sydney in 1918 and educated by the Marist Brothers in Darlinghurst, Hartcher began work as a clerk for the NSW State Railways. He completed an economics degree through part-time study at the University of Sydney. As the Liberal Party began staffing its new national office, Hartcher answered a newspaper advertisement in 1947 and was hired as a research officer in Sydney. He was to spend the rest of his career with the Liberal Party, either in the national office or on secondment to state branches including in Victoria from 1954-7 where he played a role in the election of Henry Bolte as Premier (Juddery, 1968). He succeeded W S Bengtsson as senior research officer in 1955 and became Federal Director in 1969 following the retirement of Bob Willoughby (Hancock, 2000: 290n). Hartcher was 'a tall, slightly stooped, loosely built man who looks as though he has just stopped leaning against the verandah post of one of Drysdale's country pubs' according to journalist Don Whittington (1961). Hartcher was Federal Director for the 1972 campaign when the Liberals lost office after 23 years in government, and nominally for the 1974 campaign. But he was a victim of the post-defeat restructure of the party and left Head Office in 1974 (see below). He worked as Finance Director of the party's NSW division for eighteen months but succumbed to illness and died in August 1977. The party's senior research officer, Dr Graeme Starr, who had also left the Secretariat at this time, dedicated his documentary history of the Liberal Party (Starr, 1980) to Hartcher's memory.

**Timothy Pascoe:** Born in Adelaide in 1940, Timothy Pascoe attended St Peter's College and then the University of Adelaide where he completed degrees in engineering and economics. Winning a Shell scholarship for pure and applied science, he completed a PhD in operations research at Cambridge before moving to Harvard and completing an MBA in the Business School (Coleman, 1981). Recruited by global management consulting firm McKinsey and Co in New York, Pascoe returned to Australia in 1969 as a 30-year old to work in McKinsey's Melbourne office, where he shared an office with John Elliott, then a rising Melbourne businessman. McKinsey expanded to Sydney and Pascoe opened the office there, but fell out with the English manager and resigned; he then ran a small venture capital firm for three years, before returning to McKinsey as a consultant. He joined the Liberal Party in 1970. As the Liberal Party reorganised its Head Office after the 1972 defeat, Pascoe was approached - he believes it may have been at Elliott's suggestion - to set up a new Federal Policy Support Unit (FPSU) in Sydney (Lloyd and Reid, 1974: 317-21, 358-9). Separately, Opposition Leader Snedden, federal president Southey, and Elliott were luring Eggleton back from London (see below). The appointments of Pascoe and Eggleton were announced in February 1974. The onset of a double dissolution election in May, however, brought both new roles into sharper focus. Eggleton joined Snedden's office for the duration of the campaign - the party communications role never materialised - while Pascoe convened an intensive brainstorming session of shadow ministers and policy experts in Melbourne over the Easter week. The group produced a 136-page policy document which was immediately sent to the printers and distributed for the campaign as 'The Way Ahead' (Interview; see also Oakes & Solomon, 1974; Tiver, 1978). Also during the 1974 campaign, Pascoe set up a campaign headquarters or 'war room' in Snedden's Sydney office - the Liberals' first - to track itineraries and serve as a clearing house for information between Snedden and his frontbenchers. Electoral defeat in 1974 fuelled the momentum of organisational change. The party's Executive had revived its Federal Campaign Committee which required Hartcher, as Federal Director, to consult daily with the parliamentary leader, federal president and state divisions; Snedden announced a Marginal Electorates Committee to make a concerted effort in Labor-held seats (Starr, 1980: 294-6). But

these changes were only precursors for a more dramatic restructuring of the Head Office. In Pascoe's view, the Secretariat had not been involved in any of his policy development or campaign management work; he scathingly describes it as 'moribund, incompetent, boring (and) useless', and more concerned with doing 'what the Secretariat thought was right' rather than 'cooperating with the leader's office' and with 'the practical outcome of getting the party elected'. In Eggleton's view, the Secretariat needed to serve the parliamentary party like 'a shadow Prime Minister's department' (McLeay 1974).

Pascoe and Eggleton agreed privately that Pascoe would seek to become Federal Director for 12 months to 'turn the place around and do all the bloodletting', and then stand aside for Eggleton. This plan was 'seeded' with Southey – again, perhaps by Elliott. 'So after that I ended up as Federal Director,' Pascoe recalls. Pascoe's appointment, in July 1974, was on the basis that Hartcher would stay on in the Secretariat. It was a tricky and unstable situation. Pascoe recalls that Hartcher continued to occupy the Director's office. A journalist reported that the Head Office would be effectively split into three parts: Pascoe's policy unit and Eggleton's communications unit working out of Snedden's office, with Hartcher responsible for 'liaison between Canberra and the states' and 'national committees' (McLeay 1974). Pascoe, determined on a decisive resolution, requested a meeting with Southey and the outgoing and incoming party Treasurers, businessmen Sir Charles McGrath and Sir Robert Crichton-Browne, and presented them with a paper outlining his case:

What I said basically was, 'This is ridiculous. These two guys have got to go. And this is how I think we ought to proceed'. I gave it to them each. They read it. Sir Robert Crichton-Brown was the first to finish ... and ... said, 'Gentlemen, I know I'm the new boy, would you mind if I spoke first? Gentlemen, I have a very clear view on these sorts of matters. Timothy's put a very dramatic proposition to us. My view is we either endorse it, or we fire Timothy. And my view is we endorse it.' It was insurrection, even though I was supposed to be the boss, and it meant going against what had been agreed with the Federal Executive. The others fell into line immediately. (Interview)

Liberal Party historian Ian Hancock (2000: 269) suggests that in the eyes of the 'so-called McKinsey set', Hartcher and Holt 'stood out like dinosaurs' and were 'brutally removed'. Pascoe hired energetic replacements in policy and communications (Marsh, 1976), rebuilt the organisation's relationship with the parliamentary leadership and shadow ministry office and, with Southey, protected Eggleton from direct involvement in the imminent Snedden-Fraser leadership challenge (Ayres, 1987). His twelve month term complete, and with Fraser having toppled Snedden, Pascoe stepped aside and Eggleton became Federal Director in mid-1975, the third director in the space of a year.

