FAITH, HOPE AND CHARITY

The role of faith in the provision of services administered by Hunter Valley faith-based (non-government) organisations and the market state objectives of the Howard Liberal National Coalition Government (1996-2007)

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DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The process of writing this thesis has been rewarding, but also stressful. Most importantly, it has been a lesson in perseverance, not only for me but also for my family, who I have to thank for putting up with me over the years it has taken to complete this work. In particular, deep gratitude goes to my husband Glenn, without whose continued belief in me, I would have been lost. In relation to supervision I could not have asked for better supervisors than Professor Mel Gray and Associate Professor Jim Jose, who have been patient, informative, and understanding: their expert advice has been greatly appreciated. Thank you both for your input and dedication. Lastly, I would like to thank all the research participants, the volunteers, managers, and clients of Hunter FBOs. All have their stories to tell which can help us understand the difficulties some people have while living under circumstances that many people living in better financial and social situations may not be fully aware.
PUBLICATIONS ORIGINATING FROM THIS RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

Welfare policy in Australia during the term of the Liberal-Coalition Government (1996-2007) sought to incorporate the benefits of faith-based Christian morals assumed to be embedded in faith-based provision at the grassroots of service delivery. In turn, it was believed these morals would have a positive impact on the habits of faith-based organization (FBO) clients, who were largely welfare recipients. Correspondingly, welfare reform, particularly Welfare to Work legislation also reflected a paternalistic ethos embodying highly moral views as to why poverty existed. Therefore, it was assumed that faith-based provision could overcome the moral deficiencies of the poor. Welfare and social policy became embedded within a clear duality in relation to citizenship. Those in poverty were seen as a moral underclass lacking traditional Christian values, which prevented them from gaining employment. In turn, volunteers, particularly those who worked in Christian organisations, were upheld as virtuous citizens who would, due to their involvement in social and welfare provision, pass their moral values onto clients in need thus providing a solution to poverty. Australian politicians were following trends in other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, particularly the USA, which promoted FBOs as moral institutions capable of reforming the behaviour of the poor who had become passive dependents of the welfare state. Through a predominantly qualitative research design incorporating quantitative data collected from volunteers, managers, and clients of FBOs in the Hunter, the role of faith in the provision of faith-based social and welfare services was explored to gain an understanding of how it manifested in service provision and
whether the faith of those working in Hunter FBOs could provide a way out of poverty for those reliant on residual state benefits. The findings of this study do not support the belief held by the Howard government that the faithful seek to moralise those in poverty who use their services. In contrast, they seek to provide a caring and compassionate environment where they attempt to convey the love of God through their service.
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<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
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<td>ACOSS</td>
<td>Australian Council of Social Services</td>
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<td>BHP</td>
<td>Broken Hill Proprietary Limited (now BHP Billiton Ltd)</td>
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<td>CASS</td>
<td>Client Assessment of Services Survey</td>
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<td>Church-based Organisations (non-contracted FBOs)</td>
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<td>CL</td>
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<td>FaCHSIA</td>
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<td>Family and Community Services</td>
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<td>Hunter Valley Research Foundation</td>
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<td>JNP</td>
<td>Job Network Providers</td>
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<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Nongovernment Organisations</td>
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<td>NPM</td>
<td>New Public Management</td>
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<td>NT</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>OT</td>
<td>Old Testament</td>
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Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter introduces the rationale for research into the role of faith in faith-based service provision, provides a personal account as to why the research was undertaken, and anchors the need for the investigation within the political ideology and assumptions made by the Howard National Liberal Coalition Government (1996-2007) towards those in need of welfare support. It briefly outlines the move towards New Public Management (NPM) and expectations relating to the benefits of government contracted faith-based services, and demonstrates the key questions underpinning the research aims and objectives. It highlights why the focus of the study was the Hunter Region before progressing to conceptual explanations as to why ‘faith-based organisation’ (FBO), as a term for religious nongovernment organisations, was used in the context of the study. Finally, it provides a brief discussion on the terms ‘charity’ and ‘fundamentalism’ from the perspective of Christian belief. This is followed by a brief overview of Chapters 1 through to 8.

Faith, poverty and provision: Working with those in need

In the early 1990s, I commenced working as an emergency relief (ER) volunteer one day a week for a large faith-based organisation in the Hunter region. I was recruited from the local church I was attending at the time. As a consequence of my volunteer role, over the years I have come face-to-face - and helped many people - with an array of economic, social and family problems. From my perception and what clients have told me, some of their problems did - and still do - stem from issues directly connected with, or tangential to, drug and alcohol addiction, whether it is the client’s
own issues of addiction, or those of a family member or members. However, this is not the case for all clients. From my experience, I have come to recognise that many clients come to the centre with differentiated life stories and a complexity of need, which is grounded in issues other than addiction of any kind. There are varied reasons why a person has to approach an FBO for assistance. Issues such as mental illness, ill health, physical disability, sole responsibility for childcare, be they single mothers or fathers and, not least, the inadequacy of welfare benefits and low wages to cover ongoing costs of housing, basic needs and regular bills.

One group heavily reliant on the centre, and the most targeted in relation to welfare reform under the Howard government, was the unemployed, particularly the long-term unemployed. Again from my personal perspective, their inability to find long-term employment could be linked to issues outlined above, coupled with a lack of skills, education, experience and, in particular, self-confidence needed for a modern competitive job market. In addition, account also needed to be taken of the disappearance of low-skilled jobs in the manufacturing sector that impacted on employment in the Hunter during the 1990s, a situation from which people who relied on those types of jobs have yet to fully recover. These structural changes to the economy and employment sector also coincided with the increasing debate from conservative political views on welfare dependence, which related poverty to the lack of morals or ‘bad’ behaviours exhibited by the poor. A particular favourite was their perceived lack of a work ethic. By the mid-2000s, highly moralistic views embedded in traditional Christian values relating to personal responsibility and the benefits of free market economics to meet society’s needs led to an increased focus on those deemed ‘undeserving’ of welfare benefits. The solution lay not with
increased government spending or on a rigorous analysis of structural impediments in relation to poverty, but with the inherent morals of virtuous citizens who served their communities selflessly and who, in turn, were vessels of moral wisdom, which could impact positively on the ‘immorality’ of the poor.

In the mid-to-late 1990s, I also witnessed changes to the funding processes in relation to FBOs, which went from block grants to partnering with government via contracts and tendering processes, including competition between community-based providers. The political and economic backdrop to this debate was strongly associated with concerns relating to the growing government welfare bill, as the percentage of the population making claims for income support had risen from 5% in 1974 to 20% by mid-2000 (Australian Federal Government, 2005-06). In response, at a policy level, the Howard government introduced harsh Welfare to Work\(^1\) legislation (ACOSS, 2001; Centrelink, 2006a; Mackay, 2004). **Welfare to Work** entailed increased sanctions for those who failed to participate in enforced measures in return for their unemployment benefits. The government also extended these provisions to incorporate those on a disability payment assessed as being able to seek employment and sole parent pensions.\(^2\) To stay in receipt of benefits the unemployed, including those on a disability allowance and sole parent payment, who were deemed able, had to be seen to seek work actively, undertake work for the dole or volunteer for at least 150 to 240 hours over a six-month period depending on age


\(^2\) These payments are known as Newstart Primary and Newstart Incapacitated which differ in regards to allowances for those receiving Newstart Basic. Newstart basic has a maximum payment of $486.80 per fortnight for a single person with no dependents (Centrelink, 2012)
and the type of benefit being claimed (Australian Federal Government, 2005-06; Centrelink, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c; Harris, 2001; Hartman & Darab, 2006). These policy instruments were used to enforce a work ethic onto those who, it was assumed, did not have one. These changes were linked firmly to the notion of individual responsibility arising from another popular concept, that of mutual obligation. As an overriding directive, mutual obligation sought to incorporate government, business and civic minded individuals into a joint effort to help the unemployed into work, but welfare policy focused almost entirely on the obligations and responsibilities of people who were unemployed (McClure, 2000, 2000a).

Economic participation became the cornerstone of welfare policy. Therefore the unemployed were obliged to look for work, attend meetings with their Job Network advisor\(^3\) and attend all job interviews. They were warned not to leave employment without a good or valid reason. Failure to meet these participation requirements led to sanctions on welfare income, which could include loss of income for up to eight weeks, or the inability to obtain a benefit from the state for a set number of weeks or months (Centrelink, 2006). Within this policy framework, poverty became conceptualised as something the poor could overcome given the right moral tools and incentives to do so. As the faith-based sector in Australia, which was and remains overwhelmingly Christian, was by this time in partnership with the state, its moral underpinnings became an important policy tool. It was claimed that FBOs could, by way of their inherent faith, pass their values onto the poor thereby making a moral impact directly on their antisocial behaviours.

\(^{3}\) Known since 2007 as Job Service Providers
Therefore, the tendering processes at a state and federal level, which sought moral alternatives to amoral state services, incorporated faith-based providers into contractual relations for welfare and community services, including Emergency Relief and Job Network Providers (Engels, 2006).

Contractualism is the term used in relation to government partnering with nongovernment providers, and was an important element of New Public Management (NPM), which incorporated the restructuring of the administration of the state (Bresser-Pereira, 2004; also see page 75). In other words, the state sought to relieve itself from its former services and find other alternatives outside of government provision. However, it did not wish to relinquish control of service provision.

Welfare reform - or the rolling back of the welfare state - was not limited to conservative politics. Parties on the left, such as the Labor Party in Australia, had also followed the trend. However, belief in the faith-based sector’s ability to make an impact on the morals of the poor via faith was a hallmark of the Howard Coalition Government, despite the lack of empirical evidence as to whether proselytising could or would have any demonstrable impact on the morals of the poor and, in turn, provide a pathway out of poverty. Many of the national FBOs had long implied that faith and spiritual guidance played a large role in their delivery of services. An overview of their websites confirmed this and served to uphold the government’s claims. However, little was known about exactly what happened at the grassroots of provision and the role faith played in the everyday world of faith-based provision in community settings.
As I have studied the faith-based sector and worked in it as a volunteer, I am acutely aware of what faith-based welfare and social services organisations can offer those in need. They give material and social support to those who have little choice in being able to meet their needs due to a lack of financial and social resources. The resources given, particularly of the material kind, do little to solve or even alleviate poverty. They help clients overcome the immediate crisis or difficult situation at the time of their visit. During my interviews with clients I do not embark on proselytising about the virtues of faith but I was unsure as to how other volunteers interacted with clients, particularly those who worked at other centres. Was I alone in my hesitancy to speak of faith to clients? Would managers of FBOs expect volunteers to speak of faith? Was I letting the team down, so to speak, in not talking about my Christian beliefs and how they might help people in their immediate situation? The policy focus on faith and my own experiences led me to wonder what role faith played in the provision of services in Hunter FBOs. Did volunteers talk about the virtues of faith and, if so, in what circumstances might it be appropriate, if at all? Could faith provide a concrete solution to poverty that I was failing to acknowledge? Was I the only FBO volunteer who did not talk about religion during my interactions with clients? Much had been said at a political level as to the importance of disseminating Christian values and morals in community settings and their perceived benefits on what was thought to be the ‘valueless’ poor population, which Levitas (2005) referred to as the ‘moral underclass’ in welfare reform discourse. The perceived poverty-alleviating aspects were little understood of faith-based provision and had not heretofore been explored fully in Australia. As a volunteer in the sector, I did not know, even within the centre in which I worked
what role ‘faith’ played in other volunteers’ day-to-day activities with those whom they sought to help. Therefore, policy which sought to evoke faith as a solution to poverty was not based on hard empirical evidence but was rather informed by the directions being undertaken in the USA at the time, despite a lack of knowledge about how these expectations might align with the grassroots delivery of services in Australia. As the faith-based sector was upheld increasingly as providing solutions to the problems faced by those in the communities in which they served, evidence as to the role of faith in faith-based provision in Australia needed further exploration and understanding.

**Key questions regarding the role of faith in faith-based provision in the Hunter Region**

Little research has been undertaken in Australia, and none at all in the Hunter region where the study was located. Hence the study focused directly on the role of faith in the provision of welfare and social services administered through FBOs in the Hunter Region of New South Wales, Australia. In light of emerging policy expectations, key questions needed to be answered as to the role of faith in service provision:

1. How did faith-based volunteers view the discussion of faith with clients during service provision?

2. Were clients of FBOs likely to hear a moral message in relation to the issues surrounding their poverty?
3. Morality aside, what other benefits accrued for the Howard government in relation to contracting FBOs to provide welfare and social services within the context of the welfare reforms?

This study sought to answer these questions. It provides a starting point for further investigation into this important policy area, particularly as governments continue to partner with the FBO sector to provide an array of welfare and social services coincident with the move towards NPM within the market state environment and neoliberal discourse of the Howard Coalition government in Australia. Seeking to understand the role of faith in the provision of welfare and social services as a policy directive during the Liberal-Coalition’s time in office could not be analysed critically without this contextualisation. This form of research, the critical analysis of social systems and political motivations, sits within the framework of critical social theory, a tradition of research undertaken by social scientists interested in power relations, and their impact on the less fortunate in society (e.g., Allen, 1999; Arendt, 1968; Bryson, 1991, 1992; Fraser, 1994, 2004; Fraser & Gordon, 1994; Giddens, 1971; Gilgun & Abrams, 2002; Gray & Webb, 2009; Habermas, 1979; Hachen, 2001; Hamilton & Maddison, 2007; Harvey, 1990; Mertens, 2007; Morrow & Brown, 1994; Pleasants, 2000; Stockman, 1983; Yeatman, 2000). This study focuses on the power of ideas, in this case in relation to why there is poverty, particularly in a rich Western nation. Therefore, social democratic theory is also influential throughout the study in regards to upholding the rights of those who are less fortunate in society and who have little in the way of a voice when up against the narratives of the dominant political classes (Jamorzik, 2001; Mendes, 2005; Saunders, 2005).
There has been significant research undertaken on a national level involving social welfare services and nongovernment organisations (NGOs) (Australian Council of Social Services, 2001, 2005, 2006, 2008; Brown, Kenny, Turner, & Prince, 2002; Maddison & Hamilton, 2004; Vellekoop-Baldock, 1990). However, the Hunter region as a research site has had little in the way of explanatory research conducted specifically around faith and the faith-based welfare sector. Spatially, the Hunter region provided regional, rural and remote locations on which the study could draw. It comprises 11 Local Government Areas (LGAs) that constitute the Hunter Region Organisation of Councils (HROC, 2006), but is now known as the Hunter Councils Incorporated (2010) (see pages 141 & 142 for maps). Therefore, FBOs inside these council areas were included within the research (Babbie, 2001; Dey, 1999).

Even though unemployment statistics are fluid and, as some argue, not truly reflective of the exact number of unemployed people, they show that the Hunter continually has a higher proportion of unemployed people in comparison with Sydney. For example, the Hunter in the September quarter of 2004 had an unemployment rate of 6.5% while Sydney showed a rate of 5.2% (Australian Bureau of Statistics, National and Regional Profile 2000-2004). Those who fall into the category of the long-term unemployed, i.e., out of work for more than a year and who live in the Hunter, can expect to be out of work far longer than elsewhere in the nation. In 2002, the figure for long-term unemployment stood at 245 weeks compared with 176 weeks elsewhere in Australia (Hunter Councils, n.d.; Hunter Valley Research Foundation, 2008-2009; Mitchell, 2002). The Hunter had also suffered large structural setbacks with the closure of many of the regions’ traditional
industries, including Broken Hill Proprietary Company (BHP) in 1997 (Hunter Valley Research Foundation, 2011). Many people in receipt of government unemployment and other benefits rely on FBOs for welfare and social service provision (ACOSS, 2001; Engels, 2006; The Samaritans, 2007). The Hunter has FBOs, like the Wesley Mission, Salvation Army and Samaritans, which provide services to at least 50 to 60 thousand clients throughout the region each year (The Salvation Army, 2007; The Samaritans, 2007; Wesley Mission, 2007). As part of this provision, clients could be referred to a volunteer counsellor or be able to talk to someone willing to listen to their problems.

Hence the objectives of this Hunter Valley based study were to: (i) understand the role of faith in faith-based service provision and its benefits in addressing client needs and issues; (ii) comprehend client views of services provided by FBOs; and (iii) establish whether overall, the system of faith-based welfare and social provision, in conjunction with NPM practices, matched the dominant political line that FBOs provide a moral framework through face-to-face contact with clients in need. In pursuing those objectives the study aimed to:

1. Examine the contribution of faith to the volunteering role.
2. Ascertain the main philosophical underpinnings, i.e., how faith framed the views of volunteers and managers of participating FBOs, particularly in relation to working with those in need.
3. Gain an understanding from the perspective of the volunteers and managers as to the extent to which faith could make a real difference in the lives of those in need of their assistance.
4. Explore the claims of the Howard Government in relation to the faithful sharing their values: in other words, were those at the coal-face of welfare provision willing to share faith with those in need?

5. Comprehend client feedback on service provision, including the adequacy of services provided, the perceived attitudes of staff towards clients, and the expression and reception of religion within emergency relief services at one major regional FBO.

6. Contribute unique and relevant knowledge on the FBO sector to ongoing social policy debate on the benefits and limitations of faith in service provision, the marketisation of welfare services, and the future direction of social policy in the post-welfare era.

To pursue these aims, the research involved the following activities:

1. The collection of primary data through surveys of eligible Hunter FBOs delivering a volunteer counselling or support service, and in-depth interviews with managers and volunteer counsellors of FBOs in the Hunter region.

2. The collection of secondary resources, including newspapers; scholarly journals; policy reviews, related reports and departmental government documents, especially those of FaCHSIA; the Internet; and audio-visual resources, such as podcasts and research documentaries.

3. The establishment of a database on FBOs in the Hunter region providing welfare services, including emergency relief and material assistance, such as food and in-kind aid, and volunteer counselling or ministry service for inclusion in the study.
4. Development of two distinct methods for analysing qualitative and quantitative data, including a Client Assessment of Services Survey (CASS) for the recruitment of participants accessing emergency relief from a major regional FBO supplying welfare services.

Specific discussion of the research methodologies is undertaken in Chapter 5. Before highlighting the key findings of the study it is necessary to note some limitations. Although overall the research design yielded robust and verifiable data, some aspects of the design could have been improved. For example, the term ‘counsellor’ might have been misinterpreted in the first survey mail out even though it was defined broadly in the information packs sent to participating FBOs. There was a tendency to interpret ‘counsellor’ as being specifically trained and not a volunteer available to listen and talk to clients about their problems. However, this was clarified over the phone with managers before the second survey was mailed to participants. Also, a few volunteer and manager surveys were returned, which potentially limited the power of the study. However, the surveys were not intended to produce a representative sample, but to serve as a recruitment tool for the in-depth interviews. As such, far from limiting the study, they formed a crucial part of the research design.

**Key findings**

The study highlighted a sector in which the undercurrent of faith was as strong as its moral overtones. However, volunteers and managers working in Hunter FBOs seeking to assist those in need sought to show their faith through care and compassion, without recourse to discussing faith, unless a client initiated it. As a
collective group, faith mediated their judgments and distrust of clients, which was a key feature in their time-limited interactions with them. Showing clients the love of God via their actions, was a key element in light of the limitations of their services, be it material assistance or, indeed, human resources. There was little evidence to uphold the optimistic view that FBOs could provide a solution to poverty. Rather, FBOs managed the poor, making sure that those in need of food were fed and those in need of comfort found it. Due to the volunteers and managers seeking to act on their faith via works, they provided faith-based capital and a cheaper welfare alternative as the state sought to cut back its welfare bill.

**Definitional issues**

Are FBOs non-profit, nongovernment, third sector or voluntary agencies and does terminology matter? National and international writers in this area used a variety of terms, such as non-profit or not-for-profit, nongovernment, third sector, quangos, and voluntary and community agencies, interchangeably in the literature (Adair, 1999; Berger, 2006; Botsman & Latham, 2001; Dickey, 1987; Dolnicar & Randle, 2007; Edwards & Hulme, 1997; Greer & Hoggett, 1999; Jamrozik 2001, Lyon, 1992; Maddison, Denniss, & Hamilton, 2004; Mendes, 2005; Nevile, 2002; Staples, 2008). To gain an understanding of why this was so, some of the terms were analysed in their use, and in relation to one another, though it must also be acknowledged that for each term used, there was no conclusive or definitive definition to be found in the literature.
Non-profit organisations

Lyons (1992) examined the term ‘non-profit organisation’ in Australia and stressed that non-profit organisations – or not-for-profits – were an institutional manifestation of commitment by various groups of people to provide a service, create an activity or advance a cause. He highlighted the voluntary effort that sustained them, their lack of authority (in relation to government) and the absence of a profit motive.

Third or voluntary nongovernment community services sector

Maddison, Denniss, and Hamilton (2004) drew on Lyons’s definition for the term ‘third sector’ which Lyons (1992) had defined as:

All those organisations that are not part of the public and business sectors; or, those private organisations that are formed and sustained by groups of people (members) acting voluntarily and without seeking personal profit to provide benefits for themselves or for others; that are democratically controlled; and where any material benefit gained by a member is proportionate to their use of the organisation (cited in Maddison et al., 2004, p. 9).

The term ‘third sector’ aligned with left-of-centre politics, especially from Giddens’ influence on New Labour in the UK and the New Democrats in the USA as a consultant to Tony Blair and Bill Clinton respectively. His ‘third way’ politics gave rise to the discourse of social investment, mutual obligation, partnerships between the state, business and NGO sectors, social equity, inclusion, and community development as it sought an alternative to the far Left and Right of welfare politics,
i.e., a third way taking the best of both political persuasions, walking a tightrope between individualism, efficiency and rights-based social justice (Giddens, 2000, 2001; Gray, 2003; Kenny, 2000; Maddison et al., 2004). Within this political discourse, the ‘third sector’ referred to not-for-profit, nongovernment, voluntary sector or community service organisations, as they are called in Australia. ‘Voluntary sector’ is an umbrella term for community service organisations outside of government and the private profit-seeking sector (Kenny, 2000; Onyx, 2000).

Billis and Glennerster (1998) grouped the terms ‘non-profit’, ‘third sector’ and ‘voluntary agencies’ as belonging to the voluntary sector with no definitional parameters to distinguish each term. However, the Office of the Community and Voluntary Sector in New Zealand (OCVS, 2006), drawing on a definition provided by the Johns Hopkins Centre for Civil Society Studies, combined the voluntary and community sector into a single definitional framework.

