

**Resisting the Welfare State:
An examination of the response of the Australian Catholic
Church to the national health schemes of the 1940s and
1970s**

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degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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To

My parents Deb and Jack

My sisters Frances and Mary-Anne

My children Josephine, Michelle, Dominica, Brendan and Patrick

My husband Michael

I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis is the result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other University or Institution.

(Signed):

(Dated):

ABSTRACT

This thesis extends and refines a growing body of literature that has highlighted the impact of Catholic social principles on the development of welfare state provision. It suggests that Catholic social teaching is intent on preserving the role of the traditional family, and keeping power out of the hands of the state. Much of this literature, however, is concerned with European experience (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Castles, 1993; van Kersbergen, 1995). More recently Smyth (2003) has augmented this research through an examination of the influence of Catholic social thought on Australian welfare policy. He concludes that the Australian Church, at least up to the 1970s, preferred a 'welfare society' over a 'welfare state', an outlook shared by the wider Australian community.

Following the lead of Smyth, this thesis extends the insights of the European research through an examination of Catholic Church resistance to ALP proposals to introduce national health schemes in the 1940s and the 1970s. These appeared to satisfy the Church's commitment to the poorest and most marginalised groups in the community. Why, then, did the Australian Church resist the proposals? The thesis concludes that there are at least two possible ways of interpreting Catholic social teaching – a preconciliar interpretation that minimises the role of the state, and a postconciliar interpretation that allows for an active, albeit limited, state. The adoption of either is informed by socio-political factors. The thesis, then, concludes that the response of the Church in the 1940s and the 1970s was conditioned by socio-political and historical factors that inclined the Australian Catholic Church towards a conservative view of welfare.

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Abbreviations

AACG	Archives of Archdiocese of Canberra/Goulburn
ACHCA	Australian Catholic Health Care Association
ACHA	Australian Catholic Hospitals Association
ACLP	Anti-Communist Labor Party
ALP	Australian Labor Party
AMA	Australian Medical Association
ANSCA	Australian National Secretariat of Catholic Action
ARSC	Archives of the Sisters of Charity of Australia
BMA	British Medical Association
CHA	Catholic Health Australia
CHA (V)	Catholic Hospitals Association (Victoria)
CLRI (NSW)	Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes (NSW)
CSM	Catholic Social Movement
CSSM	Catholic Social Studies Movement
DLP	Democratic Labor Party
ECCA	Episcopal Committee for Catholic Action
ECCSSM	Episcopal Committee for Catholic Social Studies Movement
GPSA	General Practitioners Society in Australia
HIC	Health Insurance Commission
JPCSS	Joint Parliamentary Committee on Social Security
LCMA	Archives of the Little Company of Mary, Province of the Holy Spirit
MHSC	Medical and Hospital Survey Committee
MPC	Medical Planning Committee
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NCC	National Civic Council
NCCB	National Conference of Catholic Bishops
NCMS	National Conference of Major Superiors
NHIP	National Health Insurance Program
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
NJHAC	National Joint Health Advisory Committee
NSCPH	National Standing Committee of Private Hospitals
PBS	Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
PP	Parliamentary Papers
SAA	Sydney Archdiocesan Archives
VHIAA	Voluntary Health Insurance Association of Australia

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