After a year as director of the Victorian division of the Party, Pascoe returned to his consultancy work, establishing an innovative non-profit group ARTS Limited designed to provide commercial consultancy to arts bodies. He was appointed by the Fraser Government as chairman of the Australia Council in 1981. Since 1984 he has managed his private Sydney-based consultancy specialising in strategic advice and leadership. He was appointed a member of the Order of Australia in 2004.

**Tony Eggleton:** Born in 1932 in Swindon, UK, Tony Eggleton was educated at King Alfred's College in Wantage and joined the Young Conservatives. His first job was as a copyboy then reporter with the Swindon *Evening Advertiser* in the late 1940s. Arriving in Australia as an 18-year old, he resumed journalism with the Bendigo *Advertiser*, where he interviewed newly-elected Senator John Gorton. Moving to the Australian Broadcasting Commission in Melbourne and Adelaide he gained rare expertise after the introduction of television in 1956. Promoted rapidly to chief of staff in the Melbourne news room, he began to look for new opportunities. The Department of the Navy advertised for an experienced radio, television and newspaper reporter to run its public relations activities. He got the job, partly thanks to intervention by the minister, Gorton, who recalled the Bendigo interview and who also saw this new departmental position as a potential

political asset (Hancock, 2002: 90). Eggleton recalls he 'spent a lot of time at Parliament House rather than Russell Hill (Defence offices)'. He came under the eye of Prime Minister Menzies in 1964 when, following the collision between the destroyer, *HMAS Voyager*, and the aircraft carrier *HMAS Melbourne* in which 82 sailors died, Eggleton managed the media with a sure hand. Separately, chairing a committee to create a National Press Club in Canberra, Eggleton had reason to write to Menzies. Impressed, Menzies arranged for Eggleton to serve as press secretary to then-defence minister Shane Paltridge during the 1964 Senate election, and asked Paltridge to report back to him on his performance; Menzies subsequently took on Eggleton as his own press secretary. At Kirribilli House over summer in 1965-6, Menzies confided in Eggleton, whom he referred to as 'laddie', his intention to retire. Eggleton was bequeathed to Prime Minister Holt and helped the new leader promote his image through effective use of television (Frame, 2005: 146-9), though leadership aspirant Paul Hasluck regarded Eggleton as a 'little twerp' who helped destroy Holt's leadership by feeding his weakness for publicity (Henderson, 1998: 198). In the days after Holt's disappearance in the surf at Portsea in December 1967, Eggleton came to very wide public attention through his dignified and composed television briefings (Anon, 1967b). His high profile is suggested by the fact that, when Liberal MPs gathered to vote for Holt's successor, Eggleton both admitted the cameras to the party room before the vote and also announced the result to the waiting press afterwards. Joining Prime Minister Gorton's staff as press secretary, Eggleton's brief expanded to a trouble-shooter role, having accompanied Gorton during his controversial late-night visit to the US Embassy with journalist Geraldine Willesee (Reid, 1971; Hancock, 2002). Eggleton also wrote a highly critical internal report about Gorton's media performance during the 1969 campaign, urging the 'close supervision of the campaign by a campaign manager, and the appointment of a television specialist' (Hancock, 2002: 244). When Gorton was toppled by McMahon, Eggleton commenced work for his fourth Prime Minister but soon moved to London where he was appointed Information Director for the Commonwealth Secretariat. Following the Liberals' defeat, Eggleton was made 'an offer I couldn't refuse' to return to Canberra to establish and run a 'new communications shop' for the party; Elliott phoned to offer to 'help finance' his return (Ramsey, 2009: 17). This was Eggleton's first job with the organisational rather than parliamentary wing of the party.

Following Pascoe's restructures, Eggleton soon became Federal Director. At this point Eggleton joined the Liberal Party for the first time. As a working journalist he had not joined the Party, and could cite the authority of Menzies for his decision not to do so:

(Menzies) said – and this is not something that you would hear today – 'I don't mind what party you support, as long as you feel you can be loyal to my Government. But I'm not interested in your politics. I'm interested in whether you do a professional job as press secretary to the Prime Minister'. I thought, yes, that was all satisfactory to me. ... I'd been clearly identified with and associated with and voted for the Liberal Party, but I hadn't been a card-carrying member until I became Federal Director.

Eggleton was national campaign manager for the 1975 and 1977 election campaigns, which saw massive wins for the Liberals, as well as the much closer 1980 victory. But he then oversaw three successive defeats, an unprecedented experience for the Party as it entered a 'period in the wilderness'. At the suggestion of Fraser, Eggleton had prepared a 'to do' list in the event of election defeat and amid the continuous Howard-Peacock leadership rivalry, Eggleton became a stabilising influence, a scrupulously neutral broker between the warring factions (O'Reilly, 1987). Eggleton recalls repeatedly offering to step aside but Elliott, the party's Treasurer from 1984 and its President from 1988, insisted he remain and directed more resources into the organisation, reportedly doubling the Secretariat's budget to \$1 million and then doubling it again (Ramsey, 2009).

Eggleton retired from Head office on his 59<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1991 after 17 years as Federal Director – nearly as long as Willoughby's marathon 18 years – and moved to Brussels to head the global aid agency CARE International. Like Willoughby before him, Eggleton's lengthy tenure in the Head Office led ultimately to contented retirement in the garden suburbs of Canberra.

**Andrew Robb:** Born in 1951 as one of nine children in a dairy farming family in Epping, Victoria, Robb was educated by the Christian Brothers at Parade College, Bundoora. He completed a diploma of agricultural science at Dookie Agricultural College and worked as an animal health officer and agricultural economist with the Victorian Department of Agriculture (1972-79). Studying part-time, he completed an economics degree at La Trobe University and went on to a part-time tutoring role: an academic career beckoned. Robb however opted against doctoral studies in the US and accepted an appointment as economist with the National Farmers' Federation (NFF) where he was introduced to rural politics. Taking an increasingly prominent free-market role on issues of tariffs, industrial relations and the environment, Robb was appointed Executive Director of the Cattle Council of Australia and returned to the NFF in 1985 as Executive Director (P. Kelly, 1992: 41-2; P. Williams, 1997: 53-4). Identified by John Elliott as a potential future party official, Robb was appointed deputy director in the lead-up to the 1990 campaign. Robb set up a specialist campaigning unit focussed on marginal seats, and travelled with Peacock during the campaign proper. When Eggleton resigned, Robb was appointed Federal Director in 1991. He managed the Liberals' losing campaign in the 1993 'unwinnable' election and the winning campaign in 1996 (Robb, 1996b, 1997; P. Williams, 1997).