This framework was not dissimilar to that employed by Lyons (1992) for non-profit organisations and the third sector, i.e., they were neither government nor business organisations. They were self-organised, self-governing, non-profit organisations, where services were non-compulsory (Dekker, 2000; Lyons, 1992; Maddison et al., 2004; OCVS, 2006). Kenny (1994) argued that community organisations were nongovernment in that they were autonomous or semi-autonomous from government and developed locally relevant programs in the communities in which they were working. Even though they received most of their funding from federal, state or local government sources, community organisations from her perspective were philosophically committed and accountable to the
communities in which they were embedded and served.

The term ‘quango’ is an acronym meaning quasi nongovernment or quasi-autonomous nongovernment organisation (Editorial, Environmental Policy and Law, 1979;5). Although some Australian writers have used the term, it is usually associated with those writing from a UK and European perspective (Bertelli, 2006, Bonavia, 1978; Kramer, 1983). However, the term could be related back to Kenny’s (1994) interpretation of a nongovernment organisation or NGO.

**Community sector or NGO?**

The term ‘community sector’ was used repeatedly by ACOSS (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008) in its annual survey of non-profit, nongovernment organisations, and extensively within its publications (Macfie, 2006). However, many Australian research projects and reports in recent years have used the term NGO (Maddison et al., 2004, Staples, 2008). It is also used internationally by the World Bank and other international agencies to refer to ‘private organisations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development’ (Operational Directive 14.70, World Bank, 2001; n.p.n). The World Bank (2001) applies the term ‘to any non-profit organisation which is independent from government … typically (NGOs) are value based organisations which depend, in whole or part, on charitable donations and voluntary service’.

On its overseas aid website, the Australian Government used the term NGO to refer to organisations like the Salvation Army, Australian Baptist World Aid,
World Vision, and the Quaker Service Australia (AusAID, 2006) as did the United Nations (n.d) in reporting on Australian organisations working overseas. Therefore, from the comparison and use of each term in the literature, it could be ascertained that they referred to the same sector in all its length and breadth. The sector was viewed as not being part of government or in any way profit driven and business oriented. This was not to say that they would not reflect, resemble or receive funding from government departments or business entities, but to highlight a sector that had developed through the work and dedication of committed individuals and community groups who held a myriad of ideals and community goals, including the promotion of a volunteer labour force and the generation of social capital.

**Charity: Where did this term go?**

For many, the delivery of welfare services by a faith-based organisation has long been referred to as charity (Bartkowski & Regis, 2003; Bode, 2003; Saunders Peter, 2004; Hamilton & Maddison, 2007). The term ‘charity’ in the Bible is interchangeable with the word ‘love’, as both terms represent alternative translations of the original Greek word ‘agape’. Jesus gave his disciples a command to ‘Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another’ (John 13: 34)

4 All Bible quotations use *The Message*, NavPress Publishing Group, 2002, unless otherwise specified.
affection, loving and graciousness. It is also defined as the giving of help, money and food to those in need. Charity has its origins in pre-welfare-state systems situated in the family or church. It is, however, modelled around the deserving and undeserving dichotomy and the value of the work ethic (Brown, Kenny & Turner, 2002). As a model for welfare, it functions separately from the state. It exists in welfare state regimes to fill gaps, helping the very poor who are regarded as passive with ‘little power to self-determination’ (Brown et al., 2002, p. 168). Its focus is residual and individual, downplaying rights to the access of resources. Due to its autonomy, the charity model has no commitment or legal requirement to provide equitable services to those seeking assistance.

The term ‘charitable’ remains in common law in regards to the tax status of organisations providing welfare services on a not-for-profit basis. As a legal entity, they also fall under the rubric of the term ‘charity’ which gives taxation relief in a variety of forms at the state and federal levels of government (Thompson, 2006). As charities, they can collect funds from the public and donations over two dollars are tax deductible for the giver. Thompson (2006) highlights the current Australian Tax Office description of a charity as ‘an institution or fund established for altruistic purposes that the law regards as charitable’ (p. 17). Charitable purposes are:

1. Relief of poverty
2. Relief of the needs of the aged
3. Relief of sickness or distress
4. Advancement of religion
5. Advancement of education

6. Provision of child care services on a non-profit basis

7. Purposes beneficial to the community (Thompson, 2006, p. 17).

However, the new market structures have changed the model of charitable provision. As Brown et al., (2002) argued, once an organisation takes up a contract with the government, it is no longer a charity but fell into the ‘welfare state industry model’ in which the presumed neutral state funded [FB]NGOs to administer welfare. In this way, non-government organisations became agents of state via service provision. Consequently, they were no longer autonomous but controlled by centralised government bureaucracy and ‘therefore no longer charity’ (Brown et al., 2002, p. 170). This perspective would incorporate those welfare organisations administering emergency relief, funded and administered by the government (FaHCSIA, 2008). Engels (2006) referred to faith-based organisations providing emergency relief as ‘emergency relief providers’ (p. 170) rather than charities, even though they started as charitable organisations. This move away from the term ‘charity’ was also highlighted by the Benevolent Society’s preference for ‘social enterprise’ rather than charity projects (Hampshire & Smeaton (the Benevolent Society), 2001). Therefore, new models of welfare provision and what could be viewed as more socially acceptable terms had rendered the term ‘charity’ obsolete or at the very least undesirable. There could be no doubt the term ‘charity’ carried with it negative connotations (Mendes, 2005) as it sat in stark contrast to the concept of social justice and the right of all citizens in a modern functioning state to be entitled to having

5 The Benevolent Society also claim on their website (see http://www.bensoc.org.au/) not to be a ‘religious’ organization which they clearly started out as (also see Dickey, 1987).
their basic needs met. Welfare in this framework was regarded as a human right, which upheld the dignity of people in need, taking into consideration far broader and less individualistic issues contributing to poverty. From this viewpoint, gaining access to resources should not be achieved via a request or, at the very worst, begged for from benevolent or religious organisations or people. Therefore, as the state restructured and new forms of governance were incorporated, nongovernment welfare providers moved away from using ‘charity’ as a description of their services.

**Faith-based organisations**

The term ‘FBO’ refers to the type of organisations under investigation in this study, set within a defined and targeted definition relating specifically to a particular grouping of NGOs under investigation, namely, NGOs motivated in their endeavours by faith. To understand the difference between secular and what Berger (2003) refers to as ‘religious’ NGOs, there must be an understanding of their underlying motivation:

[I]n contrast with the rights based approach of many secular NGOs, the starting point for religious NGOs is the duty orientated language of religion characterised by obligations towards the divine and others by a belief in transformative capacities, and a concern for justice and reconciliation (p. 19).

Berger (2003) argued the term ‘religious’ was used by some writers when speaking of NGOs with an underlying philosophy based on religion. In this context, as Berger (2003) argued, the term ‘religion’ tended to be understood as professing an outward obligation by people of faith to help those in need based on the teachings of the
church or synagogue, for example. However, in seeking to understand the function of religion in society as a collective phenomenon, Durkeim [1915] (1968) provided this explanation:

A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden-beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a church, all those who adhere to them (p. 47).

Religion from this perspective is collective, bringing people together who share a common set of beliefs and ways of being. For the purposes of this study, religion underscored personal faith, which might be similar, comparable or completely different from the religious organisation or church to which a person belonged. Faith was, therefore, a more subjective term, and allowed for the discussion of beliefs from a personal perspective from people who work within FBOs even if they did not conform, as Chambrè argued, to ‘mainstream or even organised religious groups’ (cited in Berger, 2003, p. 437). This study also drew on international literature, especially North American research focusing on the implementation, debate and outcomes of the Charitable Choice amendment of 1996 and other relevant legislation in which faith-based charitable and contracted religious NGOs were abbreviated as FBOs: Faith-Based Organisations, this study will therefore do the same (Bartkowski & Regis, 2003; Chambré, 2001; Kemeny, 2007; Wallis, 2005). The abbreviation CBO for church-based organisations is used to highlight organisations providing charitable services without government contracts relying only on private donations of money and personal time.
Faith: What does the Christian fundamentalist believe?

Although this study focused on personal faith, all the interview participants belonged to a church. Therefore, they belonged to a Christian culture with an underlying value system. However, the interpretation of scripture could sit within a spectrum of ‘truth’, which could be taken literally or interpretively. The term fundamentalist has become viewed in a negative light, particularly when used in conjunction with the Muslim faith. From a Christian perspective, fundamentalists are often viewed as those on the right of the Christian belief spectrum who seek to convert others via evangelism (Cameron, 2004). Historically, however, fundamentalism relates to Protestants objecting to, as Von Dohlen (1997) states, ‘liberal theological movements which are regarded as undermining the fundamentals of the Christian faith’ (p. 251). For fundamentalists, importance is placed in the belief that Jesus was born, lived and died on a certain date and time in a specific cultural setting (Von Dohlen, 1997). In regards to this, they see themselves as mainstream orthodox Christians. To fall into this category one has only to take the Bible as being the literal word of God’s transcendent truth. Some people and branches of the Christian faith, for example, a minority of Anglican Church leaders viewed as liberal have questioned these core beliefs, taking a more interpretive stance, but still adhere to the Christian faith (Spong, 2005). Not surprisingly, this causes tension and criticism between denominations (Porter, 2006). This is particularly true as fundamentalists are from an ethical standpoint Universalists. They view the values they hold as being applicable at a universal level - to all societies and cultures, therefore they also seek to evangelise (Von Dohlen, 1997). This is most evident in the expansion of Christianity on a worldwide scale, by the number of missionaries who sought, and still seek, to
convert societies and cultures holding different belief systems to the Christian faith, including influencing the secularised West.

**Defining the poor from a Western perspective**

Poverty is classified in the literature as being either relative or absolute. Absolute poverty often refers to those in the third world wherein many survive on a dollar a day or less and are, therefore, absolutely poor (Chen & Ravallion, 2007; Edward, 2006). Relative poverty refers to a state of economic realities in the West which highlights poverty relative to the general population. It gives researchers a tool to compare those who are economically disadvantaged with those on median and high incomes. Relative poverty provides a way in which poverty can be broadened to include access to services, consumption habits and educational attainment, rather than just lack of adequate income (Brady, 2005; Lewis, 2007, Moller et al., 2003; Rogers, Siminski, & Bishop, 2009). This study did not set out to define specifically who the poor are by way of a statistical interpretation or to argue the benefits or limitations of a poverty line, as many other researchers with an interest in poverty have done (Adams, 2002; Cox, 2002; Davidson, 2002, 2002a ; Edward, 2006; Marcelo, 2006; Saunders, 2005; Tsumori, Saunders Peter, 6 & Hughes, 2002). As this study is set within a Western nation, which has a functioning welfare system, a person is classified as poor or in poverty, whether long or short-term, if they need to access the services of FBOs to get some of their basic needs met. They might be facing what has been termed in the literature ‘food insecurity’ (Lee, Fischer &

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6 There are two Peter Saunders who write regularly on poverty albeit from different perspectives. To differentiate between the two, one will be referred to as Saunders and the other Saunders Peter.
Johnson, 2010; Lilburn, 2004) or ‘social exclusion’ (Baum & Gleeson, 2010; McCall, 2010) and be unable to meet a material or social need either via family, government or market mechanisms. Therefore, this definition sits within the concept of relative poverty as they are in need in relation to the larger population not needing such assistance. Within this definition, the concept of poverty is more fluid as some people may only need to access an FBO once in their life, or for some, their need may be ongoing.

**Thesis structure**

Having outlined the context in which the vision for the study arose, the rationale, the key findings, and the main terms to be used in reference to the faith-based sector in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 focuses on the political and policy framework in relation to the incorporation of the faith-based sector as a key provider of resources material and moral, to those in need. The increasing use of faith-based organisations in welfare policy needs to be contextualized and understood in relation to the restructuring of the welfare state and the increased intersection of political and religious discourse in policy debate. It traces the rise of conservative political values linked to the rise of the religious right, culminating in what some commentators call the ‘culture wars’, and neoliberal ideology underpinning the restructuring of the welfare state (Dyrenfurth, 2007; Maddox, 2005; McKnight, 2005; Wear, 2008). Christian voices and values undoubtedly became part of the post 9/11 political debates, particularly with those on the religious right being more vocal in the public arena and courted by governments open to traditional values taking a more central role in policy formulation (Maddox, 2005; Marr, 2007; Porter, 2006; Walsh, 2000). Within these
dual discourses, social welfare was more solidly construed as a personal issue, one through which individuals via the adoption of the right values and morals could use to overcome their dependence on the state. Governments became less inclined to keep supporting those who were claiming state benefits, particularly those who were thought to lack a work ethic. Lacking this ethic didn’t fit with the supposed mainstream values of hard work, evoked politically by Howard as belonging to ‘battlers’ who worked hard to support themselves (Johnson, 2007). In turn Australian government policies such as Welfare to Work reflected Workfare reform in the USA (Bartkowski & Regis, 2003; Schram, Fording & Soss 2008). This policy determined that those who were in receipt of a welfare benefit, more specifically the long-term unemployed, must look for work and comply with their participation requirements, to gain access to a state payment (Centrelink, 2006). The underlying assumption was that people on benefits were lazy and work shy. As a policy, Welfare to Work was and remains, highly moralistic. As Chapter 2 highlights, its moral underpinnings sat within a framework which conservative politicians and social commentators felt resonated with the perceived moral framework of FBO service provision.

Chapter 3 begins with a discussion of the relationship between Christianity and its historical underlying mission to help the poor. This discussion is then linked to the issues and debates surrounding the development of the faith-based sector in Australia, the rise of the secular welfare state, and the impact in the 1980s and 1990s of New Public Management (NPM) on the state’s administrative apparatus, in particular the effect of contractual partnerships on faith-based organisations and the funding of emergency relief (ER). Some of the theoretical perspectives as to why services for those deemed ‘deviant’ are located at a community level are reviewed in

On the basis of these discussions, Chapters 3 and 4 provide an overall contextualisation of FBOs and their recent rise to political prominence. But this is only part of the story in understanding the role of faith in the provision of emergency relief for the poor and needy. Chapter 4 discusses the rise of discourses, which uphold the benefits of national, family and community values as providing solutions to community problems. It highlights the benefits and limitations of concepts such as social capital, the third way and volunteerism. In particular it focuses on discussions around the faith-based sector as being incubators of social capital or, as others have called it, faith-based capital, as this sector relies heavily on volunteers to provide many of its services. Finally, Chapter 4 highlights some of the main issues in regards to volunteerism itself, such as the who, how and why of community participation, and the influences impacting on the need for volunteering at a rural and regional level.

Chapter 5 provides a detailed description of the methodology. Although the overall framework of the research design was qualitative, it also incorporated a quantitative process. Both methods incorporated the collection of data from volunteers, managers and clients from 15 FBOs in the Hunter region.

Chapters 6 and 7 are dedicated to findings relating to the role of faith in
Hunter faith-based organisations, which both correlate with and differ from government expectations as to how the sector operates. The sector is highly moral, and the centres in which participants worked and operated were found to be imbued with faith. However, the participants were hesitant to discuss faith with clients. Overwhelmingly, volunteers and managers sought to show their faith through their actions. They sought to show clients the love of God during service provision, which they undertook within the constraints of limited resources. FBOs operated within extremely tight budget constraints, therefore showing clients that a loving God took precedence in the delivery of services.

Chapter 8 discusses the research conclusions within the context of market state objectives and welfare reform and highlights how, at the grassroots of provision, faith-based organisations sought to be inclusive rather than exclusive. In other words, they sought to help everyone who approached them for assistance, regardless of why assistance was needed. This contrasted with the Liberal government’s focus on more paternalistic measures, such as sanctions and conformity to individualistic neoliberal ideals of worth. The positive impacts of faith were visible in volunteers’ reluctance to judge clients and their tendency to accept people based on their sacred humanity. However, the study found that faith did not lead to social relationships between clients and volunteers outside of FBO provision highlighting limitations of faith-based social capital in the context of the FBO environment. FBO provision is specifically a way in which those of faith can show those in need the love of God when seeking assistance. Since the government saw FBOs as a cheaper solution to the problem of the poor, the faith-based sector, due to its mission to help, found itself trapped into helping more people with less, a
situation which undermined their mission to show a loving and generous God to those in need.

The faith-based sector is entreated to form an alliance with other interested parties to highlight the complexity of issues that contribute to poverty. This will help to shift the emphasis away from a purely moralistic framework, to one which seeks to tackle the many issues underpinning need which had been overlooked by the neoliberal political agenda. In this way, the FBO sector can, once again, remain accountable to the communities it serves, rather than merely plug the gaps in the ever-diminishing welfare safety net.
Chapter 2: Joining faith and policy: A marriage made in heaven or marriage of convenience?

During the tenure of the Howard Liberal-National Coalition Government (1996-2007) an important policy shift took place within the reconfigured Australian welfare state. Against the backdrop of two major social changes, welfare reform and the shifting relationship between politics and religion, there arose a discourse on Australian and family values which sparked what some have referred to as the ‘culture wars’ (Cherry, 2009; McKnight, 2005; Miller, 2010; Walsh, 2000). The war on terrorism in the post-9/11 years and constant tensions around so-called, ‘illegal immigrants’, had heightened fears of an external invasion that served to galvanise public sentiment around national patriotism which led to a backlash against multiculturalism. Rather than tolerate external values, public sentiment moved to uphold and embrace Australian values, which were thought to be Christian and family centred. This shift was highly reflective of John Howard’s own values which he often referred (Dyrenfurth, 2007). It was within this context that Christian faith-based organisations (FBOs) assumed a central place within the reformed welfare system to capitalise on their potential to cement these Australian values. This chapter outlines this changing policy landscape and the discourse surrounding faith as a moral solution to poverty.

Christian social welfare in Australia: An historical overview

Christianity has a history of providing help to the poor, reaching back into antiquity to the time of Jesus’ death sometime between 30 and 33 AD (Dickson, 2006;
Faherty, 2006, Hill, 2007; Strobel, 1998, 2007). The emergence of a strong Christian ethos towards helping the poor was embedded in a pre-Christian historical framework (Faherty, 2006). However it was the words and deeds of Jesus, who deliberately sought out the poor, that had a huge impact on followers of his creed, as did the later writings of Paul, author of most of the New Testament (NT) (Faherty, 2006; Sider; 2007; Smidt, 2007; Wogaman, 2007; also see Matthew 6:1 & Galatians 2:10).

However, the Judaic tradition upon which Christianity is built provides an image of God that could be construed as simultaneously loving and angry, annoyed by the failings of the faithful.. In regards to God’s righteousness or moral values, the Old Testament (OT) provides what Wogaman quite harshly (2007) calls ‘retributive theories of justice’ in which he quotes scriptural dictates like ‘an eye for an eye’ and a ‘tooth for a tooth’ (p. 218). The OT is undeniably rule bound and at times overtly moral. It features the Ten Commandments and portrays a God who is, at times, angry and more than willing to ‘smite’ sinners for not obeying him7 (see, for example, Ecclesiastes 12:13; Numbers 15:30; Proverbs 8:36 & 11:19). Therefore, those who believed in the Judaic God tried to follow the rules of behaviour as decreed, or fear being denied eternal salvation due to the sin of disobedience – Jesus had yet to be sent to provide a bridge to salvation (Neiman, 2002, also see Ezekiel 18:27).

In contrast, the NT focuses on the life and times of Jesus Christ, portrayed as a kind and caring human incarnation of God the Father, often referred to as the Son

7 The Christian convention in regards to appropriating a gender to God is that of a male - Father. To stay consistent with this convention this thesis does the same.
of God⁸ (Cochran, 2007). Christ was sent by God as a saviour. Humans, unlike God, were fallible and failed to keep to the rules embedded in the OT. After his crucifixion, the rules were not to be disregarded (see John 1:17) but by having faith in Christ (God), one could traverse an obtainable bridge to salvation (O’Neil, 2007). The overriding theme of the NT is that God seeks reconciliation through Christ via grace and love: God’s grace is all inclusive (Wogaman, 2007). Believers are encouraged not only to love their enemies but also to embrace the poor and the outcast as ‘you are all one in Jesus Christ’ (Galatians, 3:28). Jesus sought a more inclusive society, one that was horizontal, rather than vertical. He fought against corrupt church officials and spoke out for those who were marginalised, particularly the poor (see James 2:2-4).

Although verses in the Bible state that salvation can be found via faith in God and God alone (see, for example, Mark 16:16, John 3:18, 36, Acts 16:30-31), there are also verses indicating a strong correlation between faith and works. For example, James focused on faith and the importance of works without which faith was dead (James 2:17 & 2:24; also see Psalm 62:12 and Revelation 20:12-13). Works provide a way for believers to follow their faith, highlighting that through their actions, the spirit of Christ dwells within them (Paul 8:9-11). Paul, who persecuted Christians when known as Saul, converted from Judaism to Christianity and modelled this new faith by collecting alms for the poor and writing in his Epistles or letters, still read in Christian churches today, of the importance of helping those in need (for example, see Corinthians 1 and 2; Galatians and Ephesians). Faherty (2006) argues that those

⁸ Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit (Ghost) are to most Christians one and the same. They form three aspects of the one God referred to as the Holy Trinity (see, for example, John 14:6 and 14:9).
watching Christianity evolve saw an inclusive community, one in which followers sought to help one another. From these early beginnings, Christianity, and its inherent concern for the poor, was set to grow.

It did not take Western societies long to establish a ‘Christian social welfare system’ providing a vast amount of what is now referred to as ‘cash and in-kind goods and services’ (Faherty, 2006, p. 116). The church-based human welfare system that emerged and operated during the first three centuries after the death of Christ remains recognisable even now, with basic elements including ‘a physical organisation as the site of its social services operations’ or house churches - church held at a home - where the majority of Christian religious meetings were held: ‘reliable sources of communal funding; defined roles and responsibilities for employees supported by the Church; and, finally, a significant array of financial as well as in-kind goods and services distributed to identified vulnerable groups whether Christian or not’ (Faherty, 2006, p. 117). Not without corruption and social inequality, the system was far from perfect (Faherty, 2006), but, even so, Christianity and the helping system it created continued to grow rapidly over the centuries in the old and new worlds alike (Hill, 2007).

Pre-federation Australia was no exception to Christianity’s influence and its missionary zeal which was exported from Britain with its convicts (Chimni, 2007). Although by this time Christianity had encountered reformation, division and sectarianism, many denominations, including Catholics and Protestants, still clung to the message of Christ’s call to help the poor (Cochran, 2007; Hill, 2007; McGrath, 2007) as reflected in the denominationally different Christian FBOs that arose during
Australia’s 19th century colonial era (Dickey, 1987, 2003; Dickey & Martin, 1999; Swain, 2005; Withycombe, 2007). The first religious charity established in Sydney was the Benevolent Society in 1813: St Vincent de Paul followed in 1854, the Salvation Army in 1882, and Wesley Mission in 1884 (Dickey, 1987; Lyons, 2000; St Vincent de Paul, n.d.; Salvation Army, n.d.; Wesley Mission, n.d.). They arose, according to Dickey (1987), due to the obvious needs of the poor. People of faith took it upon themselves to help the destitute, driven by biblical messages that spoke to them of faith, works or acts of faith and social justice.

Even though religious charities were providing assistance at this time, there is some ambiguity in the literature regarding what was available to help those in need. Dickey (1987) argues that the Benevolent Society saw itself as supporting rather than replacing the meagre government rations that were available in the 19th century. Earnshaw (1995) paints a bleaker picture by arguing that many stepped from the ‘economic shelter of the convict system’ (p. 37) only to find a society with no mechanisms for basic relief. There is, however, general agreement that the help administered by religious organisations during the colonial period was conditional. It was based on moral behaviours to which those in need had to conform (Dickey, 1987; Earnshaw, 1995; Oppenheimer, 2000; Swain, 2005). Those not wanting to be exposed to such moral judgement (Earnshaw, 1995), who could manage to make a rudimentary living for themselves so as not be reliant on charity, did so. Even so, for those with little choice, charitable provision was highly inadequate. It failed to meet need or to tackle any of the root causes of poverty and distress, though it provided limited resources to the poor and vulnerable during a time dominated by laissez faire market relations (Dickey, 1987; Earnshaw, 1995; Schwartz, 2000; Withycombe,
where a little something was better than nothing. Therefore, conditional charity sat comfortably within the broader political context of the time and did little to upset the \textit{status quo} (Withycombe, 2007). It also contained within it the idea of the deserving and undeserving poor – a distinction never far from the surface in Australian welfare discourse.

The writings of Burke, the colonial governor of NSW from 1831-1837, were influential during the colonial period. He railed against the ideas underpinning the French revolution and had little regard for abstract rights, favouring a high reverence for ‘God, piety and the social order’ (Moore, 1995, p. 10). The social order was ordained by God and, therefore, making changes to it was tantamount to going against the dictates of the Divine Will, as understood by Burke, which could be viewed as a leftover idea from the feudal past. Correspondingly, within this social structure, those who had money were regarded as being more pious and moral than those who were poor. Therefore, conservatives, who tended to focus on behaviour and morality as the cause of poverty, might have wondered at the time about the age-old question of how much help the poor really deserved (Withycombe, 2007) while those who were more liberal minded - and who acted on their faith - spent hours cooking in soup kitchens, distributing clothing and making woodpiles. However, providing material resources to the poor was not the only reason faith-based organisations arose. In most cases, if not all, as directed by Biblical teachings, they were concerned with the souls of the poor rather than their stomachs (for example,
see Mark 16:15). Evangelism was certainly first on the agenda of the Benevolent Society, which included in its terms of reference ‘relieving the distressed and enforcing the sacred duties of religion and virtue in N.S.W’ and ‘promoting the missionary cause’ (Dickey, 1987, p. 13). The Salvation Army was also highly evangelistic and linked sinful behaviour and poverty to traits of personal greed which only faith in God could remedy (Swain, 2005). Likewise, the Catholic and High Anglican Church agencies also saw the poor as responsible for their own plight. However, these agencies sought to bring the ‘suffering’ poor to God via ritual and practice just as they had done over the many centuries since the death of Christ (Swain, 2005).

The situation of the poor in the colonies was dire and, as a result, alms relief was so time consuming that the Benevolent Society, for example, was forced to put the material needs of the poor first and evangelism second (Dickey 1987). The same was true for Anglican congregations. They were so busy with dispensing charity they had little time to plead for social justice for those who were beyond the reach of their programs (Withycombe, 2007). Even at that time, some congregations looked to the broader social structure as the root cause of poverty. However, overriding this broader outlook was, as Swain (2005) concludes, a ‘regressive’ moral focus in which faith-based providers operated. This meant that even with the poor in obvious dire need, the sector failed to make any contribution to progressive solutions which lay outside the dictates of faith. Faith-based charities shunned the secular forces that sought to change society and shift the status quo. In this regard, Swain (2005)

\[9\] ‘And he said unto them, ‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature’.
questions the motives of faith-based charities arguing that, had they really wanted to help society’s needy, they would have sought change at a political level.

**FBOs, morals and welfare reform**

In Australia, large faith-based charities have always played a powerful role in social provision, as noted above, but with the advent of the wage-earner’s welfare state, began to play a more residual role. This was because social justice, as an objective of secular government, dominated policy formulation. However, as the shift away from government to contracts and individualism emerged in the 1970’s, FBOs once again became a key part of the Australian welfare landscape. FBOs expertise in aged and child care and poverty, drew the attention of governments seeking non-government solutions to social issues. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, their influence would grow even further as neoliberal welfare reform took hold and the government pared back direct welfare provision, while placing welfare benefits under increasingly stringent conditions and contracting FBOs to provide services under contract. For example, the explicit aim of the welfare-to-work policies introduced during this period aimed to change the behaviour of welfare recipients through stringent measures towards social and economic conformity, namely by seeking employment (Baker, 2009; Bartkowski & Regis, 2003; Bush, 2002; Daly, 2009; Greg, 2000; Costello, 2003; Field, 1996; Green, 1996; Leventhal & Mears, 2002; Olasky, 1992, 2000; Schwartz, 2000; Walsh, 2000; Wilson, 2003; Wuthnow, 2004a). An overt and pervasive political rhetoric became apparent in Anglo-Western, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) nations that people dependent on welfare lacked moral standards, were a drain on state resources and had to be
coerced into becoming economically active, productive members of society (Maddox, 2005; Olasky, 2000; Saunders, Peter; 2004, Wallis, 2005; Walsh, 2000). As neoliberal policies increasingly took hold, social welfare came to be viewed predominantly as an individual and a family responsibility and function of choice. In other words, neoliberal governments in OECD countries became less inclined to assume responsibility for poverty alleviation and, instead, sought solutions at the individual, family and community levels rather than investigate structural, political and institutional determinants which made dependence on the state the only option for many (Adams, 2002; Munro, 2009). Even though state spending on welfare increased substantially during the eleven-year tenure of the Howard Liberal-National Coalition government (1996-2007), the way in which welfare was delivered changed dramatically. For example, community organisations, including religious charities, were brought under state control through contracts with government for which they tendered in an openly competitive process (Brown & Troutt, 2004). Instead of being independent local agents for change seeking social justice outcomes for their clients, many were transformed into providers of services for the state. Underlying objectives for political and social change were subsumed within this contractual relationship (Everingham, 2003). The most profound change, however, was the introduction of focused neoliberal-paternalist ideals by the amendment of Welfare to Work legislation in 2006 (Australian Government, 2006; Bland, 2006; Centrelink, 2006; Porter, 2006; Schram, et al., 2008). This policy was highly moralistic and sought to reinforce a Calvinistic work ethic on welfare recipients. Social inclusion dialogues were no longer about seeking justice but were mediated through discourses upholding the value of work in which the ‘character of the unemployed’
was the targeted need for change (ACOSS, n.d; Centrelink, 2006a, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)10, 2008; Everingham, 2003; Howard, 2001; Kuyper, [1898] 2008; Saunders, 2005). As a result, FBOs, with their moral foundations and long tradition of serving the poor, became increasingly viewed as the solution to the intractable problem of poverty within neoliberal, capitalist states as economic drivers trumped the social rights of what came to be seen as the failed welfare state, especially in the USA.

The past two decades had seen a considerable resurgence of religion and the expression of religious - Christian - values in Western nations following the end of communism and fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the worldwide increase in Islamic fundamentalism and the climate of fear following the attacks on the World Trade Centre in September 2001 (Baggini, 2006; Debats, McDonald & Williams, 2007; Farr, 2008; Maddox, 2005; Porter, 2006; Taylor, 2005; Wallis, 2005; Walsh, 2000). In particular, the terrorist attacks of 9/11 intensified fears of Islamic fundamentalism and terrorist attacks on the West (Almaeena, 2007; Ajami, 2005; Baggini, 2006; Gillan & Pickerill, 2008; Norris & Inglehart, 2004) while Christianity and its traditions were given rather more sympathetic treatment in the news and popular Western media and indeed by politicians (Goot & Watson, 2007; Levey, 2006). With the increasing populist expression of religion and its reemergence in politics, there began much debate between scholars and politicians on the extent of secularisation and the specific circumstances in which religion again assumed relevance and importance in society, particularly at a political level (Baggini, 2006; Bellin, 2008;  

10 Previously known as Family and Community Services (FaCS).
The interplay of these dynamics intensified following 9/11, cementing historical religious traditions in Western societies and in particular, beliefs and social norms and attitudes on issues like divorce, homosexuality, gender roles, work orientations, abortion, and same-sex marriages. At the same time, there has been a growing trend to embrace Eastern religions into what Aupers and Houtman (2006) refer to as ‘the spiritual market place’ (p. 201) in the West. Highly moralistic attitudes interspersed with invocative references to ‘sin’ and idolatry’, increased in the Australian media, with leading Christian clerics like Catholic Cardinal George Pell and Anglican Archbishop Peter Jensen at the forefront of moral debates (Debien, 2006; Jenson, 2006; Maddox, 2005; Norris & Inglehart, 2004; Pell, 2007; Porter, 2006). This resurgence in religion – some might say religious fundamentalism of all ilk – became commonplace in largely secular countries like Australia following 9/11, although there had already been a steady rise of conservative and religious ideology over a long period in the West prior to this. The changing political and social landscape driven by conservative, neoliberal economic policies and their attack on welfare provided the ideal context for the resurgence of religious moralism. Though most visible in the USA, those world events have had a dramatic effect on Australia, which has always been pro-American (John Howard was visiting Washington, USA on 9/11) and sees itself as a leading Western nation following the USA and Europe (McDonald, 2007). Hence moral values became pivotal to welfare policy debates in Australia and part of the political lexicon used by politicians from the left and right of the political divide (Brett, 2003; 2005; Crabb, 2009; Maddox, 2005; Lohrey,
Over the past few decades, Australia, like other countries in the Western world, experienced major changes in economic performance driven partly by the forces of globalisation. Several major economic crises were accompanied by civil unrest and shifting attitudes towards welfare state intervention, in particular a conservative, and at times ultra-conservative reaction to progressive views on issues, such as the traditional role of women, the family, homosexuality, abortion, sole parenthood, and welfare dependency (Gross, 1997; Johnson, 2007; McKnight, 2005; Olasky, 1992; Moore, 1995; Porter, 2006; Stilwell, 2006; Tamney, 2005). Some have described this strong political and community backlash as a ‘culture war’ (McKnight, 2005, p. 138; see also Cherry, 2009; Neuhaus, 1992; Von Dohlen, 1997; Walsh, 2000). Or, as Von Dohlen (1997) points out, it is also referred to in the plural as the ‘culture wars’ (p. 1). Political conservatives sought to reassert strong traditional Anglo-Celtic values, particularly Protestant Christianity to the forefront of mainstream culture, which has seen vigorous debate over a variety of issues, not least government’s role in healthcare and welfare.

Variations on these ‘culture wars’ also played a major role in the Howard Liberal-National Coalition policies and their focus on (Australian Christian) values and national identity (Dyrenfurth, 2007; Johnson, 2007; Lohrey, 2006; Maddox, 2005; McKnight, 2005; Wear, 2008). Johnson (2007) argues that the Howard government’s values established an Australian citizenship norm shaped by issues of ethnicity, religion, culture, and gender, within the context of its neoliberal ideology. Howard’s (2006) conservative Protestantism and his cherished values, beliefs and
customs were pivotal to his worldview (Johnson, 2006; Maddox, 2005; Warhurst, 2007). While Howard supported a multiracial society, he believed that all Australians should adhere to and practice Australian values. This led, among other policy initiatives, to conditional funding for schools based on the ‘explicit teaching of Australian values’ and the introduction of a National Schools Chaplaincy Program (Barnett & Mason, 2009; Mawdsley, Cummings, & Elda, 2008). The Australian values citizenship test was also introduced (Michaels, 2007). Even though the concept of Australian values was vague, it constituted a social norm of integration and assimilation to which those on welfare and from non-mainstream cultures should adhere (Marr, 2007; Johnson, 2006, 2007).

As these culture wars played out there was also a concerted engagement by the Howard government with the politically active religious right (Johnson, 2006; Lohrey, 2006; Porter, 2006; Tamney, 2005). The Liberal Party in Australia aligned itself with fundamental evangelical and conservative religious organisations, which had long dominated the welfare scene. Religious groups and conservative think tanks, such as the Australia Christian Lobby (ACL), Hillsong, and the Centre for Independent Studies (CIS), were a source of political and ideological support for the government’s restructuring of welfare (Maddox, 2005; Marr, 2007; Porter, 2006). The large religious charities were seen as a cornerstone of its welfare reform policies. Therefore, FBOs provided an avenue for government to divest itself of a number of social services previously administered by the state and, at the same time, enter into contractual arrangements for service provision (FaCS, 2003; Gregg, 2000; Nevile, 2002; Salvation Army [Eastern Territory], 2007; The Samaritans, 2007; Webber, 2006). The values of the FBOs were congruent with and espoused by the
Liberal Party. FBOs also provided a legitimate alternative to state-provided services. The marketisation of services intensified under neoliberal stringency construed as economic rationalism (Cox, 2006; Goldfinch, 2000; Neville, 1997; Smith & Lipsky, 1993; Stilwell, 2000; Stilwell, 1993; Webber, 2006). Consequently, FBOs were awarded the majority of job-placement contracts in the government’s welfare-to-work initiatives, along with contracts for residential aged-care places and emergency relief provision (ACOSS, 2003a, 2003b; Engels, 2006; FaCS, 2003, 2005; Gray & Agllias, 2009; Gray & Heinsch, 2009; Webber, 2006).

Corresponding with the move towards faith-based service provision, the debate around poverty focused intently on the morality of the poor. During the Howard Liberal-National Coalition administration, and following international welfare policy trends, welfare beneficiaries - classified as ‘undeserving’, specifically the long-term unemployed and single mothers - became political targets (Johnson & Taylor, 2000; Webber, 2006) and were labeled variously as passive welfare recipients, lazy and work shy. Thus began the demonisation of the poor (Webber, 2006) or the individualisation of poverty that formed the framework of welfare reform, particularly from the conservative side of politics. During a television interview, Tony Abbott, then Commonwealth Minister for Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business in the Liberal-National Coalition government was cited as saying:

We can't abolish poverty because poverty, in part, is a part of individual behaviour ... So if you are poor and can’t make ends meet, if your children go to school with holes in their shoes and without lunch ... it is not the fault of
the employer or economic policies or the social system or the landlord – it is a result of your own ‘behaviour’ or the fact that you make ‘mistakes’ (in Webber, 2006, p. 81).

This typecasting of welfare beneficiaries resonated with the general public and the government used this populist politics to its advantage (Wear, 2008) at a time when the economy was strong and the official unemployment rate was low (ABS, 2008; Saunders, 2007). Nevertheless, within the increasingly deregulated employment sector, there were problems of entrenched unemployment; increased reliance on part-time and casual work; inequality in income with a greater number of full-time jobs being paid at a lower rate; an increase in lone parenthood, coupled with low rates of labour force participation among this group; and an increased socioeconomic dichotomy comprising two-parent families with more than one income and those with no family member in employment at all. Many unable to support themselves successfully were left with little option but to claim some type of welfare benefit and seek additional welfare and social support from welfare organisations such as FBOs (ABS, 2008; Campbell & Brosnan, 1999; Pech & McCoull, 1998). In stark contrast, those who sought to and could support themselves were cast positively as ‘Aussie battlers’ (Dyrenfurth, 2007; Goot & Watson, 2007).

There was a parallel between this way of classifying those in need and Christian beliefs about personal freedom and individual choice. For the Christian, freedom and choice is not about being able to do whatever you want without restriction, but doing what you know you should in obedience to God. God’s love is freely given and, in return, God expects a self-determined response, which includes,
if one has faith, behaving as God expects or suffer the consequences (Stuart, 2007; Tierno, 2004). Welfare is viewed as freely given (via the taxpayer) and governments expect a response in relation to acting in a specific way, such as actively seeking employment and obeying government directives. These policies focus solely on the individual, obscuring to a large degree, external factors which impact on a person’s ability to achieve independence. Therefore, the convergence of conservative politics and the Christian right in the culture wars left little room for moderate voices.

Another contributing factor to the individualisation of poverty was the advent of the market state. The Howard Liberal-National Coalition government and other Western governments seeking solutions to a number of social and economic issues particularly poverty, pursued policy changes begun during earlier periods in which the private market and community organisations entered into contractual partnerships with the state (Adams, 2002; Demuth, 2006; Hickson, 2010; Nevile, 1999, 2002; Porter & Trezise, 2006). Apart from economic arguments and political action relating to the disadvantages of heavy government spending on welfare, collectives, such as trade unions also came under attack (Goot & Watson, 2007). Instead, government favoured private, individual incentives, such as lower marginal tax rates, which particularly benefited high-income earners (Kudlow, 2004). Just as the government favoured individual incentives, it also favoured individual choice in relation to meeting individual needs. For welfare recipients, an array of contracted welfare providers now provided a ‘choice’ in relation to provision (Blasi, 2002; Davies, 2008; Smith & Lipsky, 1993, Wilson, 1997) as the government moved away from being the main provider of social and welfare services accept for the transfer of direct benefit payments; the majority of those providing welfare and social
assistance were faith-based (Engels, 2006).

Neoliberal welfare placed individual responsibility centre stage, and was helped along by three pillars of welfare provision: (i) government as funder and policymaker; (ii) the private sector as provider; and (iii) community as the locus of support (but not debate). As the welfare economy opened up to market competition, FBOs had to compete with one another for government contracts (Engels, 2006; McGuire, 1997). A distinction was drawn between welfare providers and welfare purchasers. Responsibility for service delivery was decentralised as control was centralised (Rhodes, 2000). Social and welfare policy declined in status and suffered for its ‘subservience’ to economic policy (Rhodes, 2000, p. 173).

As a result, those living on welfare benefits on the margins of society were expected to integrate into society through economic participation, adopting character traits consistent with the (Protestant) work ethic. It was hoped that those working in FBOs, who were mainly volunteers, would provide a moral environment for those who needed their services through the discourse of faith, teaching moral responsibility and Australian values thought to be lacking in the poor (Johnson, 2006; Olasky, 2000). To justify the use of nongovernment organisations to deliver the lion’s share of social services, Australian Liberal politicians, alongside their Republican counterparts in the USA, proposed that FBOs were ideal conduits of moral values which would impact positively on the poor and help them to transform their behaviour (Bartkowski & Regis, 2003; Lohrey, 2006; Maddox, 2005; Olasky, 1992, 2000; Nagel, 2006).
The personalisation of poverty allowed the Liberal-Coalition government to overlook references to the broader socioeconomic environment contributing to poverty, letting government off the hook, as it were, in dealing meaningfully with the problem of structurally-induced, historically entrenched poverty (Adams, 2002). Coupled with the moral imperatives contained within the Social Gospel for Christians to help those in need, this made FBOs the obvious solution to poverty, for not only was it a morally-based solution but it also expressed the ideal of community participation, volunteerism and the increasingly popular concept of social capital (see Chapter 4).

FBOs rely heavily on volunteers, who play a major role in the success and efficiency of the faith-based welfare and social services sector (Bartkowski & Regis, 2003, Cox, 2000; Melville & McDonald, 2006; Wilson & Janoski, 1995; Wuthnow, 2004a). Volunteers are the social capital of FBOs, providing many of the services they undertake, including face-to-face interactions with people with complex needs. However, volunteering in FBOs, in many instances, does not require any formal qualifications or a broader knowledge of the socioeconomic structure in which welfare clients are situated (Oppenheimer, 2000). This aspect of provision, however, was largely overlooked by policymakers and politicians. Instead, the policy focus was firmly directed at the religiosity of volunteers, which was held in high regard by the Howard Coalition government (Costello, 2003, 2005; Howard, 2007).

There is no doubt that religion plays a role in the recruitment of volunteers into FBOs (Wilson & Janoski, 1995) but, because of the increasing need for volunteers, FBOs also recruit from the general public (Volunteering Australia (VA),
2005). Therefore, volunteers may or may not adhere to the faith of the organisation in which they work. Additionally, some authors suggest that just because an agency is identified as faith-based does not necessarily mean that staff will profess to faith themselves (Chambre, 2001; Jeavons, 1994). Despite the pronouncements of Australian politicians and some academics, it has not been demonstrated whether claims that FBOs focus on and provide a moral solution to poverty were purely ideological, or whether they could be upheld empirically (Mendes, 2005). Within the context of Australian faith-based welfare provision, this aspect has not, as yet, been explored fully. There is, in fact, little understanding of the role of faith in faith-based service provision.