Leaving Head office in 1997, Robb became a senior executive with Kerry Packer's Publishing and Broadcasting empire (Snow, 1997) and Chief Executive (1991-2001) and then Chairman (2001-04) of direct marketing company Acxiom Australia, created as a joint venture between PBL and US-based Acxiom Group. Robb later chaired an industry association, the Australian Direct Marketing Association. Elected to the House of Representatives as the member for Goldstein in 2004, Robb served as a parliamentary secretary and junior minister in the last years of the Howard Government, and in opposition has held senior frontbench roles including Finance. He was appointed a member of the Order of Australia in 2003.

**Lynton Crosby:** Born in 1956 in Kadina in rural South Australia, Crosby graduated with an economics degree from the University of Adelaide. He joined the Liberal Party at 18 and recalls handing out pamphlets criticising the Whitlam Government's tax plans in Rundle Mall in 1975. An active party member, he rose to become state president of the Young Liberals. Crosby worked briefly as a market analyst for Golden Fleece Petroleum, but in 1978 began his political career, joining the staff of Liberal Senator Baden Teague as a research assistant. The following year he shifted to the state level, working for Harold Allison, the state minister for Education and Aboriginal Affairs (1979-82) and, following the defeat of the Tonkin Liberal Government, for Martin Cameron, Opposition Leader in the upper house (1982-86). He stood unsuccessfully for the safe Labor state seat of Norwood in the 1982 campaign. Turning down a 1987 offer from Eggleton to join the Federal Secretariat so that his wife could take up a job with the stock exchange in Adelaide, Crosby returned to the private sector working for Santos and Elders until 1991, when he was invited to become state director of the party's Queensland division. 'A party member and activist who happened to get into the professional wing', Crosby directed the Liberals' campaigns in Queensland in the 1992 state elections and the 1993 Federal elections. Again invited to join the Federal Secretariat, this time by Andrew Robb, he accepted and moved to Canberra in 1994. As Robb's deputy he ran the marginal seats unit during the 1996 election campaign (Williams, 1997: 202-3). He also inspected Republican Party campaign techniques in the United States in 1994 (Bathgate, et al., 1996).

Crosby's first campaign as campaign director was a close run thing; at the end of the 1998 campaign he had to tell Prime Minister Howard his polls were showing the Government heading for defeat; the Liberals scrambled over the line (Errington & van Onselen, 2007: 275). Crosby successfully directed Howard's third campaign success in 2001 (Crosby, 2000, 2002). Resigning as Federal Director in 2002, Crosby moved into a new career phase, setting up a political and business consultancy, Crosby-Textor, with market researcher Mark Textor. In addition to the Liberal Party, Crosby-Textor has provided market research and political advice to the British Conservative Party in 2005, the Canadian Conservatives under Stephen Harper, and Boris Johnson's successful campaigns for Lord Mayor of London in 2008 and 2012; he has been described as a 'maestro of the dark arts' who has introduced 'dog whistle politics' into the UK

(Grice, 2005; Glover, 2008). Crosby Textor's 2005 work for the New Zealand National Party has also been critically portrayed (Hager, 2006).

**Brian Loughnane:** Born in 1957 in Geelong, Loughnane was educated in Colac where he recalls regularly seeing Malcolm Fraser - the member for the neighbouring seat of Wannon - on local television. He graduated from La Trobe University in 1981 with a degree in political science. Active in the Liberal Club on campus, he was elected to the SRC as a Liberal, before formally joining the Liberal Party in his final year. He celebrated his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday on the day of the dismissal of the Whitlam Government, allowing him to enrol and vote in the subsequent election. Employed by Shell Australia as an industrial relations manager for ten years from 1982, Loughnane travelled extensively; but he maintained membership of the same party branch, Viewbank in suburban Melbourne, for his entire career. He was an active member, holding several positions in the branch including president and directing numerous local campaigns during federal and state elections. After the election of the Kennett government in Victoria in 1992, Loughnane shifted into political staff work as senior adviser to Small Business minister Vin Heffernan. Two years later he was approached to serve as Chief of Staff to ill-fated Opposition Leader Alexander Downer; within a few months Downer had been replaced as leader by John Howard. Loughnane was joined Howard's staff but after a few months opted to return to the private sector; he worked with the Gas and Fuel Corporation in Melbourne in 1995 and 1996. Appointed by the newly-elected Howard Government as chief of staff to Industry, and then Defence, minister John Moore (1996-2000), Loughnane returned to Melbourne as the state director of the Liberal Party in 2000. He came to national prominence in July 2001 as campaign director in the successful by-election defence of the Melbourne seat of Aston, which the Howard Government had been widely expected to lose. He succeeded Crosby as Federal Director in 2003 and was campaign manager in the successful 2004 campaign and the losing campaigns of 2007 and 2010 (Loughnane, 2005, 2007 (19 December), 2012).