Many large FBOs provide welfare and social services, particularly emergency relief (ER) through Federal and State\(^{11}\) government contracts (see Chapter 3). However, they also rely heavily on donations and public benevolence to be able to deliver services to those in need (Colegate, 2004; Engels, 2006; Maddison & Hamilton, 2007; Lyons, 2000; Mendes, 2005; Yeatman, 2001). At the same time, smaller FBOs or church-based organisations (CBOs) provide welfare to the needy in their communities without any form of government assistance, relying only on public benevolence and church donations. The provision of services for many FBOs, however, is contingent on their ability to gain government contracts in the yearly competitive funding cycle (Engels, 2006). Many, if not all, rely heavily on donations and volunteers to provide services. Even so, they are no longer considered merely a

\(^{11}\) Although the Federal government contributes to the funding of emergency relief (ER) for each state and territory, it does not contribute to the delivery of these services at a state or territory level (Engels, 2006).
means to plug gaps in government social and welfare service provision and thereby fulfil their hitherto more traditional role of serving as the ‘safety net for the safety net’. The Howard Coalition Government (1996-2007) drew on the long history of religions’ contribution to welfare and vigorously promoted FBOs as the ‘gateway’ to service provision for people in need of welfare and social assistance, reflecting, to a large degree, concurrent welfare policy in the USA and other developed Western nations (Bartkowski & Regis, 2003; Family and Community Services (FaCS), 2003; Maddox, 2005; Wallis, 2005; Wuthnow, 2004). As ACOSS (2003a) has highlighted rural and regional areas do not have any other available form of social services and rely solely on the nongovernment and faith-based sector for family and social assistance. Even so, it was with little knowledge as to how the faith-based sector operated and administered welfare and social services to those in need at the grassroots level that policy regarding the value of faith was built. The following chapter reviews the history of faith-based provision and why it became a favoured alternative strategy to combat poverty in lieu of any strategic measures employed directly by the government.
Chapter 3: Faith, Christian social welfare and FBOs: Providing for the poor

This chapter explores why FBOs have become a favoured policy instrument to manage the problem of the modern-day poor. It provides an overview of the rise of the secular welfare state and the contested and largely ignored role, particularly by Australian policy scholars, of FBO provision within it. The chapter highlights the transformation of the welfare state in the 1980s with the rise of New Public Management (NPM), public choice and contractualism. During this time FBOs were increasingly viewed, at a political level, as better able to make a moral impact on poverty. Welfare state services and provision had come to be viewed as ‘amoral’ as clients of the state, it was argued, had little in the way of incentives to seek employment and independence. Many FBOs provide welfare services by way of Emergency Relief (ER) and, as the study incorporates clients of this type of provision, a brief review of how the sector is funded is made and will be discussed, highlighting the funding constraints faced by the sector. Also, as the role of faith in faith-based provision is little understood in Australia, is explored largely by way of US literature from different perspectives, including client responses to religious elements of service provision and how faith can impact negatively and positively on clients who seek faith-based services. Overall the chapter seeks to understand the debates in regards to the benefits and drawbacks of faith in relation to helping the poor.
FBOs and the secularisation of welfare

Political and policy change in regards to social welfare was to come post Federation in 1901, but it was incremental and targeted at those viewed as deserving of assistance. The rise in trade unionism during the 1890’s depression pressured the government to introduce social justice measures into the wage system via arbitration. The Harvester Judgement of 1907, ordered by Justice Higgins, set wages at a level which would allow a working man (sic) to support a wife and three children creating what Castles (1985) referred to as the ‘wage earners’ welfare state. Future social policy would largely reflect the male as the wage earner with women and children as dependents (Dalton, Draper, Weeks, & Wiseman, 1996). In 1908, the newly formed Commonwealth Parliament passed legislation for payments to be made by way of pensions to the aged and disabled, in other words, for those who could not work and support themselves and who fell into the ‘deserving’ category of welfare provision (Chunn & Gavigan, 2004; Schwartz, 2000; Steensland, 2008 also see Parliamentary Library, n.d.). These payments were means tested, paid at a flat rate and funded from general revenue (ABS, 1994, 2000). Maternity payments were to follow in 1912. They were paid as a lump sum to the mother on the birth of the baby (ABS, 1994, 2000). By the mid-20th century, following the shock of the great depression, pressure from unionism and the advent of WWII, a much broader range of benefits, including child endowments [1941] (ABS, 2000), was introduced, underpinned by a secular welfare orientation and Keynesian economic theory. Rather than help predicated on the goodwill of the church or private charity, welfare came to be seen as a public good and right of all citizens debated through the prism of so-called rational debate.
(Band, 1989; Deakin, 1994; Encel, 1970; Jamrozik, 2001; Mendes, 2005; Saunders, 2005).

Similar developments occurred at roughly the same time in the USA, Great Britain and other industrial nations. Roosevelt’s ‘New Deal’ in the 1930s introduced state intervention in the US economy following the Great Depression (Steensland, 2008). In Britain, the Social Services and Allied Services report - better known as the Beveridge report of 1942 – became highly influential in focusing on the eradication of the five giant social evils: want, disease, idleness, ignorance, and squalor. As a result of initiatives such as these, emerging welfare states across the OECD brought in a raft of welfare benefits and government-administered social services with each welfare state underpinned by its own political, economic and social history. Each nation state varied in its commitment to welfare based on arguments on just how much responsibility the state should shoulder in relation to meeting the needs of its citizens (Steensland, 2008). For a time, the welfare state with varying degrees of coverage across different nation states was seen as a progressive social measure (Barnes & Srivenkataramana, 1982; Murray, 1989; Rothgang, Obinger, & Leibfried, 2006; Small, Harding & Lamont, 2010). Welfare had become a government, therefore largely a secular concern. It was to be solved by rational, objective policy solutions and, for a time, the charity model remained more or less the exclusive domain of religious organisations. The dictates of faith were subordinated to the new initiatives undertaken via the welfare state and largely overlooked in relation to welfare and social policy (Chapman, 2009).

However, faith-based charities did not disappear. They continued to work
alongside the government seeking to help those who fell through the cracks of state support. They were part of the ‘safety net to the safety net’ (Chapman, 2009; see also Family and Community Services (FaCS)\(^\text{12}\), 2003; Maddox, 2005) and, to some extent, fell out of favour in these ‘secular’ times (Swain, 2005) as ‘religious practises and beliefs … diminish[ed] with modernisation’ (Nash, 2004 cited in Swain, 2005; p. 79.2). Moreover, charity was seen as a judgemental, regressive instrument of moral control. Religion became irrelevant to social welfare (Swain, 2005). However, this is not to conclude there was a total lack of interest in religion and faith as it was played out in social welfare. Wuthnow (1981, 1995, 2000, 2004), for example, has studied religion in the USA for a number of decades. In 1981, he referred to ‘dualistic’ and ‘wholistic’ (sic) Christian belief, seeking to distinguish between highly moral and inwardly focused faith, and those inclined to be orientated towards others and concerned for those who were in need. The latter were ostensibly more inclined towards social welfare activities with the poor and the outsiders on the margins of society. This dichotomous analysis, portrayed here in simplistic terms, was used by researchers to determine differences in belief between those who sought to help the unbelieving poor outside of the church environment and those who were more comfortable seeking to attend solely to the morals of those inside their church communities (Driedger, Currie, & Linden, 1983; Wuthnow, 1981).

Other authors, such as Swain (2005) in Australia, traced the origins of social work back to religious communities and their social welfare endeavours, while Payne (2005) in the UK argues that social care was an aspect of all religious

\(^{12}\) Now known as FaHCSIA
cultures. The coupling of faith and the welfare state – and faith and social work – can be traced to the beginnings of welfare and the role of churches seeking to help those suffering from poverty during the medieval period. The 16th century Elizabethan Poor Laws – with their distinction between the deserving and undeserving poor – reflected religious perspectives and perpetuated moralistic views of poverty and the state’s role in controlling deviants (Faherty, 2006).

The origins of social work are usually linked to the Charity Organisation and Settlement movements in the late 19th century in the USA and Great Britain, with friendly visitors seen as their predecessors. Friendly visitors were usually religiously motivated, upper class women who stressed religious values based on love and visited the poor to teach them how to run their households, budget and educate their children, admonishing them if they needed correction to ‘save the miserable from the sin of poverty’ (Minahan, 1987, p. 741). They held a clear view of the correlation between morality and poverty. Social work was a Western invention with its origins in Europe and the USA. As it evolved from scientific charity, it devised social interventions based on rational approaches to directing the lives of the poor. As it grew and established itself as a profession, it developed the view that charity, and the corresponding problems and solutions to poverty, lay in a scientific understanding which became embedded in the bureaucracy and rational orientation of the emerging welfare state (Gray, Coates, & Yellow Bird, 2008). To reach professional status, social work drew on the world of science, especially psychoanalytic psychology. It focused on individual traits and subconscious issues explained from a scientific perspective rather than from moral or religious failings (Leighninger, 1990). In so doing, it left its religious connections behind and embraced secular welfarism during
the 20\textsuperscript{th} century (Gray, 2006; Payne, 2005).

**Challenges to the ‘rational’ welfare state: The market and morals**

By the late 1970s, the aims and objectives of highly bureaucratic welfare states were being challenged by a neoliberal discourse on the virtues of individual endeavour and the benefits of the free market over wasteful and inefficient direct state intervention and redistribution. Accelerated by globalisation, specifically the spread of global capitalism, neoliberalism brought with it a raft of policy changes that sought to make national markets competitive in an international arena (Brodkin, 2003; Calderone & Rhoads, 2010; Jamrozik, 2001; Martin, 2007; McKnight, 2005; Mendes, 2005; Weiss, 2001). Adam Smith’s *homo economicus* – the profit-maximising individual – was resurrected. Welfare policy began to target the unemployed. The goal was to move people off welfare into work – to make them economically self-sufficient. So-called ‘activation’ policies aimed to make people full participants in the jobs market (Heikkilä, 1999; Jamrozik, 2001). Welfare dependency - generational welfare - was targeted due to New Right concerns about the growing welfare bill. Direct welfare payments were called into question. Policymakers’ gaze fell on the unemployed, many of whom were sole-parent families, headed mainly by females (Lyons, 2000), and called for able-bodied welfare recipients to engage in socially responsible behaviour by actively seeking work in return for their welfare benefits (Norton et al., 2008; Martin, 2007; Saunders, Peter, 2007; Tsumori, Saunders, Peter, & Hughes, 2002; Wilson, Stoker, & McGrath, 1999).
Mead (1986, 1997) was very influential in turning the focus away from the state or wholly secular solutions to poverty, to individual responsibility based on Biblical teachings. He focused on citizens’ obligations, rather than their rights. The welfare dependant had to be taught how to behave via ‘help and hassle’ (Mead, 1997, p. 24) and ‘paternalistic’ measures (Wilson et al., 1999, p. 473) became the principal modus operandi during the 1990s. Mead’s (2003) concept of ‘new paternalism’ took an overtly religious turn ‘to link aid to work requirements [seen as] … most in keeping with the Bible as well as the most effective’ (p. 55). Mead (2003) embraced the Christian philosophy of ‘helping people to help themselves’ favoured by successive conservative political parties from the left and right with long-held moralistic views on the causes of poverty. Consequently, welfare became a behaviour management program (Soss, Fording, & Schram, 2011) in which strict conditions were imposed making access to time-limited welfare benefits conditional on recipients conforming to behavioural requirements (ACOSS, 1998, 2001; Bartkowski & Regis, 2003; Bodkin, 2003; Braithwaite, Gatens, & Mitchell, 2002; Centrelink, 2006; Chapman, 2009; Martin, 2007; Stoker & McGrath, 1999; Wilson & Steensland, 2008). Thus Keynesian welfare with its social justice imperatives was abandoned (Bartkowski & Regis, 2003; Chapman, 2009; Jamrozik, 2001; Roche, 1992; Roller, 1999) and welfare states realigned their focus on reforms to, and the sustainability of, the pressing issues of health and aged care (Culter, 2010; Doyle et al., 2009; Mehmet & Roderic, 2009; Rothgang et al., 2006). Consequently, welfare states in industrialised nations have suffered little, if any, downturn in welfare spending (Glenn, 2009). Rather than shrinking the welfare state, state welfare was further entrenched (Travers, 2005) but resources were diverted, as much as possible,
to the more deserving who were also politically more powerful than the poor. For Bodkin (2003), welfare reform was less about ‘policy realities and more about electoral politics’ in seeking out the populist vote (p. 30).

In a policy speech given in 2001, John Howard announced that AUD 1.7 billion was to be spent on welfare reform over the next five years (Howard, 2001). The prior social welfare and health budget had included what many would refer to as ‘middle-class benefits’, such as the health insurance rebate\(^\text{13}\) for those who could afford it, the non-means-tested baby bonus and increased benefits to a wider range of families (Abbott, 2010). For Fenna (2007), these politically popular initiatives were largely possible due to the Howard government’s good fortune of governing during the ‘good [economic] times’ (p. 329). Yet, despite the strong economy and government surplus in 2006, access to some welfare benefits was made more difficult, particularly for those on disability pensions who would also be subject to ‘a job capacity assessment’ (Centrelink, 2006). Welfare claimants were expected to enter into ‘activity agreements’ along with those on Newstart payments\(^\text{14}\). These stringent measures increased the risk of clients being breached\(^\text{15}\) should they renege on participation contracts (Centrelink, 2006a; Kerr & Savelsberg, 2003; Schooneveldt & Tomlinson, 2002; Martins, 2007). The timing of these reforms corresponded to an increasing shortage of full-time, low-skilled jobs, an increase in casual employment or underemployment, a sharp rise in the cost of living throughout

\(^{13}\) Private Health Insurance Incentives ACT 1998 No. 121, 1998 - Sect 4.10.


\(^{15}\) A monetary sanction in which a client loses a percentage of their income for the first and second breach, the third breach is loss of all income for a total of eight weeks (Centrelink, 2006).
the 2000s, and the devolution of a number of government services onto the community sector (Fritze, Ireton, & Rivkah, 2007; Kettings, Sinclair, & Voevodin, 2009; Mangan & Williams, 1999; Watts, 2001). However, these considerations were largely ignored or, in relation to casual employment, viewed as beneficial as they provided more flexible employment opportunities. Centrelink became increasingly like an employment bureau with Centrelink officials – and their contracted nongovernment counterparts – acting as job-placement rather than welfare agents.

In turn, this impacted on FBOs. With the move towards a more conservative and moralistic view of poverty within a neoliberal market-oriented welfare economy, like other welfare agencies, FBOs involved in welfare-to-work job network programs were forced to comply with government expectations and implement stringent welfare measures, including the reporting of non-compliance for those on Newstart benefits to Centrelink. The reformed system in this regard was set up like a moral net from which clients of the state could not escape. At the broad political level, faith-based employment agencies contracted to the increasingly paternalistic Centrelink were either forced to or indeed compliant in reporting clients, who would incur further sanctions. Many turned to faith-based FBOs as a last resort for social and welfare assistance. Therefore, FBOs willingly engaged in the Job Network, benefiting from contracts not only for welfare-to-work services but also emergency relief assistance. They were an intrinsic part of the broader political structure and harsh policy environment seeking to provide individual clients with a moral solution to their poverty (Bartkowski & Regis, 2003; Chapman, 2009; Costello, 2003; Olasky, 1992, 2000; Owens, 2006). Of course there was little evidence to suggest that this would happen, particularly in Australia. However, the strong belief in
individual attainment underpinned by virtue and moral standing, during the Howard administration, and held particularly by Howard himself, was a very strong underlying ethos of the political environment in 2006.

To gain a better understanding of why morals mattered so much to the Howard Liberal government, Brett (2003) traced the main political philosophy and ethos of the Liberal party for the last century. She argues that virtues, rather than values, underpinned their morality and this was ‘inherent in their political thinking’ (p. 9). While values are changeable and open to discussion, virtues are steadfast ‘immune from the relativising morality inherent in the concept of values’ (p. 10). Liberal virtues are drawn from Protestantism’s – specifically Christianity’s – ‘commitment to the morally independent individual’ (p. 11). Howard, while Prime Minister expressed the benefits of individual endeavour and championed the qualities held by successful people like war heroes and surgeons who could appeal to the wider populace. Historically, Liberals have regarded people as upholder of moral qualities not classes such as collectives. Brett (2003) went on to argue that Howard used this virtue talk to focus attention on volunteers as the crucible in which virtues, such as self-sacrifice, individual endeavour and duty, were distilled and expressed.

There was little wonder then that faith-based volunteers and the faith-based sector became a focus for providing employment services and emergency relief to the poor. The compensatory welfare talk was that people in need and dependant on welfare lacked the virtues to make them independent or, at least, to stave off poverty. People of faith held virtues which resonated with their political ideology and their values, based on faith, were deemed to be just as steadfast as their virtues. Those of
Christian belief were less likely to deviate or be influenced easily by alternate streams of thought. Due to this, these strongly held values would be expressed, by those of faith, to those deemed not to adhere to them. Thus Federal Treasurer Costello (2003) in an address at an Anglican lunch pronounced:

... these agencies can make more immediate and individual contact with those in need. They are run by people of religious and moral conviction, willing to share their values in support of treating underlying causes of poverty (p. 3).

Therefore, from the perspective of the neoliberal Liberal party, the cause of poverty lay in the personal behaviours of the poor. Again, as highlighted by Costello (2003), in the same speech:

A homeless man who is drug or alcohol dependent will probably be entitled to income support … the pension should be enough to provide food and shelter … but it doesn’t … (money) is always spent on the wrong thing. And it always will be until you treat the cause of the poverty, which is alcohol and drug dependence (p. 3).

Via moral and faith-based face-to-face teachings they were able to convince the poor to abstain from drinking and gambling, to look for work, to adopt a more virtuous and independent lifestyle mirroring that of the middle class. This neo-Aristotelian philosophy contends that morals are not for individuals to choose, but must be learned from ‘embedded relationships’ – from those who live virtuously in the community, in this case from faith-based volunteers (Neuhaus, 1992, p. 109). FBOs became idealised, not only for the perceived moral benefits accruing to those seeking
assistance, but also as reservoirs of goodwill and producers and users of social
capital, not least volunteers (Bartkowski & Regis, 2003; Bush, 2002; Costello, 2003;

The main thrust of the political argument arising from right wing conservatives, was that people of faith working or volunteering in FBOs could inspire welfare clients to fulfil the aim of welfare-to-work policies and become more personally responsible. Conservative Olasky (1992, 2000), a major contributor on the benefits of modern-day faith-based provision, argues that the welfare state’s failure, was the cause of the many problems faced by the poor. Moreover, notwithstanding advances in women’s rights, secular theories like feminism were detrimental to society affecting the composition of the family and welfare policies and making it easier for women to live on their own, without a husband. He argues that during the 1960s ‘as government obligation to single mothers’ increased, marital obligation decreased’ (Olasky, 1992, p. 187). The end result was divorce and children born out of wedlock which in turn increased the number of children growing up in poverty. Olasky (1992) inferred that the poor lacked faith or morals. Christian standards had been replaced by immoral ways of living that led people into poverty and, at worst, created generational poverty where children living off benefits viewed this as normal. In this regard, there was little doubt the problem of entrenched, generational poverty was a long-standing public welfare issue (Henderson, Harcourt, & Harper, 1970) even during the ‘golden age’ of the welfare state (Rothgang et al., 2006, p. 251; see also Adams, 2002; Community Affairs Legislation Committee, 2005; Schmidt & Goodin, 1998).
The reasons put forward for the failure of the poor to support themselves and their families included the welfare state’s tendency to override the Protestant work ethic and individual responsibility (Green, 1993; Latham, 1998; Schmidtzt, 1998, 1998a; Steensland, 2008). It allowed for moral failure to occur where the lower classes took up bad habits, such as drinking, gambling and drug use, preventing a ‘working lifestyle’ (Martin, 2007; Neuhaus, 1992; Steensland, 2008). For Olasky (1992), the best way to help the needy was through religious compassion, instruction and assistance from those belonging to faith-based organisations, churches and congregations. Unlike Mead, who argued for the state to introduce paternalistic welfare measures to teach the poor, Olasky (1992) looked to the benefit of the morals and values of the mainstream, particularly the US faithful (keeping in mind that the Christian religiosity of the USA, which could be transmitted to the poor, was high in comparison to other Western nations) (Cameron, 2004; Wuthnow, 2004a). However, Table 1 shows the distribution of the world religions and highlights Christianity in all its manifestations as the most dominant. Other Western nations also hold many who believe in the Christian faith and its influence has long been felt throughout the occident (Frame, 2006; Sanneh, 2003). Therefore, Olasky’s (1992) appeal to faith, particularly the Protestant form of the Christian faith, as a solution to poverty, resonated with a wide audience, not only in the USA but also in other Western nations. Table 2 lists the number of believers by faith, which again highlights Christianity’s dominance on a worldwide scale, and Table 3 highlights the dominant position of the Christian faith in 2001 in the USA in comparison to other faiths held by its citizenry.
Figure 1: Distribution of the world's religions

Source: http://www.adherents.com/Religions_By_Adherents.html
Table 1: Statistics on the world’s top 21 religions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>2.1bn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>1.5bn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Secular/Nonreligious/Agnostic/Atheist</td>
<td>1.1bn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Hinduism</td>
<td>900m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Buddhism</td>
<td>376m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Primal-indigenous</td>
<td>300m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>African Traditional and Diasporic</td>
<td>100m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Sikhism</td>
<td>23m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Juche</td>
<td>19m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Spiritism</td>
<td>15m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Judaism</td>
<td>14m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Baha'i</td>
<td>7m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Jainism</td>
<td>4.2m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Shinto</td>
<td>4m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Cao Dai</td>
<td>4m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Zoroastrianism</td>
<td>2.6m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Tenrikyo</td>
<td>2m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Neo-Paganism</td>
<td>1m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Unitarian-Universalism</td>
<td>.8m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Rastafarianism</td>
<td>.6m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Scientology</td>
<td>.5m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>151,225,000</td>
<td>159,030,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonreligious/Secular</td>
<td>13,116,000</td>
<td>27,539,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judaism</td>
<td>3,137,000</td>
<td>2,831,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>527,000</td>
<td>1,104,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhism</td>
<td>401,000</td>
<td>1,082,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnostic</td>
<td>1,186,000</td>
<td>991,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atheist</td>
<td>902,000</td>
<td>1,272,986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinduism</td>
<td>227,000</td>
<td>766,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unitarian Universalist</td>
<td>502,000</td>
<td>629,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiccan/Pagan/Druid</td>
<td>307,000</td>
<td>433,267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritualist</td>
<td>116,000</td>
<td>163,710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American Religion</td>
<td>47,000</td>
<td>103,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baha’i</td>
<td>28,000</td>
<td>84,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Age</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>68,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikhism</td>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>57,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientology</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>55,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanist</td>
<td>29,000</td>
<td>49,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deity (Deist)</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>49,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taoist</td>
<td>23,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eckankar</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>26,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://www.adherents.com/rel_USA.html#religions
These numbers indicate that policy focused on the Christian faith in the USA sat within the belief system of a majority of people. In all probability they held views resonating with the strong cultural consensus of liberalism, particularly American liberalism, in regards to strongly held attitudes towards freedom and individualism (Steensland, 2008). The USA led the overt incorporation of religion into politics, but it did not take long for Australia to follow suit, particularly once the Howard government took office (Bartkowski & Regis, 2003; Maddox, 2005; Warhurst, 2007). However, religion was not the only reference on which those seeking to remodel the behaviours of the poor drew. Drawing on the moral values of the middle classes to help solve the perceived immorality of the lower classes, or more specifically the moral ‘underclass’ (Levitas, 2005, p. 14), also became popular during the 1990s. Etzioni (1993, 1995, 1997), for example, drew on secular concepts of responsibility and rights, which were influential in the UK and USA. Ultimately, it was the rise of religion, neoliberalism, market-oriented welfare, and conservative politics, which brought about a strong political focus on the virtues of a Christian morality, underpinned by the benefits of Christian communities already embedded in a long tradition of helping the poor. Indeed, addressing poverty via moral values and religious virtue was not new to welfare policy formulation (see Handler & Hasenfeld, 1991; Schwartz, 2000). It was Olasky (2000) who brought the use of faith as a tool for welfare policy into the modern age. He was at the forefront of popularising faith-based provision by calling it ‘compassionate conservatism’ (p. 1). This term cleverly incorporated the ideal view of Christianity as being compassionate, along with the added value of conservative values, particularly those embedded in ideals related to individual independence. Olasky (2000) put forward
the argument that the poor and welfare dependent benefited materially and psychologically from faith-based welfare and social services. For example, when they received material or supportive assistance they were obliged to change their errant behaviours based on biblical teachings, thus improving their economic and social situation. He provided many stories of Christian men and women seeking to influence the behaviours of the poor as worthy examples, highlighting homes for single women, food banks and services for drug addicts and the mentally ill. Underlying the success of all of these endeavours was the moral teachings of Christianity incorporating a ‘tough love’ approach, in other words a balancing act between compassion and control to modify the behaviours of those in need. If the behaviours of the needy did not change in regards to the expectation of the faithful, they were then not entitled to gain from the assistance provided (Olasky, 2000).