## Appendix Two

### The First Marginal Seat Campaign

The origins of targeted campaign strategies in Australian elections can be traced back to 1951. Labor's Federal Secretary Pat Kennelly developed the first, albeit rudimentary, plan for what is now commonly termed a 'marginal seat' campaign: a nationally coordinated effort to target campaign resources to seats identified as essential for victory. Loss of government in 1949 and defeat in the 1951 double dissolution prompted Labor's Federal Executive to review their campaign performance. Kennelly was dispatched to Britain, where he witnessed the triumph of Atlee and the British Labour Party in the 1950 general elections. In the first of two reports to the Federal Executive, Kennelly emphasised the need for earlier candidate preselections by state branches for those seats they believed they could win back, along with better public relations and more discipline to counter the better funded Liberal Party (Weller and Lloyd, 1978: 414, 420, 432-3 and note). His 1951 review went further. Picking up his earlier recommendation about preselections, Kennelly proposed a plan for the party to 'concentrate' its campaign resources. Kennelly identified 21 seats he believed Labor could take from the coalition. With the Menzies Government having been returned with a 17-seat majority, winning these seats would be enough to secure a small Labor majority. In the ensuing debate at the Federal Executive, these 21 seats were described as 'marginal seats' - perhaps the first recorded usage of this term in Australian campaigning (Weller and Lloyd, 1978: 448-50).

What did Kennelly mean by 'concentrating' resources? As a state secretary, Kennelly had built his own influence through deft interventions into candidate preselections in Victoria, a process he referred to as selecting 'horses for courses'. He now recommended state branches preselect candidates for the 21 seats within the next six or eight months. Further, he suggested state branches meet with him and the Federal President 'for the purpose of working out a system, including the financing of same, whereby the endorsed candidate could be able to spend considerable time in the electorate prior to the election.' Not wholly convinced, Executive agreed to a discussion with State executives about 'marginal seats and the special financing of candidates for such seats'. The details of this 'special financing' became clear later, when Kennelly reported back on a meeting with the Opposition Leader, Ben Chifley. At the meeting, the parliamentary leader and the party organisation had developed a cost-sharing scheme: in each of the targeted 'barometer or marginal seats', the Federal Executive, the Federal caucus election fund, and the respective state branch would each contribute an equal sum to provide an electorate-specific campaign fund. The sum agreed - £5 per week for each contributor - was hardly a lavish amount; over two years it might amount to a commitment of perhaps £1500 per seat or £30,000 in total. But Kennelly believed it would allow candidates to put in 'preparatory work' prior to the campaign proper. The states were evidently uneasy about this federal intervention in their campaign management: any campaign work under the scheme was to be performed 'under the supervision and direction' of the respective state branch and would apply only 'in those seats where agreement was reached'. Chifley's support for the scheme would perhaps have overcome such parochialism - but the promising negotiations were interrupted, by Chifley's sudden death (Weller and Lloyd, 1978: 507), and were never apparently resumed.

Kennelly deserves recognition for formulating this rudimentary marginal seat campaign. But - quite apart from his inability to secure party agreement for it - there was a crucial flaw at the heart of his logic. This goes to the correct definition of 'marginal' seats. All the 21 seats on his list were 'marginal' in the sense that, requiring an average 2PP swing of 3.4 per cent based on 1951 voting, they were indeed seats Labor could realistically hope to win. But all of them were held by the Liberal or Country Parties: absent from Kennelly's concept was any recognition that Labor needed to defend its own seats. In fact, several Labor seats, including the soon-to-be Opposition Leader Dr H V Evatt's NSW seat of Barton, were held by a thread and should surely have received any additional campaign resources. The proposed concentration or targeting of resources thus misrepresented the reality of the strategic challenge facing Labor by assuming a pro-Labor

swing.<sup>60</sup> One suspects indeed that, given, some of the seats on Kennelly's list had been held by Labor under the Curtin/ Chifley Government, Labor simply hoped it could recreate the conditions of the 1940s a decade later; others however were new seats created in the 1949 expansion of the House of Representatives. Whatever the shortcomings of Kennelly's plan, however, Labor's 1954 campaign preparations were as united and as detailed as they had ever been (Weller and Lloyd, 1978: 553) and Labor under Evatt won an absolute majority of the vote and picked up five seats in five different states – all of which had been on Kennelly's list<sup>61</sup>.

The Liberal Party also developed the principles of marginal seat campaigning, though their approach was not driven nationally, from the Federal Secretariat, but by the New South Wales state director, Carrick. In the lead-up to 1954, Carrick identified eight marginal seats in that state for 'maximum intensity' of campaigning. Unlike Kennelly, the Liberals did recognise the need to defend (three Liberal-held marginals) as well as to attack (five Labor-held marginals). Using their best electoral asset, Carrick prevailed upon Menzies to include visits to all of the eight seats on his campaign itinerary (Hancock, 2000: 147-8). Three Liberal-held NSW seats, Mitchell, Robertson and St George, were on both parties' lists; of them St George fell to Labor.

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<sup>60</sup> The target list also omits some seats, particularly in Queensland, which on a 2PP basis were apparently more 'winnable' for Labor. The target list also emphasises seats in the large states in which Labor was already strong: six seats were identified in New South Wales, where Labor already held 24 of 47 seats (51 per cent), and five in Victoria where it held 15 of 33 (45 per cent); by contrast only three Queensland seats were on the list though Labor held only four out of 18 seats in that state and one seat in Western Australia where Labor held only 3 of 8 seats. This reflects that incumbency provides greater campaign capacity; it may also suggest that expectations of future success were higher where success had been already experienced.

<sup>61</sup> The five seats that changed hands in 1954 were St George (NSW), Griffith (Qld), Sturt (SA), Swan (WA) and Bass (Tas). A sixth seat on the list, Flinders (Vic) had been won by Labor in a by-election in 1952 but was lost to the Liberals in the 1954 elections. It is not clear what if any additional campaign resources Labor may have concentrated on these campaigns and this question would repay closer study.

### Appendix Three

#### Party Officials: Interview Data, Demographic Data and Party Experience

**Table 1: Research Interviews: Where and When Conducted**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Location of Interview</b>	<b>Duration (hours/minutes)</b>	<b>Approx word count of transcript</b>
24 Feb 2010	Andrew Robb	Respondent's office, Parliament House, Canberra, ACT	1h 27m	9,800
26 Feb 2010	Bob Hogg	Respondent's home in Epping NSW	2h 30m	6,800
17 Mar 2010	Timothy Pascoe	Respondent's office, Edgecliff NSW	1h 41m	7,700
22 Mar 2010	Tony Eggleton	Respondent's home, Deakin ACT	2h 19m	17,000
24 Mar 2010	Bob McMullan	Respondent's office, Parliament House, Canberra ACT	1h 27m	10,500
19 Apr 2010	Geoff Walsh	Respondent's office, Melbourne Vic	56m	4,500
21 Apr 2010	David Combe	Researcher's office, University of Sydney NSW	1h 55m	11,000
20 Sep 2010	Tim Gartrell	Restaurant, Redfern NSW	1h 02m	6,800
21 Sep 2010	Lynton Crosby	Respondent's office, Sydney NSW	1h 39m	10,500
15 Dec 2010	Gary Gray	Respondent's office, Parliament House, Canberra ACT	1 h 30m	9,100
8 Mar 2011	Cyril Wyndham	Respondent's home, Newcastle NSW	1 h 22m	6,800
15 Mar 2011	Brian Loughnane	Liberal Party Headquarters, Canberra ACT	1 h 18m	7,200
18 Oct 2011	Karl Bitar	Hotel foyer, Sydney NSW	1 h 53m	15,000

**Table 2: Interview Coding Schema: Principal Themes**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Sub-theme</b>	<b>Sub-sub-theme</b>	
Personal Experience - prior to selection as National Secretary/ Federal Director	Outside Party	Private enterprise	
		Journalism	
		Union movement	
		Overseas	
	Joins party		
	Within Party	On the ground	Campaign/ non-campaign experience
In central office - state			
In central office - nat'l			
In Party in Office			
Methods of Selection as National Secretary/ Federal Director	Election (ALP)	Contested	
		Consensual	
	Appointment (ALP)		
	Appointment (Liberal)		
Campaign activities	Campaign director		
	Campaign lessons/ innovations		
	Campaign organisers		
	Campaign style		
	Centralising and coordinating of		
	Communications	Advertising	
		Direct mail	
		Internet	
		Media management	
	Headquarters		
Strategic planning	Market research		
	Marginal seat campaigning		
	Rational allocation of resources		
Head office characteristics	Relationships with party/ campaign elements	With members (on the ground)	
		With party in public office – inc leadership	
		With national executive (party central office)	
		With state branches/divisions (party central office)	
		With external consultants (party central office)	
	Finances	Banking/ overdraft/ debt	
		Budgeting/ expenditure	
		Property development	

		Public funding receipts
		Transfers from state branches
	Nature of work	
Professionalism	Agree/disagree with description of self as	
	Elements of definition of	Career development
		Competent
		Dispassionate/ rational/ scientific
		Modernity
		Paid, not voluntary
		Passionate/committed
		Personal skills/ experience
Vocational/ serious		

**Table 3: National Secretaries and Federal Directors: Place of Birth and Education**

<b>ALP</b>	<b>Where born</b>	<b>Education</b>
Arch Stewart	Sebastopol, Vic	Unknown
Daniel McNamara	Pomorneit Vic	State schools
Patrick Kennelly	Northcote, Vic	St Patrick's College, East Melbourne
Jack Schmella	Charters Towers, Qld	Christian Brothers College
F E Chamberlain	London, UK	Local UK schools; apprenticed at age 14
Cyril Wyndham	London, UK	Kingston Day Commercial College (UK); London School of Economics trade union program
Mick Young	Sydney, NSW	Marist Brothers, to age 15
David Combe	Glenelg, SA	Prince Alfred College, Adelaide, Adelaide University, B.A.
Bob McMullan	Perth, WA	Stirling High School; University of Western Australia (B.A., B.Ec)
Bob Hogg	Melbourne, Vic	Brighton Technical College, Caulfield Institute of Technology
Gary Gray	Rotherham, UK	Local high school, SA; Australian National University (B.Ec.)
Geoff Walsh	Sydney, NSW	Caulfield Grammar School; La Trobe University
Tim Gartrell	Orange, NSW	University of Sydney; Masters in Communications Studies
Karl Bitar	Sydney, NSW	High School in Lebanon; Bankstown TAFE; University of NSW (BA)
<b>Liberal</b>	<b>Where born</b>	<b>Education</b>
Don Cleland	Coolgardie, WA	Guildford C of E Grammar School
Robert Willoughby	Greenock, Scotland	Local high school, UK to age 15
Bede Hartcher	Sydney, NSW	Marist Brothers, Darlinghurst; University of Sydney (B.Ec.)
Tim Pascoe	Adelaide, SA	St Peter's College, Adelaide; Adelaide University (B. Eng., B.Ec); Cambridge University (PhD); Harvard University (MBA)
Tony Eggleton	Swindon, UK	King Alfred's College, UK
Andrew Robb	Epping, Vic	Parade, Christian Brothers; Dookie Agricultural (Dip. Ag. Sci.); La Trobe University (B. Ec.hons)
Lynton Crosby	Kadina, SA	Adelaide University (B.Ec.)
Brian Loughnane	Geelong, Vic	La Trobe University, (BA hons)

**Table 4: National Secretaries and Federal Directors: Occupations and Political Experience Prior to Appointment**

<b>ALP</b>	<b>Age joined party</b>	<b>Previous Occupations (non-political)</b>	<b>Prior political activity (extra-party)</b>	<b>Prior political activity ('party in office')</b>	<b>Prior political activity ('party organisation')</b>
Arch Stewart	?	Mining, selling groceries	Trade union member and delegate (AWU)	Candidate Vic and Fed parliaments;	Secretary, Ballarat PLC; Senior v-p, Vic PLC; Fed Electorate campaign manager; Sec, Vic ALP 1911-1925
Daniel McNamara	?	Local co-op ventures	Elected Berwick Shire Council, president; Trade union organiser, AWU	Candidate Vic parliament; Elected to Leg Council 1917-1947; Minister, Vic Govt;	Delegate to Vic conferences; Member Vic executive; Asst sec and organising sec, Vic branch; General secretary 1925-1947
Patrick Kennelly	15	Clerk, miner	Trade union member, FCU	Member Leg Council 1938-1952; Minister, Vic Govt	Local Branch sec; Member, Vic executive 1932-1950; Organising sec, Vic branch
Jack Schmella	?	Teacher, Qld state department Jackeroo, prospector and miner	Union member, researcher, industrial officer, AWU		State sec, Qld branch
F E Chamberlain	?	Apprentice printer Army Conscript (UK) Labourer, timber clearer, road worker, dairy farmer, watchman, tram conductor and driver (WA)	Trade union member and secretary and advocate (WA transport); Delegate, ACTU		State sec, WA Branch 1949-1974; Delegate, Federal Executive; Fed v-p and President (1955-61)
Cyril Wyndham	Teenager (14?), British Labour Party			Elected Merton and Morden local council, UK Press sec, Ldr Opposition, ALP 1957-61	Clerk, then assist to Gen'l Sec, then admin officer, internat'l dept, British Labour Party 1944-1957; State sec, Vic branch 1961-63
Mick Young	?	Shearer	Trade union member and official AWU		Organiser, Asst state sec and state sec, SA branch
David Combe	19	Casual petrol station attendant;		Press sec and ministerial staff, SA Govt;	State electorate campaign manager; Organiser, asst sec, sec, SA branch