But is moral failure only confined to the poor? What of problems that strike rich and poor alike? Addiction is often posited as an example of why poverty exists (Costello, 2003; Grant & Dawson, 1996; Power, 1999). The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW, 2002) found that a majority of Australians from a wide range of socioeconomic situations consumed alcohol. In 2001, 82.4% of those aged 14 years and over had consumed alcohol in the preceding 12 months, while 8.3% of the population drank every day and ‘one in three persons aged 14 years or more consumed alcohol in a way that put themselves at significantly increased risk of alcohol-related harm in the short term’ (p. 14). In relation to illicit drug use: 37.7%
of the population in 2001 had used illicit drugs\textsuperscript{16} at least once in their life; 16.9% had used drugs in the previous 12 months; and 7.6% of males used marijuana in the previous week compared with females at 3.7% (AIHW, 2002\textsuperscript{17}). Based on international trends, the culture of drinking and drug taking is prevalent in the West (AIHW, 2002). However, these results do not give an indication of the socioeconomic status of respondents, which presumably encompassed a wide social selection. Therefore, they cannot suggest a link between this culture, welfare dependence and poverty. But they show that addiction and abuse of alcohol is a community-wide problem.

Others, however, have found a complex situation in relation to drug abuse, welfare dependence and poverty (Keys, Mallett, & Rosenthal, 2006; Mulia & Schmidt, 2003). For reasons of contextualisation, a review of the work done by Grant and Dawson (1996) helps to juxtapose the political views held in relation to those on welfare, particularly with reference to addictions around the time welfare reforms were being introduced in the USA and germinating in Australia. The researchers examined US data from the 1992 National Longitudinal Alcohol and Epidemiological Survey (NLAES) prior to Charitable Choices in 1996. Their objective was to find a national estimate for the prevalence of heavy alcohol and drug abuse and dependence among five sets of welfare beneficiaries: Aid to Families

\textsuperscript{16} Marijuana and cannabis were the most common substances used (33.1%), amphetamines (8.9%), hallucinogens (7.6%), ecstasy/designer drugs (6.1%) and pain-killers/analgesics for non-medical purposes (6.0%).

with Dependent Children (AFDC)\textsuperscript{18}; Special Supplement Food Program for Women (WIC); Food stamps, (FS); supplementary security income (SSI); and Medicaid. From 42,862 households targeted, they had a response rate of 91.9% for households containing more than one person - and for individuals 97.4%. Their study took sex, race and age into consideration. They found that for those on AFDC 13.2% were heavy drinkers and 7.6% were abusers of or dependent on alcohol. For WIC, the figures were 11.5% and 7.9%; for FS 13.8 and 8.2%; SSI 6.4% and 4.3%; and for Medicaid, 10.3% and 5.2%. For drug abuse, it ranged from 7.2% to 9.85% for AFDC, WIC and FS and for SSI and Medicaid 3.8% and 6.0%. They found that men were most likely to be dependent on alcohol and drugs and the most likely age group was those between 25 and 34 years on AFDC and FS but not WIC; and among 30-54 year olds on SSI and Medicaid. A limitation of the study needing further exploration is that it does not indicate why there are differences between beneficiaries’ rates of drug and alcohol consumption. The researchers suggest that these results indicate only a minority of welfare beneficiaries have a problem, and as part of the welfare reforms, services were needed to target prevention and treatment for these subgroups within the welfare population. Other studies have shown a strong correlation between poverty and drug and/or alcohol addiction (Healy, 2007; Nandi et al., 2010). These contradictions indicate that poverty has many causes and the issues are complex and raise questions as to what else might cause poverty. Other authors point to the socioeconomic structure, health, disability, mental health, social alienation, and even postcodes or where a person lives as being part of the problem (Adams, 2007).

\textsuperscript{18} Many of these benefits have been reformed. For example Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) is now Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) which is time limited (Mulia & Schmidt, 2003).
2002; Bland, 2006; Jamrozik, 2001; Saunders, 2005; Sykes, 2006; Vinson, 2007).

However, the view of the poor as being morally bankrupt correlated very well with the move towards the restructuring of the welfare administration where the faith-based sector would be placed in a position of partnering with the state as it continued to serve the poor.

**Contractualism: A new model of service delivery**

Australian governments, before the restructuring of the welfare state, often supported FBOs in helping the poor by way of block grants based on mutual trust (Dickey, 1987; Evans et al., 2005; Nevile, 2002). However, the last two decades have seen an increasing number of Australian faith-based, nongovernment organisations incorporated into market-style contractual relationships with governments. The label of ‘contractualism’ was given to this new model of service delivery (Davis, 1997; Gregg, 2000; Nevile, 1999; Wilson, 1997; Yeatman, 2001). The terms of contract held FBOs more accountable to government in the way they provided services and pitted service provider against service provider as they tendered competitively against one another, reached service targets and faced auditing of service provision and time limits on the funding of services (ACOSS, 2003a; Berger, 2006; Cox, 2000; Engels, 2006; Evans et al., 2005; Gregg, 2000; Nevile, 1999; Yeatman, 2001). The terminology and the way FBOs administered services changed dramatically. Instead of the charity model, FBOs were amalgamated into what Brown et al., (2002) claimed was a welfare state industry model (see Introduction) as contracts increasingly prescribed the conditions under which many FBOs operated.
The framework of contractualism emerged from New Public Management (NPM), which became the dominant state administration model focused on efficiency and effectiveness. It resulted from a number of competing issues that arose after the post-war boom, gaining unstoppable momentum by the late 1970s, placing OECD governments under pressure to cope with an array of socioeconomic concerns (Evans, Richmond & Shields, 2005; Giddens, 1998; Rothgang, Obinger, & Leibfried, 2006). The administration of the state and the terminology in relation to need changed. Risk became a dominant theme in social policy, especially identifying who should bear it (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1998; Kemshall, 2002), and covered all areas of welfare from the unemployed and market failure to healthcare and social services. But risk had two meanings. One related to the risk governments were willing to take or shed, and the other to the shifting of risk onto the community increasingly subject to rapid ‘individualization’ (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, p. 39). In relation to poverty, two important points need to be noted. One is that the individualisation process negated socioeconomic class distinctions. For example individuals inhabiting a class based on common traits, socio-economic status and virtues become open to risk at a personal level. Each member has to take on more risk to get their needs and wants meet as the state withdraws. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) suggests risk impacts upon self-understanding and how individuals relate to each other and other groups: it is more diluted as there are fewer bonds of commonality between individuals, thereby limiting their political power. The second, and perhaps most important point, is that inequalities do not go away, but are redefined via a process of individualisation of social risks. As a result:
social problems are increasingly perceived in terms of psychological
dispositions: as personal inadequacies, guilt feelings, anxieties, conflicts and
neuroses ... social crisis emerges as individual crisis which are no longer ...
perceived in terms of their rootedness in the social realm (Beck & Beck-

Religion aside, as with welfare reform, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim’s (2002) analysis
placed the blame for poverty squarely on people who depend on welfare rather than
on the social structure, the state or class inequalities, which were no longer seen to exist. Therefore, the welfare state approach, which incorporated various forms of
government intervention, protection and citizenship rights to mitigate individual
risks, such as unemployment, became displaced by strategies mirroring the
economic efficiency of the private sector. Central to these strategies were moves to
incorporate nongovernment actors, particularly community-based organisations
which undertook specific functions in relation to servicing disadvantage groups, into
partnership with the state (Auger, 1999; Botsman & Latham, 2001; Dunleavy, 1991;
Gray, 1989; Latham, 2000; Nevile, 1999; OECD, 1995; Stilwell, 1993, 2000), a
situation Everingham (2003) refers to as ‘welfare corporatism’ (p. 91).

In Australia, legislation to bring about a national competition policy was
signed by Commonwealth, State and Territory governments on the 11th April 1995
via three intergovernmental agreements (Nevile, 1999). Although, as Nevile (1999)
states, there was nothing in the agreements that specifically targeted the social
welfare sector, the competition policy reflected the belief that the best way to
achieve increased levels of productivity and innovation (and hence an increased
standard of living) was through ‘the disciplines imposed by effective competition’ (NCC, 1997, p. 1, cited in Nevile, 1999, p. 1).

The state was being reorganised. To quote Britain’s one-time Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher: the State should steer (via frameworks, objectives and targets) rather than row (by providing services directly using the public sector workforce, hence a contraction of state-provided services) (Head, 2005). This metaphor captures the central dynamic of New Public Management - a managerial system that aimed to redirect the orientation of state capacity and to make the government more accountable and efficient. It also had the effect of making FBOs much more accountable, via their contracts - as authors argued that this was needed if they accessed government funds (Adair, 1999; Blasi, 2002; Bresser-Pereira, 2004; DeHoog, 1990; Lipsky & Smith, 1989-90).

The benefits of these changes relating to government responsiveness had two faces: the first was outwards to citizens and customers seeking to improve the quality and relevance of services, and the other was inwards via the political executive, giving the relevant minister increased control over the bureaucracy which, it was argued, would lead to less waste (Head, 2005). Within this context, publicly-funded NGOs, FBOs, and other forms of charitable assistance, which already had an identified role in assisting those in need, came to be seen as ideal vehicles to contribute to the risk-coping strategies increasingly employed by governments seeking to find alternatives to poverty alleviation. FBOs, in particular, had a number of positive characteristics, which were perceived to resonate with the tenets of NPM, such as flexibility in addressing need, cost effectiveness (as they relied heavily on
volunteers) and a conservative moral framework, which sat comfortably within the moral discourse of poverty. Therefore, FBOs were praised for the valued guidance given to those experiencing poverty, unemployment and social stress and were awarded an array of contracts (Costello, 2003; Dickey, 1987; Engels, 2006; Family and Community Services (FaCS), 2003; Mendes, 2005; OECD, 1995).

Even though individual choice was presented as an important element in the restructuring of welfare services, Costello (2002) provided a much more cogent reason why politicians were turning to the voluntary sector, particularly FBOs, for the provision of welfare services, as shown by his statement to Anglicare:

The second thing we have learnt in Government is that services can be delivered through the voluntary association much more effectively because of the quality of the character of the people that staff the institution … I watched even some of the bankers here at my table here enviously looking at the low overheads. And nobody is more efficient in management than bankers and superannuation companies.

Morality and choice aside, Costello (2002) suggested there were strong economic reasons for the establishment of contractual partnerships with FBOs linked to the government's NPM aims and objectives for increased efficiency in its policy of contractualism. For Everingham (2000), economic efficiency overshadowed other considerations relating to humanistic values and needs, which had significant implications for the faith-based sector.
The [FB]NGO sector in Australia differs markedly from for-profit organisations in that it was largely not profit oriented (Lyons, 1992) and relied on volunteers rather than paid workers. These differences led to concerns among commentators about the increasing - and changing - involvement of FBOs via contractual arrangements with government (Brown, Kenny, Bryan, & Turner 2002; Tonkiss & Passey, 1999; Majumdar, 2004; Nevile, 2002). However, Nevile (2002) pointed out that [FB]NGOs had always sold their services to the state but the level of government control over their services had changed through increased reporting and accountability requirements and stringent ‘eligibility’ criteria for some programs. For example, gamblers could only access programs for gambling addiction, while those with other addictions were turned away. Nevile (2002) argues this situation does not allow for the flexibility, responsiveness and innovation usually associated with this sector. She also stated that agencies unable to meet reporting requirements might be forced to close or amalgamate into larger organisations. The added administrative pressure raised special concerns for smaller agencies with limited staff and volunteer numbers unable to win contracts without partnering a larger NGO.

In this constrained or regulated environment, the sector’s advocacy role was likely to suffer since the competitive tendering model legitimised contracts contingent on [FB]NGOs disengaging from policy-making issues (Maddison et al., 2004). Effectively, they were prevented from speaking out, especially about the impact of the harsh welfare policy on the poor. For example, the former Liberal-

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19 Many authors do not differentiate between FBOs and NGOs when discussing what they view as the NGO sector. The abbreviation [FB]NGO is a reminder that FBOs are included within the discussion.
National Coalition government ‘froze out’ uncooperative [FB]NGOs by de-funding organisations like the Australian Youth Policy and Advocacy Coalition (AYPAC), which was an articulate critic of the former Federal Government (Maddison et al., 2004). On many occasions, the Howard government was hostile and negative towards [FB]NGOs seeking to undermine its credibility legitimately by democratic means but, as far as the government was concerned, they were contracted to provide services, not to agitate and protest (Maddison et al., 2004). A good example of government hostility towards church leaders speaking out on political issues was given by former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer (2003) in the Sir Thomas Playford Annual lecture:

> It was a stark reminder of the tendency of some church leaders to ignore their primary pastoral obligations in favour of hogging the limelight on complex political issues – and in this case a national tragedy (the Bali bombings) ...
> Too often, it seems to me, the Churches seek popular political causes or cheap headlines. And this tends to cut across the central role they have in providing spiritual comfort and moral guidance to the community.
>
Downer (2003) completely ignored FBOs’ long history of advocacy, seeking, among other objectives, a more equal society and the narrowing of the divide between the rich and poor. Furthermore, Mendes (2005a) has highlighted how the Howard government established a ‘Not-for-Profit’ Council with members ‘acquiescent’ to government or, at least, not outwardly critical of the government’s objectives. He claimed this council was quite narrow and not particularly representative of the wider [FB]NGO network. The lone speaker for the sector was
the compliant Salvation Army, which had benefited quite substantially from an array of government contracts. Nevertheless, this was the vehicle set up by the government to become the recognised voice for the sector. Not surprisingly, this non-representative body was seen as a direct threat to less compliant nongovernment agencies with a record of social criticism, such as ACOSS (Mendes, 2005a).

Another measure undertaken by the former Liberal government, which added legitimacy to Maddison et al., (2004) and Mendes’ (2005a) claims despite the fact that it was not converted into legislation, was the parliamentary debate on the redefinition of ‘charity’. The aim of most charities was to try and change unjust laws or government policies (Charities Act, 2003, part 2 section 8). Hence policy activism was more than ancillary or incidental to its other purposes (Maddison et al., 2004; The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 2003). Many saw this debate as yet another government attempt to control the outcomes of welfare reform. Some saw it as more than a veiled threat against NGOs that stood to lose their tax-free status, which would seriously undermine their viability (Maddison et al., 2004). However, there might also have been another deeper reason why charity and its provision within the Act were deemed a nonpolitical activity.

Withycombe (2007) argues that, by drawing on Biblical teachings, early church leaders in Australia saw provision to the poor via charity as an act between the giver and God, not the giver, God and the government. Given their conservative views about society and the need to maintain the status quo, politicising the plight of the poor could herald social unrest, which had already happened through the rise of the trade unions during the colonial era. Social stability was then an important
political objective and might have influenced the Howard government’s view of charity as a non-political activity and underscore its aversion to political activism. The multipronged attack by the Howard government dramatically weakened [FB]NGOs’ traditional social advocacy role on behalf of the poor which Maddison et al., (2004) contend is vital to a robust democracy. They found 74% of respondents to their survey on NGOs’ advocacy role felt their public statements had to ‘fall in line with government policy’ (p. x). With the change of government in 2007, Julia Gillard, then Deputy Prime Minister, stated that Labor would be rewriting the thousands of contracts it had with the [FB]NGO sector: removing what had been termed the ‘gag orders’ as part of its social inclusion agenda (Franklin & Lunn, 2008). Even so, this did not remove the political vulnerability of the sector to government control when in a contractual partnership with the state regardless of who was in office.

**Contracting Emergency Relief (ER) in Australia**

As Engels (2006) states, emergency relief has a long tradition in Australian social welfare. Even though its beginnings can be traced back to the colonial era, he contends that, as an activity to help alleviate poverty, it has only received limited consideration by Australian researchers studying poverty. Although he does not proffer any reasons for this, the paucity of research in this area might be due to the fact that the majority of those supplying ER are faith-based20. Engels (2006) highlights that just as religion has been viewed as a remnant of the cultural past by

20 All states, and territories, 969 ER suppliers were faith-based. The 1008 suppliers of ER were categorised as including welfare, community, local governments, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and ‘other’ (Engels, 2006, p. 174).
some scholars, social and welfare provision based on a scientific agenda usually took precedence in the research endeavours of academics (McGrath, 2011).

Faith-based providers in the Hunter are contracted to provide emergency relief, which allows eligible clients to seek assistance with food and utility vouchers. This includes help with electricity, phone (landlines only) and water bills (ACOSS, 2003a; Engels, 2006; FaHCSIA, 2008). As well as offering ER, some FBOs also provide social support and financial or general counselling. Some agencies charge for these services while others do not. They also provide additional support with clothing and furniture made possible through private donations. As with most NGOS, volunteers comprise the majority of the workforce who interview clients seeking assistance (ATO, 2004; Engels, 2006; Fritze et al., 2007). In 2007 the Samaritans helped 8,482 families in the Hunter, Manning and Central Coast areas (The Samaritans, 2007) and the Salvation Army helped over 30,000 families in the Australian Eastern territory (Salvation Army, 2007). Emergency relief assistance is often the last resort for many struggling on benefits with little choice but to seek aid for food, clothing and utility bills (Saunders, 2005). The typical client base of emergency relief providers are those on low incomes, especially casual workers, single mothers, vulnerable families, the aged, the disabled, mentally ill, members of Indigenous communities, and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, abbreviated as CALD (ACOSS, 2003b; Bland, 2006; Dalton et al., 1996; Jamrozik, 2001; Mendes, 2005; Mendes, 2004; Rawsthorne, 2006; Saunders, 2005; Sykes, 2006; Vinson, 2007; Webber, 2006).

According to Engels (2006), Federal emergency relief funding to States and
Territories was proportional to the number of people registered on Centrelink benefits, including the Disability Support Pension, Newstart, Parenting Payment Single, Youth Allowance, Family Tax Benefit A, and the Community Development Employment Program. This leaves a large discrepancy in funding for each state and territory. For example, for 2005-2006 New South Wales received $9,616,307, whereas the Northern Territory received only $795,083: the difference between the two sums is nearly $eight million dollars. However, in regards to this discrepancy, reasonable argument could be made on the grounds of population statistics. If the figures were broken down based on the amount of funding per person in NSW and the NT, the amount received would be $1.42 and $3.92 per person respectively (ABS, 2005a, 2005b) and 20.2% of the population of NSW and 12.5% of the Northern Territory’s population claimed a government allowance or cash payment in 2006 (ABS, 2005, 2005a). From these calculations, the Northern Territory would seem to be better funded than NSW thus contradicting Engels’ (2006) claims to unfairness. However, these figures include all recipients of welfare payments. The real problem with funding, and the main point Engels (2006) is trying to highlight, is that funding, by being linked to particular Centrelink benefits, did not take all people on benefits who approach FBOs for assistance into account. Therefore, even though there were over 20% of people in NSW and 12% in the NT on some type of benefit, funding allocations for ER did not take all these claimants into consideration. Engels (2006) argues those who were left out were those on an aged pension, carer’s payment, tertiary students on Austudy, and newly arrived immigrants who were ineligible to receive government assistance for two years, all of which he contends were clients of ER providers. However, there is also evidence to suggest that low-
paid wage earners, those made redundant and those who have left their employment also seek assistance for ER (see ACOSS, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2006).

The linking of ER funding to the official numbers on unemployment benefits through Newstart and Youth Allowance is also highly problematic (Engels, 2006). The unemployment rate as calculated by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2008) included those who worked a minimum of one hour per week. There is little doubt that these people did not have enough money to meet their basic needs on an income based on one hour’s work, which would mean they would be on some type of benefit. Therefore, there was a large number of people who were registered as employed and not accounted for in the funding for ER and who, in all probability, could not make ends meet and would need to seek out the services of an FBO.

Another issue for ER funding is that it is fixed each year, received by agencies in July and December, and administered by the State and Territory offices of FaHCSIA (Engels, 2006). The amount of funding given was not based on the true cost of living\textsuperscript{21} and remained static even if the number of organisations operating in a state or territory had increased. Therefore, organisations could never be absolutely certain of the amount of money they would receive and whether they would have to cut down on services or tighten their eligibility criteria. To keep themselves eligible for funding, organisations often submitted tenders that undervalued the real cost of service provision (Engels, 2006). This ultimately impacted on the stability and

\textsuperscript{21} Funding was tied to the CPI, a measure estimating the average price of consumer goods and services purchased by households at one point in time but did not take into account price increases over a period of time.
availability of ER services. Even though some FBOs had very large revenue streams\textsuperscript{22}, to continue to be eligible for government funding they had to meet qualification requirements based on proof of direct expenditure on client need prior to the renewal of their annual contracts (ACOSS, 2003b). This meant FBOs had to conform to the government’s expectations and requirements. This form of ‘governmentality’ (Foucault, 1991) was the means by which FBO managers and volunteers – as moral actors operating outside the state – were co-opted into disciplining the needy (they could only provide assistance within government targets) and where it was hoped faith would act as a moral guide for those who failed to meet broader cultural expectations (Davies, 2008; Meagher & Healy, 2003; Nevile, 2002).

\textbf{Faith and service provision}

As already noted, there is little Australian research on the impact of faith-based values on service delivery and there is even less research on clients’ experience of faith-based provision. Hence this study sought to ascertain whether or not assistance was made conditional on clients hearing a religious message and whether or not clients were comfortable with this. In lieu of Australian research dealing directly with this issue, research focusing on ER provision was examined. Even though this research did not mention faith or religion, it incorporated ER providers and, as Engels (2006) has highlighted, many of those were faith-based.

\textsuperscript{22} The Salvation Army, Eastern Territories social work arm (community welfare) funding for 2007 stood at $34,472,000 of which 52\% was sourced from a number of government departments (SVA Eastern Territories Annual Report, 2007).
Frederick and Goddard (2008) studied clients’ (n=20) perspectives on ER provision in Australia. They found that even though some had had positive experiences and acknowledged the kindness of staff, the caseworkers made them feel ‘undeserving’. They felt embarrassed and humiliated at having to ask for ER. Nevertheless, an important issue for clients was the caseworkers’ discretionary powers as to the level of assistance provided. Most clients received less than they needed. The study highlighted the different values and practices of ER provision that did little to address the cause of individual poverty. ER was only a temporary solution to meet an immediate need. However, Frederick and Goddard (2008) did not specify whether or not clients had visited a secular or a faith-based ER provider. Therefore, they did not provide any insight into faith-based moral values as opposed to secular values and their role in ER provision. This would have provided a much deeper comparative insight into differing values surrounding ER provision. However, researchers in the USA have examined how the religious elements in welfare provision manifest in social welfare services.

To gain an understanding of clients’ perceptions and responses to the religious ‘elements that occur in congregation based food programs’ (p. 297), Sager and Stephens (2005) undertook a participant observation study at eight congregations (church-based services) delivering food to the homeless in the USA. They also undertook in-depth interviews with thirty homeless people using faith-based emergency food program services. They explored how religious elements were integrated into service delivery and how those elements, especially sermons, were perceived by those who ate the food provided. They found that even though congregations used prayer, they were usually short and not considered overtly
‘religious’ by participants. However, the majority of service users viewed sermons, ranging in time from ten minutes to two hours, negatively and as a form of religious coercion. Clients were obliged to sit through a sermon before food was served and 83% had heard - or sat through - a sermon in the last week while being fed at a soup kitchen. Even though 20% of the participants enjoyed the sermons and another 4% were indifferent, 64% expressed negative feelings about them. The majority of participants resented having to sit through a sermon before they could eat and took a strong view that religion was being forced upon them. Participants viewed the service providers:

... as hypocrites and not real Christians as their actions did not match their religious rhetoric. The providers did not take into account the values and religious beliefs of the needy whose religiosity was on a par with the rest of US society. The homeless were made to feel inferior to the providers, including volunteers, on the basis of class differences between the providers and the clients (Sager & Stephens, 2005, p. 305-306).

Sager and Stephens (2005) claim that the provision of food to the needy was framed around client pathology – or a deficits approach – and services were individualised. In keeping with the prevailing political view, it was assumed they were in their situation because they lacked religion. The individualisation of issues faced by the poor was consistent with studies on professional practice in helping those in need, where clients’ views and values were secondary to those of the paid professional service providers. This undermined the proposed benefits of Charitable Choice legislation and confirmed suggestions that faith-based provision was more
compassionate and understanding than that given by secular professionals. The introduction of Charitable Choices brought religion and spirituality into sharp focus within the social work profession. Many social workers worked within FBOs and some even had degrees in religion and theology (Sherr, Singletary, & Rogers, 2009).

Sherr et al., (2009) studied a privately funded FBO, called ‘Crossing the Journey’ (CTJ), seeking to find out whether: (i) the organisation was especially innovative in its use of faith as a solution to client problems; (ii) used its privately funded status to proselytise to clients; and (iii) clients saw this as unwanted religious persuasion. The social work literature increasingly calls for social workers to recognise the ‘spiritual beliefs, practices and memberships of clients’ (Sherr et al., 2009, p. 158) . Therefore, they are supportive of religion as a valid part of intervention, but have reservations as to how it might manifest in practice. They described CTJ as a ‘stand-alone non-denominational organisation that collaborates with congregations to establish spiritual families in a midsize city’ (p. 160). To understand how social workers within this organisation might cross the line from professional practice to religious proselytising, Sherr et al., (2009) focused on their methods of practice and found that the organisation used a triangular model in which a spiritual family (volunteers), professional social workers (Christian, licensed - clinical social work - professionals (CLPs)) and clients (neighbours) joined together in an 18-month program. The first assessment of neighbours was based on their readiness to change: Would they give up behaviours deemed inappropriate by CTJ, such as drug and alcohol abuse, and would they accept the Christian God as active in their lives. Once a neighbour consented to these conditions, the spiritual family, CLP and neighbours would meet and pray to seek God’s intervention.
The evaluation of the service included a review of initial assessment sheets and case records, as well as in-depth interviews with spiritual family members - neighbours (clients), CLPs and board members. Positive outcomes were found. The program was seen as innovative and successful in influencing the attitudes of the mainly middle-class spiritual families but there were concerns. Three in particular were highlighted: ‘the screening process, the initial spiritual family meetings after the screening process, and working with people who do not identify themselves as Christian’ (p. 161). Sherr et al., (2009) found that the screening process, including its length (up to three months) was intended to screen people so that those seeking immediate material assistance were excluded. Neighbours (clients) had to make a long-term commitment to the program and to God and this led to pressure on desperate and vulnerable clients who then framed their responses to suit CLP’s expectations. Also clients misinterpreted what it meant for God ‘to be active in their lives’ and felt they had to agree with the recommendations of their spiritual families and CLPs even though they had been assured that their personal thoughts were a valid and important part of the process. Hence the three-way relationship was not reciprocal. Some clients also took issue with the expectation they had to attend church every Sunday.

Individual volunteers and CLPs contradicted statements made by some staff members that those who held different religious beliefs or no belief at all would not be treated any differently. They claimed that evangelising and belief in Christ were central to the program. In conclusion, the researchers recognised that FBOs were an integral part of the social welfare landscape, and that social workers within them would conform to organisational requirements. However, they recommended
guidelines for ethical practice: Care needed to be prioritised; power imbalances needed to be recognised; roles needed to be clarified; clients should not be pressurised into discussing religion; open dialogue was needed; and client feedback should be sought. Due to increasing reliance on the faith-based sector, social workers needed to appreciate and accept the role of religious organisations in addressing social problems but more research into this area of practice was needed.

For some, the restriction of access to service based on religious and behavioural criteria gave cause for concern because it conflicted with citizenship rights to welfare (Bartkowski & Regis, 2003). Bartkowski & Regis, (2003) found that several congregations whose social networks cascaded outside their church would deny or withdraw aid if they had reason to believe an individual would squander limited congregational resources:

We try to find out [about aid recipients and their situation] when people call: Because this happens a lot. This is a very small town...If we find out [that aid recipients] are having any kind of deviant behaviour, using the money in a negative way and if they are abusing what we give them, we just jerk back and don’t give them anything else (p. 76).

Clearly, then, the faith-based sector had well and truly bought into the government’s disciplinary regime performing the role of moral actors forcing the poor to conform to moral behavioural standards. Likewise in Australia, welfare beneficiaries who failed to comply with the terms of their participation contracts were sanctioned through breaching. A ‘two-tier’ system had been created – with welfare divided
between the deserving middle class, and the undeserving poor, the lower class (Soss, et al., 2011). Those on the Left protested vehemently (Mendes, 2004, 2005; Saunders, 2005; Serr, 2006). Those on the Right saw faith-based provision and its morally infused assistance as one of the most redeeming features of the new welfare economy (Bartkowski & Regis, 2003). They effectively made resource savings by denying access and, at the same time, were reforming the poor, forcing them to engage in compliant behaviours or lose their benefits. Thus faith-based social capital led to exclusionary practices that punished ‘deviants’.

When a class of ‘deviants’ had been ‘created, an enforcement system had to be established requiring the exercise of discretion’ (Handler & Hasenfeld, 1991, p. 30). A lack of political consensus regarding the treatment of the poor – or even their harsh treatment within formal provision – led to the localisation of services. The local community was left to ‘sort out the ambiguity’ (Handler & Hasenfeld, 1991, p. 30). Foucault’s (1984) governmentality had come full circle with local communities forced into the ‘enforcement system’ affected by ‘power relations’ (Mills, 2003, p. 35). Local community FBOs and CBOs could decide how to deal with the poor and they did this by disciplining them (Mills, 2003; Smart, 1987). However, discretionary power in the delivery of nongovernment welfare services was not limited to community-based FBOs and CBOs. State-provided services – police, judges, teachers, and social workers – used similar discretionary powers in controlling access to resources (Handler & Hasenfeld, 1991). They were ‘street level bureaucrats’ (Lipsky, 1980; see Soss et al., 2011) who could exercise some resistance to state sanctions but mostly were constrained by organisational practices and norms (also see Mills, 2003). This nevertheless allowed for some diversity in the response
to the poor with FBOs and CBOs likely to exercise compassionate concern. Since FBOs and CBOs operated at arm’s length from government, service provision could vary from organisation to organisation. This mode of governing at a distance is characteristic of Australia’s ‘networked governance’ system which marks a shift from ‘hierarchy-orientated government through regulation, towards more participatory approaches to decision making that involve an array of non-state actors in the private and community sectors’ (Gunasekara, 2008, p. 207). Within this model, government takes a step back in finding solutions to intractable problems, like poverty, relying on the cultural and moral influence of community actors, in this case particularly those of faith, to uplift the poor.

Wuthnow (2004) argues that most people in the USA would have been brought up with Christian values of caring and compassion. Thus most welfare organisations - whether faith-based or not - and those providing care would display caring and compassionate attitudes. While secular and faith-based organisations might display the same care and compassion, religion teaches ‘unconditional love … to legitimate caring as a [distinctly] human activity’ (p. 276). Therefore, religion as a ‘first language’ taught in the home had broader significance, reaching into all aspects of care, including secular services. Whether this claim would stand up empirically in Western countries like Australia which are not as religious as the USA requires further investigation. Nevertheless, Wuthnow (2004) argues first that recipients of care, if they were highly religious, might see the hand of God at work with help being construed ‘as a blessing from God’, a gift, rather than a right. This gift, however, depended on reciprocity and was a reward for faith: ‘God takes care of His own’. Faith rests on the ‘poor always being with us’, on their always being people to
whom a religious person might show charity or unconditional love and rewards accrue as a benefit of faith. Therefore, receiving ‘something for nothing’ – the sense in which society viewed charity – was an anomaly because there was always a teleological dimension to the giving and receiving of care. Social norms held that care be dispensed on merit – to those who were deserving or had earned or were owed it by virtue of their ‘good’ – moral – behaviour. They could be classed as ‘good’ citizens who had fallen upon hard times. Sanctioning care or welfare by limiting the number of times help could be dispensed required some sort of payback but this was anathema to religious notions of charity and care: Caregiving should be ‘universal, natural, human and beneficial’ (Wuthnow, 2004, p. 277). For Wuthnow (2004), religion offered ‘abundant love’ for everyone. Charity was ‘love freely given’ (p. 277) attached only to moral obligation, in return for which the recipient received God’s grace. But how could charity be dispensed without undermining the recipient’s sense of moral worth? In receiving ‘something for nothing’, was dignity not threatened? Rights and entitlements to care might compensate for the ‘moral fallout’ (Wuthnow, 2004, p. 278) of being judged for one’s inability to take care of oneself and one’s family but moral judgements were inherent in welfare provision - whether via religious charity or humanitarian rights-based social benefits (also see Steensland, 2008) - and came with a mutual responsibility of caregiving and receiving. The pivotal question for social policy then revolved around whose responsibility it was to care for the needy.

In conclusion, this chapter has discussed the faith-based sector as an important element of contemporary welfare provision. In turning to the faith-based sector, governments not only put their faith in religious communities to discipline
the poor but also in the volunteers that were the backbone of many FBOs and CBOs. This had a flow-on effect for professionals as FBOs could provide ‘economical - or efficient - care’. Formal professional services were costly when viewed in light of affordable volunteer-driven faith-based services.

In the next chapter, volunteerism - as the foundation on which the faith-based sector operates - is examined through the lens of social capital. FBOs’ continued ability to provide and expand services within the neoliberal policy environment is contingent on a continuous supply of volunteers. Debates surrounding social capital are examined in light of post-Third Way politics and the faith-based sector is discussed in light of Australian secularism and multiculturalism since the increase in non-Christian faiths in Australia raises issues for future faith-based provision.
Chapter 4: Social capital and volunteerism: Faith-based community solutions to national problems?

Volunteerism is the foundation of the faith-based sector. In this chapter it is examined through the lens of social capital, an idea that captivated neoliberal policymakers towards the end of the 20th century. Social capital was embraced by the new right and left alike, and became a pivotal lever of ‘Third Way’ politics as values talk re-entered policy debates – and national, family and community values were once again placed centre stage. As public sentiment turned against welfare expansion, social capital was harnessed into arguments about the failures of the welfare state. The logic of family and community responsibility – linked to ‘fair go’ Australian values – and the idea of ‘small government’ and a ‘big society’ created a cocktail of ideas that intoxicated a public fearful of risk and disinterested in unaffordable and inefficient welfare for those labelled ‘dole bludgers’. Social capital was about ‘community’ – about caring communities built on neighbourly goodwill. If community goodwill could be harnessed, there would be less need for formal professionalised government services as the public turned to compassionate volunteers for help. Social capital was the ideal counterpart to neoliberal paternalism (Soss et al., 2011) and faith-based welfare typified both. Hence this chapter examines volunteering, particularly within Christian organisations.

Faith-based organisations as providers of social capital

The renewed policy focus on faith-based welfare in government provision has been driven by increased recognition of FBOs as ‘the primary developers of social capital’
Harnessing social capital in Australian welfare policy

The move to embrace the idea of social capital in Australian welfare policy can be traced to the Social Security review of 1980 (Winter, 2000; also see Cass, 1986) which recommended ‘participation by all people in an active society’ (Winter, 2000, p. 4). Along with ‘social inclusion’ and ‘social exclusion’, the idea of ‘social capital’ became central to policy debates (Conghaile, 1999; Martin, 2004; Myers, 2004;
Smith, 2000; Muffels, Tsakloglou, & Mayes, 2002). Following the Social Security review, the former Department of Social Security (DSS) undertook a study which highlighted the benefits of government-funded, community-based intervention (see Smith & Herbert, 1997). Winter (2000) highlighted arguments that those on low incomes could benefit greatly from the potential and initiative of community services through ‘social participation’ (p. 5). Along with ‘participation in the formal labour market’, social participation was the means through which people could enhance their ‘personal wellbeing’ and improve their living standards. Social and economic participation was seen as the route to social inclusion. Lending weight to the social inclusion debate was the 1994 publication of the inquiry into community welfare organisations undertaken by the Industry Commission (Winter, 2000). The review highlighted the benefits of the community services sector to social and economic outcomes for Australian society. Thus the stage was set for the 1996-1997 budget to make provision for community-focused, social participation initiatives. Among them were measures to force the unemployed into volunteering while on benefits. Consequently, a volunteer referral service was established and organisations ‘employing’ volunteer services were encouraged to apply for funds to train volunteers (Volunteers Australia, 2010).

**Social capital dissected**

‘Social capital’ was a term first used by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1986) to refer to status-induced social benefits. For Bourdieu, social capital accrued from power, authority and social status that ensured ‘its own reproduction through a specific form of labour’ (p. 33 emphasis added). By this he meant that individuals build their own
social capital by conforming to the social expectations of their class, *inter alia* by pursuing an education, belonging to social clubs or professional associations and appreciating the arts - or cultural capital. This *accumulation* of capital contributed to an individual’s social standing and enhanced his or her ability to network, make the right connections and maintain a social and economic status. Therefore, social capital - often referred to as human capital by economists in this broad context - was accumulated, transmitted and reproduced between institutions, classes and professional groups (Woolcock, 2001). Ultimately, social capital related to other forms of capital, particularly economic wealth that accrued mainly to the upper classes. Therefore, the focus in Bourdieu’s use of the term social capital was the networks of power and social distinction held by individuals and transmitted from one social setting to another via upholding social norms, such as class structure, gender roles and economic and social privilege (Huppatz, 2009).

Use of the term in contemporary neoliberal policy circles draws on the work of Robert Putnam (1995, 2000), who was largely concerned with those features of society which fostered social cohesion, such as social organisations and networks, the norms of social and civic engagement, and generalised reciprocity – which he defined as doing something for someone and not expecting them to return the favour but possibly expecting someone else at a later date to do so. He believed that there had been a loss of social cohesion in the years leading up to the 1980s and beyond and, for modern societies to move forward as a cohesive whole, individuals needed to reengage with one another in communities and organisations in a spirit of reciprocity. Social interaction led to the emergence of strong social ties – bonding capital – and the development of social ‘trust’.
Putnam (2000) argued that the loss of social cohesion in modern society led to the marginalisation and exclusion of certain social groups, particularly those in dire economic circumstances: ‘People with lower incomes and those who feel financially strapped are much less engaged in all forms of social and community life than those who are better off’ (p. 193). This could be changed through strategic attempts to build social capital by breaking down barriers and strengthening social ties between divergent groups in society. Putnam’s work has been very influential, particularly his much-cited *Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital* (1995), followed by a much more comprehensive discussion in *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (2000) which captured the imagination of scholars from all corners of the social sciences (also see Putnam 1993a, 1993b, 1995a, 1996). Due to its promise of revitalising social democratic opportunities, social capital has now become part of the lexicon of a range of disciplines, such as economics, health, education, political science, and cultural studies (Campbell, 2000; Lauglo, 2000; Szreter, 2000; Theiss-Morse & Hibbing, 2005; Warburton & Stirling, 2007), as well as a central platform of neoliberal welfare reform.

For Putnam (2000), social capital was a ‘core feature’ of democracy and determined the pattern and quality of social relations (Hepworth & Stitt, 2007, p. 897). It comprised two elements. One was ‘bonding’ capital, which determined the level of trust between similar members and subgroups of a given society. This type of capital tended to be inward focused, reinforcing common identities and homogenous ties as exhibited by, for example, close friends and neighbours and ethnic-based organisations. On the other hand, ‘horizontal social relations, networks
or lateral ties’ formed bridging capital: it was outward looking and encompassed people from, for example, youth clubs, FBOs and social movements. It allowed for the development of trust with unfamiliar people, thus enhancing diversity and inclusion in relationships between different types of people outside of a person’s immediate social sphere. Putnam (2000) provided a simple explanation of the benefits of both: Bonding social capital is good for ‘getting by’ but bridging social capital is crucial for ‘getting ahead’ (p. 23).

In *Bowling Alone*, Putnam (1995) lamented the decline of strong civic engagement, which had been replaced by a ‘passive reliance on the state’ (p. 65). Successful societies, he argued, had strong social bonds and social networks and the quality of governance was ‘determined by [a] longstanding tradition of civic engagement’ (p. 66). To make his point, Putnam (1995) drew an analogy with ten-pin bowling: even though the number of bowlers increased in the USA by 10% between 1980 and 1993, membership of a league or group of bowlers decreased by 40%. The main issue, as he saw it, was increased individualism resulting in people isolating themselves from others, and in the process, breaking down important community connections and limiting social interaction. Putnam (1995) saw FBOs as an important part of the solution to this social breakdown and erosion of connectedness and argued that ‘faith communities in which people worship together are arguably the single most important repository (alongside educational facilities) of social capital in [North] America’ (p. 66). Linking social capital formation with volunteering, he maintained that half of all volunteering occurred in a religious context. This was why, for Putnam, religion, and congregations in particular, played an important role in developing and maintaining social capital as churches provided
an important ‘incubator’ (p. 66) for civic skills, norms, recruitment, and community involvement.

Various scholars and policymakers embraced Putnam’s (2000) thesis, in particular those seeking to highlight the perceived ineffectiveness (and possibly wastefulness) of the hugely costly welfare state. Since FBOs had long attracted volunteers and were perceived as embodying the moral fibre assumed to be lacking in society, especially among the unemployed, they were seen as an ideal context of community service through which to promote civic engagement and social capital (Baker, 2009; Becker & Dhingra, 2001; Fischer & Schaffer, 1993; Garland, Myers, & Wolfer, 2008; Greeley, 1997; Wilson & Janoski, 1995; Wuthnow, 2000, 2004).

**Social capital in a faith-based setting**

Drawing on the results of a US survey targeting 200 communities of worship, Foley and Hoge (2007) noted that religious organisations were a ‘prime source of social capital’ (p. 91) and provided assistance to newcomers. In their analysis, they were mindful of Putnam’s thesis that social capital represented ‘features of social organisations such as network, norms and trust that facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit’ (see Putnam, 1995a, p. 67). They surveyed Protestant, Catholic, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh congregations and found an enormous diversity in how each provided for the development of social capital via social network formation. Muslim, Hindu and Sikh communities provided psychological support and cultural refuge (trust) from the dominant US culture, shaping not only morals and spirituality (norms) but also how immigrants viewed themselves
politically and socially (networks). They were able to recruit new immigrants, but their networks tended to be intense and small in number. In other words, they exhibited a strong tendency towards ‘bonding capital’.

In Australia, Warburton and Stirling (2007) called this ‘dense’ networking ‘in which immigrant communities’ displayed a tendency to band together (p. 26). In contrast, Foley and Hoge (2007) also found that Protestant and Catholic churches tended to provide avenues for social networks to develop via bible study, faith-based discussion groups and prayer meetings which were open to outsiders. This provided the resident (non-immigrant) population with extensive ‘thin’ networks (not as tightly knit but more of them) or bridging capital, hence contributing to a wider scope and diversity in the development of social capital. Foley and Hoge’s (2007) study looked specifically at networks and the ability of the faithful to make connections in the community but there is a lack of scholarship on the role of faith in NGOs. Without research of this nature, the advantages, drawbacks and ‘inherent tensions’ (Thaut, 2009, p. 321) in the development of social bonds, particularly with those who do not hold similar beliefs, remains little understood.