		Graduate trainee, Shell			
Bob McMullan	20				Pres, Federal Labor Youth Org; Assist sec, acting sec, WA Branch; Anti-Vietnam war movement, anti-conscriptionist; Trade union researcher (Prison Officers' Union)
Bob Hogg	24	Food technician, Mauri Bros; production planning engineer, Thermo Radiant Ovens; Part-time printer		Political adviser, Prime Minister Hawke	Branch office holder; Factional organiser; Fed Conf delegate; State sec, Vic Anti-Vietnam war movement; Anti-hanging campaign
Gary Gray	16			Branch Member, SA and NT Staff Opposition Ldr, NT	National organiser, asst national sec; Volunteer, British Labour Party, visits to soc-dem parties in Europe
Geoff Walsh	Teenager/ early 20s Resigned, rejoined	Newspaper reporter, Foreign Affairs official		Press sec, Prime Minister Hawke	Communications Director, Federal Secretariat
Tim Gartrell	19	Council employee, South Sydney council		Young Labor; Ministerial staffer, Federal Part	Asst sec, Federal Secretariat Researcher; trade unions (MOA, CFMEU)
Karl Bitar	21	Research officer, Dep't of Education, Employment and Training		Young Labor	NSW Branch Organiser; Asst State Sec, State Sec



<b>Liberal</b>	<b>Age joined party</b>	<b>Previous Occupation</b>	<b>Prior political activity (extra-party)</b>	<b>Prior political activity (party in office)</b>	<b>Prior political activity (party organisation)</b>
Don Cleland	Before 35	Army officer, 1919-1928; Solicitor and barrister; AIF officer, 1939-1945 Chair, Production Control Board Papua New Guinea		Candidate WA Parliament, 1933,36,39 and Federal Parliament 1945	President, National Party WA 1936-38; Vice-president, Liberal party WA
Robert Willoughby	? (Employee at 16)			Parl'tary Staffer: Senate 1938-47; Opp'n Leader Menzies 47-49; PM Menzies 1949-51	Clerk, Administrator and field organiser, Liberal Federation SA 1924-38 Parliamentary liaison, Fed secretariat
Bede Hartcher	Not a member before employed by Liberal Party at age 29	Clerk, NSW Railways			Research officer and Senior research officer, Federal Secretariat; Senior Research Officer, Vic Division
Tim Pascoe	30	McKinsey and Co., New York, Melbourne and Sydney; Enterprise Management of Australia (venture capital)			
Tony Eggleton	Teenager (Young Conservatives)  Joined Liberal Party at 42	Newspaper reporter, UK; Newspaper then Radio/TV Journalist (ABC)	Public relations, Dept of Navy ( <i>Voyager</i> disaster); Communications Director, Commonwealth Secretariat, London	Press sec, Prime Ministers Menzies, Holt, Gorton, McMahon 1965-71	Communications unit, Federal Secretariat
Andrew Robb	37	Stock inspector, agricultural economist, university tutor	Exec director, Cattle Council; Exec director, National Farmers		Deputy director, Federal Secretariat

			Federation		
Lynton Crosby	18	Golden Fleece, Santos, Elders		Parliamentary Staffer, Senate; Ministerial staff, SA Govt and Opp'n; Candidate, SA parliament	Young Liberal state pres; State director, Qld division; Deputy director, Federal Secretariat
Brian Loughnane	Final year Uni	Shell, industrial relations manager; Senior manager, Gas and Fuel Corp		Chief of staff, State and Federal ministers and Fed Ldr Opposition	Branch president  State director, Vic division

**Table 5: National Secretaries and Federal Directors (interviewed): Prior Election Campaign Experience**

<b>ALP</b>	<b>With party 'on the ground'</b>	<b>With party 'in office'</b>	<b>With party organisation</b>
<b>Cyril Wyndham</b>	UK 1940s	Fed 58 (LO)	Vic 61, 62by, 63 (ss)
<b>David Combe</b>		SA 68 (LO)	Fed 69, 72 (ss*); SA 70 (ss*)
<b>Bob McMullan</b>	Fed 72 (local cm)		Fed 74, 75, 77, 80 (ss); WA 74, 77 and 80 (ss)
<b>Bob Hogg</b>	Fed 66 (vol); Vic 67 (can)	Fed 83, 84 (LO)	Fed 69by (cm); Vic 76, 79, 82 (ss); Fed 77, 80 (ss)
<b>Gary Gray</b>	Fed 74 (vol)	NT 83, Fed 84 (LO)	Fed 87, 87by, 90, 93 (HO); Vic 88, WA 89 (HO)
<b>Geoff Walsh</b>	Fed/Vic (vol)	Fed 83, 84, 90 (LO)	WA 83 (HO*)
<b>Tim Gartrell</b>	Fed 90 (vol)	Fed 96 (MP)	Fed 93 elect (tu); Fed 98 (HO*), 01 (HO)
<b>Karl Bitar</b>	Fed 93, 96 NSW 95, 99 (vol)		NSW 99, 03 (HO*), 07 (HO)
<b>Liberal</b>	<b>With party 'on the ground'</b>	<b>With party 'in office'</b>	<b>With party organisation</b>
<b>Tim Pascoe</b>			Fed 74 (HO)
<b>Tony Eggleton</b>		Fed Sen 64 (min); Fed 66, 69, 74 (LO)	
<b>Andrew Robb</b>		Fed 90 (LO)	
<b>Lynton Crosby</b>	SA 82 (can)		Qld 92 (sd); Fed 93 (sd); Fed 96 (HO)
<b>Brian Loughnane</b>	Vic 85, 88, 92; Fed 87,90, 93 (local cm)	Fed 98 (min)	Fed 96 (HO*); Vic 01by (cm); Vic 02 (sd)