Hence Baker (2009) argued that social capital drawn from religious communities needed to be defined in terms of their language. For example, faith-based capital would have one set of values and language wherein ‘transcendence’ was a basis for action and benchmarking. Conversely, academic and policy language looked to empirical evidence, market mechanisms and legal structures to justify programs of action. Therefore, those who dealt with the faith-based sector needed to understand the underlying motivation of its protagonists:
Spiritual Capital energises religious capital by providing a theological identity and worshipping tradition, but also a value system, moral vision and basis of faith. Spiritual capital is often embedded locally within faith groups but also expressed in the lives of individuals.

Religious Capital is the practical contribution to local and national life made by faith groups (Baker, 2009, p. 111).

Baker (2009) argued that these definitions allowed for the distinction between motivation and action, specifically what motivates faith-based communities and their practical actions. The ‘what’ is religious capital - their actions and the resources they supply - and the ‘why’ is spiritual capital - the motivation, faith, values, and belief that ‘shapes the concrete actions of faith communities and individuals’ (p. 112). In choosing to invest their religious capital, such as buildings and volunteers, religious communities benefitted the wider community, increased their influence and gained economic capital along with the ‘added value of religious capital’ (p. 114). The added value of spiritual capital lay in the motivation provided by religious beliefs, values and mission. When a faith-based organisation exposed spiritual capital to the ‘logic’ of partnerships with the market or the state, spiritual capital underwent a radical mutation. When religious communities were confronted with situations they deemed risky, or contentious in relation to belief, they resorted to bonding capital - member-only care rather than extending out into the community via bridging capital.

In relation to this tendency to turn inward when faced with difference, Theiss-Morse and Hibbings (2005) challenged the optimistic view of social capital theorists. Their evidence suggested overwhelmingly that people joined homogenous
volunteer associations. Citing the social psychology literature, they argued that people generally joined groups that exhibited similar values and norms and thus stratified in terms of social class, gender, sexual preference, age, religion, and income, since ‘people like to be around those like themselves’ (p. 232). Social groups fostered similarity and shunned those who were not like them. Groups favoured consensus and a cohesive, conflict-free environment. Homogenous groups fostered generalised trust and cooperation between like-minded people. There was generally little trust between those who were different, leading to their exclusion and the turning of groups inward. They also contended that voluntary associations were, in fact, less likely to be involved in political activity as they shunned conflict and diversity of opinion, which they were taught to believe was either wrong or not useful. Political involvement was seen as ‘messy, inefficient and conflict ridden’ (Theiss-Morse & Hibbings, 2005, p. 227). Members of voluntary associations might, in fact, be politically uninvolved and detached, thus not appreciating the political importance or consequences of their inward-looking focus. Membership of heterogeneous groups might also lead to members disengaging from civic participation as conflicting viewpoints dampened the desire to be involved. Face-to-face contact often established a preference for consensus. Thus members of heterogeneous groups (social, economic and cultural, for example) tended to gravitate towards those who were similar, leading to the formation of groups that could be antidemocratic, intolerant and distrustful of politics and in which there was tight bonding among group members (Theiss-Morse & Hibbings, 2005).

Putnam (2000) was well aware of the compromising and negative situations that could emerge and undermine the positive aspects of social capital. He called this
‘the dark side of social capital’ (p. 350; also see Putzel, 1997). He pointed out that gangs and terrorists, too, had strong bonding capital. However, he was adamant that social capital on the whole was beneficial and ‘mutually reinforcing’ (p. 362). It benefitted those who reached out to others who would then be active in the wider society in which economic and social difference could be mitigated. Theiss-Morse and Hibbings (2005) did not agree. They argued that ultimately group formation led to distrust between divergent populations. Many who belonged to voluntary associations were from higher socioeconomic backgrounds and tended to uphold dominant social and cultural values, which perpetuated privilege and silenced the voice of socially disadvantaged and marginalised minority groups in society. They argued that social capital theorists overlooked this aspect of human nature. Hence, generally the public did not want to become involved in public debate and most voluntary associations were apolitical.

**The Third Way and active citizenship**

At around the same time as the ideas on the benefits of social capital were taking hold, policy analysts and social theorists sought to find alternatives, compromises and partnerships with the state to solve community issues. In doing so, they coined the term ‘active citizenship’ and embraced the concept of social capital (Winter, 2000). This move was embodied in Botsman and Latham’s (2001) notion of the ‘enabling state’, Australia’s version of the Third Way popularised by Anthony Giddens (1998) in Great Britain. Giddens (1998) had proposed an amalgam of policy initiatives bringing together positions from the left and right of politics to formulate a middle-ground policy. Botsman and Latham (2001) emphasised the importance of
social capital and social entrepreneurship in providing non-state solutions to social issues at a community level incorporating ‘learning, welfare reform, social capital and the reinvention of democracy’ (p. 9). McKnight (2005) referred to this as ‘the instrumental rationality of neoliberalism’ (p. 95), which sought to appease the left’s call for increased government provision of services and resource redistribution which was achieved largely via the community. Cox (1995), however, took a different view in relation to the development of social capital and community solutions: government must help in its development; there must be ‘interplay of state and community’; the community could not achieve consensus or provide solutions on its own; and only the state could maintain structures that were ‘open, egalitarian and democratic’ (p. 46).

This middle-ground policy, which embraced the non-state-solutions argument more readily, was promoted heavily during the Blair (1997-2007) and Clinton (1993-2001) administrations. Also the escalation of Charitable Choices under George W. Bush upheld the policy shift of contracting-out solutions to intractable social policy problems to the community sector (Bartkowski & Regis, 2003; Nagel, 2006; Theiss-Morse & Hibbings, 2005). Underscoring these policy directions was the concept of the active citizen contributing to the local community (Hepworth & Stitt, 2007; Theiss-Morse & Hibbings, 2005). The active citizen was a ‘good’ moral citizen who took responsibility for himself and for his community and was seen as the solution to many of the social ills in the West (Wistheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 237). It was in this context that the ideas of the ‘active citizen’ and ‘social capital’ emerged – plucked from their social democratic home in civic and community engagement and transplanted into the discourses of established welfare institutions, social policy and
community organisations. Together with other concepts, such as mutual obligation, reciprocal partnerships and economic participation, active citizenship and social capital became part of the discourses shared by Third Way policymakers and those advocating the neoliberal marketisation of services (Ferguson, 2004; Goldstein, 2004; Jackson, 2009; Leventhal & Mears, 2002; Nagel, 2006; Olasky, 2000; Putnam, 1995; Woolcock, 2001, Wuthnow, 2004a).

From a policy perspective, Schuller, Baron, and Field (2000) argued that seeking remedies for community problems with the use of concepts like active citizenship was deeply problematic since the concept of social capital did not necessarily square with that of ‘active citizenship’ geared towards individual endeavour and was not about reaching out to another to bridge social or economic inequities in a social or community setting. The bringing together of different terms in relation to the benefits of social capital had also led Putnam (2000) to differentiate between social capital as civic virtue, individual responsibility and networks of reciprocity.

This mixing up of different terms and their incorporation into the debate is why many view the concept of social capital as being too broad and hence, open to misuse by politicians. Cox and Caldwell (2000) highlighted the differences of opinion within the academic literature as to just what social capital was and how it might be achieved. They asked: Was it merely the social glue that held voluntary organisations and communities together or was it wider in scope? Was it located only in the community or voluntary sector or could it be applied more broadly in the political sphere? Given the complexity of divergent conceptualisations of the social
capital agenda, the problems faced in its operationalisation, and debates as to its measurement, Bryson and Mowbray (2005) argued that the social capital agenda was just a ‘spray-on solution’ (p. 91) without any underlying substance that would contribute to making any substantial changes in people’s lives. However, the promise of the social capital agenda was given prominence and the voices of those opposed to it were largely ignored at a political level.

In the context of these debates, therefore, notions of citizenship changed as states embraced a social capital agenda. Citizenship had long been understood within democratic states as embodying a reciprocal relationship between the individual and the state but new questions were raised about the political obligations and respect due to government and the limits or boundaries of state intervention on the lives of its citizens (Gray, Crofts, & Healy 2001; Heywood, 2007). Different interpretations of social contract theory provide varying opinions on the rights and responsibilities presumed to be embedded in the concept of citizenship.

Social contract theory originated out of the ‘state of nature’ thesis (Heywood, 2007; Hobbes, 1651; Locke, 1689; Rawls, 1971; Rousseau, 1762) in terms of which people did not have to ask for any type of permission to act but could do whatever they chose without legal, social or political responsibility to act in certain ways. They could even murder one another without sanction, if they so choose. Social contract theorists have sought to find explanations as to how societies should be organised so that they remained cohesive, functional and stable. Two early protagonists of social contract theory, who provide the focus for this brief discussion, acknowledged the need for government, but they came to different views
as to the role and extent of government involvement in the lives of those it sought to govern.

In *The Two Treatises of Civil Government*, Locke (1689) viewed the government as having only a limited role. In other words, he upheld the benefits of a small state. Government, as a representative body, was there only to uphold individual freedom and to protect life, property and health, and it should do this as an impartial judge as it governs for everyone. In turn, citizens would give up certain rights (or natural rights in relation to survival), such as murdering each other and stealing property, hence the term contract.

On the other hand, Hobbes argued in *Leviathan* (1651) that government should be absolute and unlimited, and provide rights and responsibilities. Government should be far-reaching and boundless, with unquestionable power. This was, in his view, the only way for social stability to be attained. If this was not obtainable, then the only other option was anarchy.

Locke seems to have held a much more favourable view of people than Hobbes, as within his limited government theory, freedom from need would rest squarely on individuals and families to provide for themselves, and if they could not, society would have to do so in a voluntary manner. Underlying this belief was also the state of nature thesis, a concept where everyone is equal and in which a sense of justice and charity needed to prevail for any semblance of society to exist. For Locke, this was to be found in the vast spaces of (North) America (*Second Treatise* V.36). With the evolution of Government as a small state, limited in its intervention
in people’s lives, the sense of justice and charity would not be swallowed up by an overarching state. Locke was not alone in his observations in relation to citizens caring for others in need when other options were not available. De Tocqueville (1961b) also wrote about the civic virtues of settlers seeking to inhabit the frontier spaces of (North) America where need was met by way of civic duty, or a type of emergent volunteerism that filled the void of an absent state. Hobbes, on the other hand, seemed to conclude that people would need to be much more forcefully directed by an overriding government. If people were left to their own devices, conflict would arise largely due to self-interest.

Drawing on social contract theory, elements of it resonating with both sides of the modern political divide can be seen. The social capital debate, with its call for civic duty, individual justice and charity as part of citizenship are in line with Locke’s thesis. In other words, responsibility for many of the social and economic goods to be shared with those in need have to come from the people themselves. However, arguments from a social welfare perspective, state that citizenship entails social rights - access to education, health, welfare and work - provided by the state as part of its primary responsibility to citizens (Jamrozik, 2001). Mowbray (2004) argued that the focus on social capital and active citizenship resulted in little regard being given to broader government policies affecting ‘the distribution of power, privilege, opportunity, wealth and income’ (p. 2). Finally, according to Cook, Dodds, and Mitchell (2001), reliance on communities and volunteers via social capital allowed governments to abrogate their responsibilities by placing the solution to complex problems on the shoulders of the community, particularly volunteers. In other words, civic-minded citizens were being burdened with problems they could
not and should not be expected to solve.

The Australian Community Sector Survey (2005) undertaken by ACOSS, which incorporated 831 social service agencies for 2002-2003 and 2003-2004, highlighted these very same concerns. ACOSS found that, due to an increase in demand for services, a number of volunteers and staff increased their hours to deliver services within budget. They found that volunteers were seen as flexible or able to be coerced to make an extra commitment if needed to deliver services within the budget constraints facing [FB]NGOs. Among other issues, they faced a high turnover in volunteers, meaning that there was no stability in service provision. However, some were seeking solutions to reverse the situation (Hidalgo & Moreno, 2009).

Even so, attention is drawn to Warburton and Mutch (2000) and their assertion of the declining ability of volunteers to meet increasing demands for their services. Traditionally, the ‘typical’ volunteer was a white, middle-aged woman from an upper class socioeconomic background who did not work. However, as more women entered the workforce, it became increasingly difficult for them to meet the dual demands of work and home, including care for the elderly. Hence many became less inclined to volunteer in what, following feminist critiques of social care, was seen as undervalued women’s work, thus undermining the rate of volunteer activity traditionally undertaken by women in the community (see also ABS, 2006).
Volunteering Australia (VA) is the peak body for volunteer organisations in Australia. Membership is free and open to organisations with a largely volunteer workforce and private organisations that allow paid staff to volunteer some of their time, universities, research institutes and Commonwealth government departments with an interest in volunteering (VA, 2010). It has formulated a list of principles relating to volunteering within community-based organisations to delineate clearly between volunteering and other activities, such as paid work. Interestingly, caregiving in the private or domestic realm for the sick, elderly and disabled is excluded from their principles (Bittman & Thomson, 2000). This might be due to the expectation that women would automatically undertake this activity or that they had little choice in this matter. However, according to Volunteering Australia (2005), volunteering is:

1. Beneficial to the community and the volunteer.
2. Unpaid work.
3. A matter of choice.
4. Not compulsorily undertaken to receive pensions or government allowances (see below).
5. A legitimate way in which citizens can participate in the activities of their community.
6. A vehicle for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs.
7. An activity performed in the non-profit sector only.

8. Not a substitute for paid work.

9. Not a replacement for paid work and does not constitute a threat to the job security of paid workers.

10. Respectful of the rights, dignity and culture of others.

11. A process that promotes human rights and equality.

The ABS (2004, 2006) classified a volunteer as someone who ‘willingly gives unpaid help, in the form of time, service, or skills, through an organisation or group’ (n.p.n). This definition correlates, to some extent, with Wilson’s (2000): ‘Volunteering means an activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group, or organisation … this definition does not preclude volunteers from benefiting from their work’ (p. 215). Of course the debate as to the boundaries of volunteering continues and questions remain: Is caring for a family member in the informal privacy of home volunteering? Is just having the desire to help volunteering? (Cordingley, 2000; Wilson, 2000) For the purposes of this study, all of these definitions capture the sense of ‘volunteering’ with one important caveat: volunteering in an FBO is undertaken within structured environments involving particular norms and values.

Volunteers

According to the ABS (2006), in 2006, 5.2 million people or 34% of the Australian population aged 18 years and over participated in voluntary work. Forty four percent of volunteers were in the 35-44 year age group, which had the highest participation
Collectively, volunteers of all ages contributed 713 million hours to the community. They undertook a variety of activities in a diverse range of organisations and groups. In total, the value of volunteering to the economy increased from $8.9 billion for 1999-2000 to $14 to $16 billion for 2006-2007. This dollar figure also represented approximately 313,000 full-time jobs (ABS, 2006). The four most common areas of voluntary activity were: sports and physical recreation, education and training, community welfare, and religious involvement (VA, 2005). Those with a strong connection to the workforce were the most likely to volunteer and included full-time workers: men (19%), including part-time work, and women in part-time work (29%), full-time employment (19%) and unemployed (25%) (ABS, 2006). Australian-born people tended to volunteer (36%) more than those born elsewhere (29%) (25% not accounted for). Almost two thirds of volunteers (62%) worked for one organisation, 25% for two, 8% for three, and 4% for more than three. As the ABS (2006) explained:

"The work a volunteer does for each particular organisation is referred to as a volunteering involvement. During 2006 there were 7.8 million involvements. Most of the organisations for which people had volunteering involvements were in the non-profit sector, 84%, with 14% in the government sector (such as schools) (n.p.n)."

Also, the ABS (2006) found people who had some kind of recent involvement in community activity were more likely to be doing voluntary work. For example, of those who had been actively involved in a religious organisation in the previous 12
months (which might include their voluntary work activity), to partaking in the survey, 57% volunteered, in comparison with 29% of those who did not.

Wuthnow’s (2004) analysis of *The World Values Survey* undertaken between 1997 and 2000 indicated the strength of the volunteer sector in Australia. In relation to the portion of adults who said they were ‘currently active as volunteers in charitable organisations’ (p. 101) Australia, Puerto Rico and Nigeria were ranked in the top three, out of the 64 participating countries, above North America which was ranked fourth. Although there is disagreement among scholars as to the actual increase in the rate of volunteering (Warburton & Mutch, 2000; also see ABS, 2006), the figures suggest that volunteering is on the rise. It is those with employment and strong community connections, particularly to a church, who tend to be more active. They provide all the elements needed for the development of Putnam’s (1995) social capital and evidence for his claim that FBOs were a primary source of it.

This raises the question of whether volunteering in FBOs is more about the social networks volunteers make than the development of relationships between volunteers and clients (outsiders) where faith-based values can be passed on. Analysing two FBOs (Centres A and B) in Maryland in the USA, Belcher and Deforge (2007) focused on concerns raised by the volunteers working at each centre who interacted with the needy. Issues included why the poor could not manage on their benefits (when others did). The Department of Social Services (DSS) was also viewed by the volunteers as dumping the poor onto their aid centres, which were experiencing an ever-increasing demand for their services. Belcher and Deforge (2007) revealed that the volunteers in their study had limited training, and only a
basic understanding of the wider resources available for them to draw on when helping the needy. They also worked within tight budgets. Importantly, in seeking to form relationships with other volunteers at their centre, increasing demand meant that they had less time to socialise with one another. Volunteers who worked in the centre situated in the poorer area of town (centre A) became frustrated by full waiting rooms. Consequently, interactions with fellow volunteers at their centre were often stressful. Due to the increase in need, and corresponding busyness, the volunteers often blamed the poor for not being able to manage their affairs. Some of the volunteers themselves were on some type of benefit, prompting the question back to researchers that ‘I have to be frugal – why not them?’ (p. 12). Research participants from centre A had little knowledge of welfare reforms and why the needs of their clients had increased. However, the volunteers who worked in Centre B, in a better part of town, acknowledged that the government was doing less and, as a result, they were less critical of their clients. Both sets of volunteers, however, were aware of the increasing demand on their services and acknowledged their faith as the reason for why they provided welfare services to the poor.

As this research suggests, the shifting of welfare onto the faith-based sector might, in some circumstances, undermine the development of social capital as volunteers work harder and, in turn, became stressed. This impacted on their ability to socialise or form social networks - bonding capital - with those belonging to their centre. Belcher and Deforge (2007) highlighted the tension arising from overwork and a limited understanding of the political process. Not only did distrust of others (the clients) seem to increase, negating any hope of establishing bridging capital, this situation might impact negatively on clients’ access to resources with responses such
as ‘these people don’t seem to realise we are not a grocery store’ (p. 9). Face-to-face contact and open dialogue with the poor was made difficult by this ‘us’ and ‘them’ scenario. Different centres, even though they shared the commonality of faith, could operate in an entirely different way from one another, depending on where they were situated and the people who populated them.

These differences in the workings of faith need to be taken into consideration as FBOs are viewed as repositories of linking social capital - places in which the poor can get information and experience social inclusion. They are also said to provide the moral framework governments are seeking to instil in the needy which, in turn, underpins welfare policy and, to a large degree, a hope that they hold the key to providing a solution to poverty (Latham, 2001; Olasky, 1992, 2000; Woolcock, 2001; Wuthnow, 2004). There are, therefore, a lot of expectations being placed on volunteers, especially in the context of their religious beliefs, particularly as there is little consensus or research as to how personal faith manifests in relation to helping those in need.

**Volunteering and religion**

There is debate within the literature, as to the extent to which religious belief influences volunteering, or whether other variables, such as social networks and relationships, are more important to members of religious organisations and their volunteering role (Becker & Dhinga, 2001; Belcher & Deforge, 2007; Berger, 2003; Durkheim, 1915, 1968; DuBois, 1997; Ebaugh, Chafetz & Pipes, 2006; Hepworth & Stitt, 2007; Wuthnow, 1991; Wuthnow, Hackett, & Hsu, 2004; Warburton & Fahey,
Gaining access to the ABS’s Confidentialised Unit Record File (CURF), Dolnicar and Randle (2007) collected quarterly data in 2000 relating to volunteering in general. The data was national in scope and focused specifically on volunteer work. In keeping with their marketing orientation, Dolnicar and Randle (2007) were interested in finding better ways for voluntary organisations to attract volunteers. They believed that being able to target different segments of the community was better than marketing strategies based on a ‘generic’, one-size-fits-all stereotype of volunteers as middle-class white women. The dataset included 4,267 subjects. Twelve variables were developed which were statements about the underlying reasons given by volunteers who donated their time:

… for the social contact; to gain personal satisfaction; because of personal/family involvement; because of religious belief; to be active; to learn new skills; to do something worthwhile; to help others/community; to gain work experience; to use their own skills or experience; because they felt obliged; or it just happened (p. 142).

Based on this data, Dolnicar and Randle (2007, p. 135) suggested that there were six types of volunteers:

1. The *classic* volunteer has three underlying motivations - doing something worthwhile, personal satisfaction, and helping others.

2. The *dedicated* volunteer perceives volunteering as worthwhile.

3. The *personally involved* volunteer usually knows someone or has a family member in an organisation, most often their child.
4. The *personally satisfied* volunteer pursues his or her self-interest.

5. The *altruistic* volunteer wants to help others.

6. The *niche* volunteer has fewer drivers and motivation may be more specific, such as wanting to gain some type of work experience.

These categories were drawn from twelve variables, of which religion was one. Within these categories religion became subsumed under the heading of the broader categorisation of ‘niche’ volunteers. This was because, for Dolnicar and Randle (2007), the religious volunteer was driven mainly by religion and doing good works was not just the prerogative of the religious. In their view, those wanting to give back to the community, who were not driven by religion, were *classic* volunteers with the general desire to help those in need, e.g., the Red Cross is a humanitarian agency (n.d.; see also Bartley, 2007). On the other hand, Belcher and Deforge (2007) and Becker and Dhinga (2001) found that having and maintaining social networks was the most important aspect of volunteering.

Conversely, Canadian researcher Berger (2006) identified religion as a very strong determinant of philanthropic activity, including the donation of money and volunteering in charitable organisations. He argued that, just as the voluntary sector faced increased competition within market-style arrangements; it also faced pressure to engage with religious subgroups in order to attract an increasingly diverse population to philanthropic and volunteering pursuits. Using data from Statistics Canada (2000) *National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGV)*, Berger (2006) examined ‘the systematic variance in Canadian philanthropy based on religious affiliation by exploring self-determined factors (i.e., personal attitudes, and
socially determined factors, (norms and social exclusion)' (p. 116). Following research inside and outside of Canada, Berger (2006) expected Christian religious differences to impact on the behaviour of voluntary groups. For example, she anticipated that the more evangelical, fundamental and religiously demanding groups like conservative Protestants were, the more philanthropic they would be in comparison to liberal Christian groups like Catholics. However, on all the measures, ‘those classified as non-religiously affiliated give less than the rest of the population’ (p. 122). This outcome was based on percentage of household income, the total amount given to religious organisations, the method of giving compared with those affiliated with seven religions, and those who were not affiliated with any religion. But why are the religious more inclined to give and to volunteer?