Election campaigns indicated by Fed (Federal) or state + year.

by = by-election; can = candidate; cm = campaign manager; local cm = campaign manager in individual electorate min = ministerial staffer; MP – member of parliament staffer; sd = director; sen = Senate; ss = state secretary - ss\* acting; tu = with trade union; vol = volunteer; HO = Federal Head Office as eg deputy/assistant; HO\* = Federal Head Office below deputy level; LO = in leader's office

**Table 6: National Secretaries and Federal Directors: Age at Appointment and Years in Office**

<b>ALP</b>	<b>Age at appointment</b>	<b>Years in office</b>
Arch Stewart	48	10
Daniel McNamara	49	21
Patrick Kennelly	46	8
Jack Schmella	46	6
F E Chamberlain	61	3
Cyril Wyndham	33	6
Mick Young	33	3
David Combe	30	8
Bob McMullan	34	7
Bob Hogg	51	6
Gary Gray	35	7
Geoff Walsh	47	3
Tim Gartrell	32	5
Karl Bitar	36	3
<b>Liberal</b>	<b>Age at appointment</b>	<b>Years in office</b>
Don Cleland	44	6
Robert Willoughby	43	18
Bede Hartcher	50	3
Tim Pascoe	34	1
Tony Eggleton	42	17
Andrew Robb	40	6
Lynton Crosby	41	6
Brian Loughnane	50	7+

**Table 7: ALP Federal Conference Rules: Secretary's Term of Office**

<b>Secretary in office</b>	<b>Conference year and location</b>	<b>Secretary's method of selection and terms and performance</b>
Kennelly	1951 Canberra	Rule 5: "The General Secretary shall be the permanent Officer of the Federal Executive, subject to good conduct, satisfactory performance of duty, and adherence to the Policy and Objects of the Party. His services shall be terminable by the Federal Executive or by the General Secretary himself by one month's notice by either party."
Wyndham	1963 Perth	"Good conduct rule" (now 7 b (iii)) amended to include: "In the event of a vacancy occurring in the position of Federal Secretary, the Federal Executive may appoint an acting Secretary, who shall hold office until the next Conference is held, when the position shall be filled by Conference."
Young	1969 Melbourne	"Administrative Decisions. The following decisions were adopted by the 1969 Federal Conference in relation to the future functions of the Federal Secretariat ... 2. Notwithstanding Rule 7 (b) (iii) the part-time Federal Secretary continue in office pending further consideration by the Federal Executive after consultation with the State Branches. ..."
Combe	1973 Surfers Paradise	Administrative decision (above) deleted
	1975 Terrigal	Casual vacancy provision deleted
McMullan	1981 Melbourne	Good conduct provision extended to "Assistant National Secretary" Status re Conference and Executive extended to "Assistant National Secretary"
	1984 Canberra	Reference to "Assistant National Secretary" deleted Resolution on David Combe "pain and distress"
	1986 Hobart	"Good conduct" provision deleted 7 (a) (iv) National Secretary "shall be elected by the National Conference" and 7 (b) (i) "shall be subject to re-election at every second Conference"
Gray	1994 Hobart	Rule 7 (b) (iii): "casual vacancies for the position ... of National Secretary shall be filled by a ballot of the National Executive"

**Table 8: Key Agency Relationships of Federal Head Offices, 1972-2010**

Federal Election	<b>ALP Federal/ National Secretary</b>	<b>Advertising Agency (and principal)</b>	<b>Market Research Agency</b>	<b>Liberal Party Federal Director</b>	<b>Advertising Agency</b>	<b>Market Research Adviser / Agency</b>
1972	<i>Mick Young</i>	Hansen-Rubensohn-McCann-Erikson (Sim Rubensohn)	Marplan, Spectrum International	<i>Bede Hartcher</i>	No national agency	
1974	<i>David Combe</i>	Hansen-Rubensohn-McCann-Erikson	ANOP (Rod Cameron and Margaret Gibbs)	<i>Bede Hartcher</i>	Berry Currie	Quantum Market Research (George Camakaris)
1975	<i>David Combe</i>	Mullins, Clarke and Ralph (Malcolm Macfie)	ANOP	<i>Tony Eggleton</i>	Masius Wynn Williams and D'Arcy MacManus	Roy Morgan
1977	<i>David Combe</i>	Mullins, Clarke and Ralph	ANOP	<i>Tony Eggleton</i>	Masius Wynn Williams and D'Arcy MacManus	Roy Morgan
1980	<i>David Combe</i>	Forbes Macfie Hansen (Malcolm Macfie)	ANOP	<i>Tony Eggleton</i>	D'Arcy-MacManus and Masius	Roy Morgan
1983	<i>Bob McMullan</i>	Forbes Macfie Hansen	ANOP	<i>Tony Eggleton</i>	D'Arcy-MacManus and Masius	Roy Morgan
1984	<i>Bob McMullan</i>	Forbes Macfie Hansen	ANOP	<i>Tony Eggleton</i>	D'Arcy-MacManus and Masius	Roy Morgan; Brian Sweeney and Assoc
1987	<i>Bob McMullan</i>	John Singleton Agency (John Singleton)	ANOP	<i>Tony Eggleton</i>	D'Arcy, Masius, Benton and Bowles	Roy Morgan
1990	<i>Bob Hogg</i>	John Singleton Agency	ANOP	<i>Tony Eggleton</i>	George Patterson	Roy Morgan
1993	<i>Bob Hogg</i>	John Singleton Agency	Australian Community Research *	<i>Andrew Robb</i>	George Patterson	Roy Morgan
1996	<i>Gary Gray</i>	John Singleton Agency	UMR (John Utting)	<i>Andrew Robb</i>	'The Team' **	Mark Textor
1998	<i>Gary Gray</i>	Saatchi and Saatchi (Sandra Yates, Luke Dunkerley)	UMR	<i>Lynton Crosby</i>	'The Team'	Mark Textor
2001	<i>Geoff Walsh</i>	Saatchi and Saatchi plus Shannon's Way (Bill Shannon)	UMR	<i>Lynton Crosby</i>	'The Team'	Mark Textor
2004	<i>Tim Gartrell</i>	Shannon's Way plus Rhythm and Shoes	UMR	<i>Brian Loughnane</i>	'The Team'	Mark Textor

		(Graeme Woodlock)				
2007	<i>Tim Gartrell</i>	STW Communications Group (Neil Lawrence)	UMR plus Visibility (John Mitchelmore)	<i>Brian Loughnane</i>	'The Team'	Mark Textor
2010	<i>Karl Bitar</i>	McCann Erikson (Jonathan Brown) plus Cutting Edge (Ray Smith)	UMR	<i>Brian Loughnane</i>	Ted Horton, Mark Pearson and Paul Leeds	Mark Textor

\* Karen Luscombe and Jim Malonus

\*\* Toby Ralph and John King (DDB Needham) plus Ted Horton and Mark Pearson (Republic)

Sources: Mills, S (1986); Young, S (2004) for advertising agencies to 2001; various news reports thereafter.

**Table 9: Methods of Centralising Public Funding Receipts**

<b>Election year</b>	<b>ALP</b>	<b>Liberal Party</b>
1984	Apportionment statement claims national organisation spending in all states + ACT/NT, pro rata according to the number of House of Representatives seats.  State and territory branches authorise AEC to direct 16% of their receipts to the national secretariat.	Apportionment statement lodged, claiming national organisation spending in 5 states according to the actual costs of advertising and advertising production provided therein.
1987	Apportionment statement for 8 states and territories, covering 98 per cent of total spending.	Apportionment statement for all states + ACT covering 92 per cent of total spending.
1990	States and territories lodge nil spending returns while national organisation lodges apportionment statement claiming responsibility for 100% of spending in all states + ACT/NT.	Two states (Vic and Qld) lodge nil spending returns while national organisation lodges apportionment statement for all states + ACT claiming responsibility for 76% of spending.
1993	Apportionment statement covers only 8 per cent of spending in NSW Vic and ACT	Apportionment statement covers 71% of spending in all states
1996	Federal office receives all payments following redirection agreements with all states and territories	State and territory divisions claim and receive all funds
1998	Federal office receives all payments following redirection agreements with all states and territories	State and territory divisions claim and receive all funds
2001	Federal office receives all payments following redirection agreements with all states and territories	State and territory divisions claim and receive all funds
2004	Federal office receives all payments following redirection agreements with all states and territories	Federal office receives all payments following redirection agreements with all states and territories
2007	Federal office receives all payments following redirection agreements with all states and territories	Federal office receives all payments following redirection agreements with all states and territories
2010	Federal office receives all payments following redirection agreements with all states and territories	Federal office receives all payments following redirection agreements with all states and territories

Source: Australian Electoral Commission Funding and Disclosure Reports



## **Appendix Four**

### **Interview Outline**

*General approach: Broad concrete questions about your experience and activities as head of the party org, to generate comparisons across elections, parties, officials – NOT, what do you think of this hypothesis? NOR, tell me about this specific event in this campaign? Details will emerge from responses to general questions*

#### **Personal Political Background**

- How and why did you come to be involved in politics? Why and when did you join the Labor/ Liberal Party?
- Describe your early experience in the party and in election campaigns?
- Prior to becoming nat sec/fed dir, what was your experience of working [inside or outside] the party's 'head office'?
- How and why and by whom were you appointed/ elected? Was it consensual/ contested?

#### **The Party Organisation**

- On your Day One as nat sec/fed dir, what was the overall state of the party organisation: for example, strengths and weaknesses, resources, personnel, relations between/among head office, state branches, leader's office.
- Your last day when you finished, what was the overall state of the party organisation? Better or worse?
- [And as far as you are aware what changes have subsequently taken place in the overall state of the party organisation?]
- What was your role as nat sec/fed dir?
- How did this change through time? differ from your predecessor/ successor?
- What were your key relationships (most important, most sensitive) as nat sec/fed dir? Were these relationships personal or institutional?
- What were your major achievements during your time as national sec/dir? What were the major frustrations/ unfulfilled wishes over the time?
- What took up most of your time (that you wish had not)? What did you give less time to than it deserved?
- Did you regard yourself as a political/ campaign professional? What does the term mean to you?

#### **Campaign practices**

Separately for each federal campaign as nat sec/fed dir:

- Was the election winnable/ 'up for grabs' at the start of the campaign? i.e. was the campaign important to the result? Were there any particular turning points in the campaign? Or points when you were worried/ confident about the outcome?
- What did the party try to achieve in this campaign?
- How would you describe your own role in this campaign? What did you personally try to achieve in this campaign?

#### Resources:

- What party resources (including personnel) were at the party's disposal – in the head office, in the leader's office, elsewhere? How were they organised?
- Who constituted the central campaign planning committee, what was its function and what was your role on it? How were conflicts resolved?
- What external consultants were engaged by head office? What role did they play and to whom were they accountable?

## Practices

- What lessons did you take into the campaign from the previous one – and what lessons did you take from this into the next? What worked well and what would you do differently?
- What were the three or four most important improvements in your campaign craft for this election – e.g. did you use any new campaign tools (such as polling), make any innovations in communications (advertising style), improve the organisational arrangements?
- And what were your major sources of innovation and learning for your campaign practices: state campaigns, previous Fed campaign, international practice, the other party etc?
- What did the other party do that impressed you in this campaign? To what extent did you monitor campaign practices of the other party?
- How did campaigning in your time differ from what you see today?

**Campaign reports, speeches** – identify and access



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