Congregations present information to remind the faithful of their responsibility to the poor and needy, reinforced by the sacrificial teachings of scripture. This is why, according to Wuthnow (2004), religious volunteers tended to work in the human services, particularly those who engaged in ‘spiritual practice’ (p. 104). Those engaged in regular intentional activity in their quest to form a stronger relationship with God tended to volunteer the most. Drawing on data from the Arts and Religion Survey (1999) undertaken in the USA, he stated that these people engaged in daily prayer, meditation and Bible reading. They were also involved with congregations on a more regular basis, attending church at least once a week and belonging to other faith-based groups, such as Bible study groups.

However, the social bonds formed in church might well be more important than belief in relation to volunteering. As Becker and Dhinga, (2001) argued,
‘individual and social mechanisms … link church attendance and volunteering’ (p. 317), or what they referred to as the ‘church effect’ (p. 326). Church congregations fostered the strong social connections important for a robust civic life. Therefore, the salience of religion did not strongly predict volunteering. However belonging to a congregation was important to the development of social ties likely to lead to volunteering. To come to this conclusion, the researchers drew on data from the Religion and Family project undertaken in New York, which incorporated a survey (n=1006) and follow-up in-depth interviews (n=38) with congregations and religious individuals. Although they did not say when the data was collected, they mentioned checking for non-response bias by comparing the data with the 1990 US census.

They found those with close relationships with their neighbours, living in a rural area, married with children, and with social or human capital (in Bourdieu’s sense of the term), such as a high level of education, tended to volunteer. Of interest, they argued that religious denomination was not significantly related to the rate of volunteering or whether a person was more liberal or conservative in relation to their faith.

Some of the participants’ quotes however were of particular interest. An evangelical stated ‘If I am to become more Christ-like I must serve’ and from a liberal, ‘we have an obligation to help others as citizens’ (p. 328). Therefore the meaning of volunteering differed between those who had a more liberal outlook and those who were conservative. Here we see Wuthnow’s (1981) dichotomy. Some believers are driven by a strong moral obligation that is transcendent and inward looking and others are focused on the earthly or social realm. Both, however, were underpinned by a religious understanding of ‘doing good to others’ which, of course,
could also be linked to secular moral motives and were evident in the many secular humanitarian agencies around the world. However, if religion and seeking to help others were taken out of the equation, could volunteering be viewed as largely an individual pursuit with social consequences forming little, if any, consideration in the decision to do so?

**Individualism and volunteering**

Describing volunteering broadly as a form of leisure, Stebbins and Graham (2004) argued that volunteers were motivated primarily by self-interest and were largely unaware of the social ramifications of their actions. Stebbins (2004) focused more specifically on this topic arguing that the French and Latin derivation of the word ‘volunteering’ meant non-coerced activity, as did the word ‘leisure’. He coined the term ‘leisure volunteering’ to capture the idea that volunteering was a satisfying, enjoyable experience undertaken because it offered pleasurable outcomes for the self-interested individual. Such volunteering could be serious, casual or project based. For example, as a serious activity it was:

> The systematic pursuit of an amateur, a hobbyist or a voluntary activity sufficiently substantial and interesting in nature for the participant to find a (non-work) career therein acquiring and expressing a combination of its special skills, knowledge and experience (Stebbins, 2004, p. 5).

This view of volunteering contrasts to the image of the volunteer as upheld by the social capital theorists. If it were purely a leisure activity it would undermine, to a degree, the social connection thesis so important for the revival of civic society. This
argument might also be difficult to sustain given that others have argued volunteering could be arduous and, at times, personally confronting and psychologically damaging, and this was not conducive to leisurely activity (Everly et al., 2008; Rath, 2008).

This was especially true when a volunteer’s skills were needed during catastrophic events, such as natural disasters. For example, Bartley (2007), a mental health worker, responded to a call for volunteers in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Bartley reported on the impact of this experience for her and a colleague:

...in the distance we saw several dump trucks unloading debris from the storm. This pile of trash went on as far as the eye could see. My colleague began to cry. She had never experienced people living in these conditions and understood this was the way they lived before the hurricane (Bartley, 2007, p. 9).

One of the main issues she faced while volunteering was the realisation of the unfairness of the redistribution of resources, and scenes like that highlighted a social situation of which she and her co-worker were previously unaware. Therefore, volunteering could be confronting, stressful and hard work, especially when undertaken in extremely difficult situations. The context in which volunteering took place was of great importance and, Wilson (2000) argued, it was little understood.
**Volunteering as personal development**

Despite debates on the nature of and motivations for volunteering, Putman (2000) made an important point that in many instances it provided opportunities for individuals to develop useful skills. Often people volunteered to gain employment and career advancement. According to Wilson (2000), such ‘rational action and cost-benefit analysis’ (p. 215) of the benefits of volunteering to the individual could not be overlooked. Often companies took advantage of the benefits of employees volunteering in local communities as part of their corporate social responsibility agenda (Gilder, Schuyt, & Breedijk, 2005). Although the leisure and rational action thesis focused on the benefit of volunteering to the individual and did little to uphold claims about accruing social capital, volunteering could be undertaken for selfish or self-interested reasons. For example, Bloom and Kilgore (2003) interviewed volunteers who were working with the poor after the welfare reforms in the USA, in a Community Development Organisation (CDO) called Beyond Welfare Inc. in Iowa. They found that ‘contrary to the common belief that volunteerism is, at its base altruistic’, a number of volunteers said ‘it’s selfish, in that I am doing it for myself, because I feel that need’, or they were doing it for ‘self development and for my own selfish sake ... I have a lot to learn and this is a very good vehicle to do that’ (Bloom & Kilgore, 2003, p. 437). Therefore, volunteering need not always be about helping others, or benefitting the community or society. Individual and self-interested motives could also lead to people ‘doing good deeds’.
**Other influences on volunteering**

Geographic location also seems to influence volunteer activity. The ABS (2006) found that in Australia, more people volunteered outside the capital cities (23%) than within them (19%). Little (1997) suggested that community expectations pressurised women from rural areas into voluntary work and unpaid caring roles, which served not only to benefit the community but also rural self-help initiatives addressing human, environmental and social needs in the absence of government provision.

Fyfe and Milligan (2003) found, as well as geographic location, local politics affected the rate of volunteering. For example, in Vancouver in the 1980s, at the height of the AIDS crisis, the gay community was forced to respond to the lack of state provision for this politically unpopular cause. Fyfe and Milligan (2003) also examined local authorities in Scotland to reveal less voluntary activity in left-wing local authorities with a commitment to public provision for the frail elderly. On the other hand right-wing conservative local authorities were more inclined to purchase care services from private and voluntary providers leading to increased volunteering activity.

Volunteering is a voluntary rather than a compulsory activity (Cordingley, 2000; VA, 2005) but in the past 10 to 12 years, mutual obligation forced welfare recipients to engage in ‘volunteer activity’ to fulfil their participation requirements and retain their welfare benefits (Centrelink, 2006; Parker & Fopp, 2004). Volunteering Australia’s concerns about negative impacts of this policy elicited a guarantee from the federal government in 1999 that welfare recipients would not be
coerced into volunteering against their will (Warburton & McDonald, 2002). Nevertheless, about 12,000 job seekers volunteered annually to fulfil their mutual obligation, providing at least 12 to 15 hours a week at various faith-based and nongovernment organisations (Warburton & McDonald, 2002).

Michaud’s (2004) study of Canadian volunteering found that when volunteering was compulsory (as part of Canada’s workfare welfare reforms) it became stigmatised. Most of the women (n=36) he interviewed willingly volunteered in community organisations concerned with women’s issues but would not do so under coercion. NGOs would be opposed to taking on people who had been forced into community service, especially politically motivated services, such as women’s organisations. Hence Michaud (2004) concluded that ‘compulsory volunteering’ would lead to a decline in volunteering.

The voluntary sector is a complex political territory, especially when faith is the main driver of volunteering activity and minorities are excluded because they are different. Therefore, as Australia becomes increasingly multicultural, is it feasible for government to rely on predominantly Christian FBOs and their volunteers to provide welfare services within a liberal secular democracy and will Christian FBOs always have a ready supply of volunteers?

**Will there always be a ready supply of Christian volunteers?**

While Australia is not officially a Christian Nation (Frame, 2006), ABS (2006a) data reveals that the majority of Australians are Christian (over 12.6m). As shown in
Table 3, non-Christian religions constitute only 1.1 million and 3.7 million have ‘no religion’ (ABS, 2006a).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>3881162</td>
<td>3718240</td>
<td>-4.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>5001624</td>
<td>5126884</td>
<td>+2.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>309205</td>
<td>316746</td>
<td>+2.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army</td>
<td>71423</td>
<td>64197</td>
<td>-10.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh Day Adventist</td>
<td>53844</td>
<td>55254</td>
<td>+2.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostal</td>
<td>194592</td>
<td>219685</td>
<td>+12.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Of Christ</td>
<td>61335</td>
<td>54814</td>
<td>-10.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brethren</td>
<td>19353</td>
<td>24228</td>
<td>+25.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>281578</td>
<td>340395</td>
<td>+20.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>357813</td>
<td>418749</td>
<td>+17.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinduism</td>
<td>95473</td>
<td>148124</td>
<td>+55.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>10327402</td>
<td>10487316</td>
<td>+1.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Membership of mainstream Christian religions is decreasing while fundamentalist and Pentecostal groups have seen a rapid growth in membership. Religious groups tend to focus on their congregations rather than wider secular society (Driedger, Currie, & Linden, 1983; Mock, 1992; Wuthnow, 2004).

A major supplier of welfare services, the Salvation Army, has had a loss of over 10% in affiliation. Were this figure to continue to decline, the organisation’s ability to recruit volunteers from within its ranks would be severely curtailed. This gives rise to the need for non-Christian religions to be funded for welfare services under the present contractual conditions, which raises several issues: Immigrant populations tend to exhibit more bonding than bridging capital, making them less likely to extend services to the wider community (Foley & Hoge, 2007; Warburton & Sterling, 2007). Also, non-Christian religions tend to play little, if any role, in
public debates except when controversial comments are picked up by the media (The
Australian, 2006). Though not the official religion of Australia, Christian beliefs
influence public life and Christian values cohere with Australian values (Frame,
2006). So how might non-Christian FBOs fare in the allocation of welfare resources?

Though there is little Australian research in this area, lessons might be drawn
from the USA, which is heavily influenced by Protestant Christianity, even though
there are more people professing to be Catholic (Maddox, 2005; Wuthnow, 2000).
While the legal sphere upholds the freedom of religious expression and practices
within the modern secular state, Wuthnow (2005) believes that increasing religious
diversity poses a ‘significant cultural challenge’ (p. xv). He sees religion as a form of
tacit knowledge through which individuals make sense of the world using the
common language of good and evil, salvation, God, and heaven. These theologically
meaningful concepts surpass particular religious denominations and are used in
social interaction with friends, colleges and media, for example. When faced with
religious and cultural diversity, long-held assumptions might be challenged and
particular interpretations rejected outright to maintain the moral order (Wuthnow,
2005). Though modern Western societies are largely secular, Christian values remain
strongly associated with the moral order, especially when it is threatened. Hence
Christianity is increasingly drawn into political debates and the policy-making
process, as happened during the Bush administration, when faith-based welfare
assumed prominence, but only 38% of the US population favoured government
support for non-Christian - Muslim and Buddhist - religions under Charitable
Choices, while 75% favoured the funding to - Christian - FBOs within the ‘cultural
mainstream’ (Bartkowski & Regis, 2003, p. 9).
In conclusion, this chapter has shown how faith-based social capital was placed centre stage in neoliberal discourse on social inclusion. It focused particularly on the role of Christian volunteers in reforming the morals of the poor. The chapter also highlighted underlying motives for volunteering. Despite the lack of Australian research on faith-based welfare provision, FBOs have been awarded contracts based on political beliefs and moral discourse about the virtues of faith in helping the poor.

This study examines faith-based provision in the Hunter Region of New South Wales. The next chapter discusses the research design and methodology. A mixed method approach was deemed best suited to achieving the overall aims and objectives of the study relating to the role of faith in voluntary faith-based welfare provision. To this end, the chapter discusses the recruitment of volunteers, managers and clients as participants, and the data collection and analysis processes.
Chapter 5: Methodology

Methodological choices shape research practices and affect research outcomes. This chapter maps the research design and explains the various decisions in relation to the selection of research objects, subjects and the gathering and analysis of data. This discussion proceeds in five areas: The importance of qualitative inquiry with managers and volunteers in FBOs is outlined first and links made to the ontological perspective and framework of the first stage of the research design. Secondly, the mixed methodology is discussed. Thirdly, the rationale for the selection of the particular site for the investigation and the target groups, as well as the data collection methods used, is presented. Fourthly, ethical issues are reviewed. The final section examines the process of data analysis leading to an understanding of the role of faith in the provision of faith-based services in the Hunter Region within the market state environment.

Researchers have sought to understand FBOs and their place in the community by examining, for example, their characteristics (Jeavons, 1997; Sider & Unruh, 2004) and differences in religious practices, networks and partnerships with secular agencies, including government (Monsma, 2002; Smith & Sosin, 2001). Bartkowski and Regis (2003) studied their cultural influence as did Wuthnow (2004a). Gibelman and Gelman (2003) studied the differing capacities of faith-based and secular NGO provision while Flanigan (2007) examined the impact of religious values on the democratic rights of clients. However, the most important aspect of research on FBOs is largely overlooked. As Cameron (2004) notes, ‘faith-based organisations can be asked about anything except what they believe’ (p. 147).
Researchers appear to avoid direct discussions about faith lest they cause offense. Since politicians and social commentators were placing a high value on faith as a solution to social ills, particularly poverty, it was deemed important to ask questions about the religious beliefs of faith-based providers and how this impacted on clients and the services they provided. As Cameron (2004) noted, their distinctive faith-based beliefs and practices must ‘be open to scrutiny’ (p. 147). Qualitative exploration was best suited to such investigation (Babbie, 2001). In-depth interviews were used to question participants about their faith and its benefits not only in their own lives as volunteers and managers but also about how they thought their faith might impact on their clients (Higgs, 2007; Holliday, 2002). It was thought that participants’ subjective experience would add to knowledge about ‘what lies beneath’ public observations of the sector (Haverkamp, Morrow, & Ponterotto, 2005, p. 124), thereby allowing for a deeper exploration of this topic under investigation.

The methods and techniques of qualitative inquiry are favoured in the social sciences (Fine, 1998; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005; Shaw, 1999; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Wengraf, 2001). Silverman (2006) argues, ‘outside the social science community quantitative methods rule the roost’ however health and medical researchers too are increasingly recognising the benefits of qualitative research to their own natural science disciplines (Allender, Cowburn, & Foster, 2006; Dixon-Woods & Fitzpatrick, 2001). Researchers who have sought to understand the faith-based sector and impact of religion and spirituality and morals and values on practice have successfully used qualitative methods to reach important and illuminating conclusions (for example, see Bartkowski & Regis, 2003; Canda, Nakashima, & Furman, 2004; Derezotes & Evans, 1995; Wuthnow, 2004a).
Qualitative inquiry rests on the belief that reality is socially constructed (Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Foster, 1982; Fraser, 2004). Participants are seen as social actors performing context-specific roles and functions embedded in the social fabric with which they are concerned. In this study, the social fabric comprised the relationships, beliefs and practices of volunteers and managers in FBOs. Religious and moral beliefs and faith and its traditions were also viewed as cultural manifestations (Jones, 2006; Weber, [1922], 1965) recorded in written texts, enacted through ritual and liturgy, all of which might be interpreted differently (Peter & Martin, 2007). Faith and morality dwell in the world of ideas. Their transcendent and subjective nature makes them amenable to study through narrative construction (Walker, 1998, 2003). In other words, they can best be understood through story. Qualitative enquiry explores these personal narratives and encourages participants to discuss their experiences, perceptions, knowledge, and opinions of the social events under investigation (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). It allows for exploration of participants’ backgrounds, how they came to faith, and the socio-political context that shapes their opinions (Peter & Martin, 2007). A narrative interview allows for flexibility while directing participants to answer questions relevant to the study. In this study, a semi-structured interview was used to explore the stories and narrative subsets in relation to faith and its importance in volunteers’ and managers’ roles in FBOs, allowing their voices to be heard (Bates, 2003).

**Epistemological framework of the study**

The study’s focus was about the experience and knowledge of volunteers and managers and the role of faith in faith-based service provision. Participants were
viewed as knowing subjects directly and immediately involved with the phenomena and practices under investigation (Denzin, 1989; Foster, 2007; Fraser, 2004; Webb, 1993). Cognisance of the researcher-participant relationship led to the use of respectful interviewing techniques to direct the interaction and researcher reflexivity to acknowledge participants’ experience, knowledge of and interest in the research process, thereby helping to break down the researcher-researched divide (Letherby, 2007; Tanesini, 1999; Walker, 1998; Webb, 1993). Participants’ knowledge opened up important areas of inquiry directly related to the aims and objectives of the study (Dey, 1999; Esin, 1997; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to uncover power relations in faith-based provision as it seeks to change and challenge the status quo and the dominant ideologies that led to the privileging of faith and morality in social inclusion policies. The study was influenced by researchers and commentators who sought to analyse the impact of neoliberal policy on poor and marginalised groups in society (e.g., Allen, 1999; Arendt, 1968; Bryson, 1991, 1992; Fraser, 1994, 2004; Fraser & Gordon, 1994; Giddens, 1971; Gilgun & Abrams, 2002; Gray & Webb, 2009; Habermas, 1979; Hachen JR, 2001; Hamilton & Maddison, 2007; Harvey, 1990; Mertens, 2007; Morrow & Brown, 1994; Pleasants, 2000; Saunders, 2005; Yeatman, 2000). A mixed methods approach provided access to the data needed to better understand the phenomenon under study.

**Identifying the participating organisations**

The first task was to identify the faith-based organisations within the Hunter Valley region from which the participants would be drawn. The region was constituted by 11 local Hunter councils, including: Cessnock, Lake Macquarie, Dungog, Newcastle,
Great Lakes, Maitland, Gloucester, Muswellbrook, Port Stephens, Singleton, and the Upper Hunter (see Figure 2).

![Figure 2: The 11 council areas of the Hunter Valley, NSW](image)

A set of selection criteria was then developed to identify organisations with the following characteristics:

1. Located within the Hunter Valley Region (see Figure 3).

2. A faith-based, nongovernmental entity providing welfare services, such as emergency relief or other types of material aid.

3. Main clientele of the entity was in receipt of a government benefit.

4. The entity provided or might provide a volunteer counselling or social support service.
Counselling services, such as Life Line, and specific faith-based centres addressing alcoholism and drug addiction were excluded because their client base was too broad for this study. Services could include clients from medium and high-income brackets. As this study sought to identify and explore the impact of faith in the provision of emergency service for clients living on low incomes, the broad client base of these types of counselling and support centres was deemed inappropriate.

An extensive search of databases on the Internet and in the Hunter telephone
directory enabled the ‘mapping’ (Fyfe & Milligan, 2003, p. 399) of highly visible and appropriate faith-based service providers in the Hunter. The main search engines used were Yahoo and Google. Due to the possible large number of responses to each search, a number of key search phrases, including ‘community services’, ‘welfare provision’, ‘emergency relief’, ‘faith-based organisations’, and ‘non-government services’ were used as filters to ensure the generation of manageable, but comprehensive results. The Internet also provided access to FBO websites and listings of their services. Results from the ‘web mining’ (Klopotek, 2003, p. 57) were cross-referenced with information gleaned from Hunter council sites and the Hunter phone directory. In this way, smaller less ‘visible’ FBOs operating in the Hunter were identified for inclusion in the study. Using the Internet and the telephone directory to locate FBOs had the added advantage of replicating the two most likely methods of access that would be used by those seeking welfare assistance, especially those without prior knowledge of services. While some might not have access to the Internet, in all probability most would have access to a telephone directory, if not a telephone. In addition, this process also allowed for an understanding of the level of availability of relevant information for potential users, such as the location and the type of welfare and social service provided by FBOs in the Hunter region.

However, this process had a number of drawbacks. Some FBOs provided a volunteer counselling service but this was not always apparent in their service promotions or database entries in phone books. A reliance on volunteers to provide a service meant that some services would at times be without provision and, at other times, might have any number of volunteers. The faith-based sector can be unstable, with providers and organisations appearing and disappearing almost overnight,
largely due to its dependence on funding from the government and private sectors (Engels, 2006). Consequently, some listings of FBOs in the phone book and on the Internet might have been out of date. Therefore, it was possible that not all FBOs operating in the Hunter Valley at the time of the research were included in the study’s database and it was just as likely that some listed at the time of the data collection would have closed or moved by the time the study was finished. However, with repeated cross-referencing this issue was minimised.

**Recruiting participants: Managers, volunteers and clients**

The study employed a mixed-method design to gather quantitative and qualitative data targeting three distinct groups of participants: (i) managers of Hunter FBOs (for an organisational perspective); (ii) volunteers working in Hunter FBOs (for a grassroots perspective); and (iii) their clients (for a FBO users’ perspective). The incorporation of three divergent target groups allowed differences in understanding to be ascertained as well as permitting these views to be contrasted and compared. The survey of volunteers and managers had three distinct aims. They were to:

1. Gain data from participants to inform the study.
2. Use the qualitative responses obtained from the surveys in the development of the questions for the follow up in-depth interviews.
3. Employ the survey as a participant recruitment tool for the in-depth interviews.

The in-depth interviews with the managers sought insight into their views about the role of FBOs in providing welfare, and their understanding of welfare reforms and
the impact of contractualism on the services provided. The in-depth interviews with
volunteers sought their views about their experiences and understanding of the role
of faith in interactions with welfare clients. The interviews also sought insight about
volunteers’ motivation for volunteering, how they interpreted the issues faced by
their clients and the extent to which faith could have a beneficial impact for
volunteers and clients and their issues.

The Client Assessment of Services Survey (CASS) was developed by a major
regional FBO which had an annual client base of between 3000 and 4000 depending
on the number of volunteers ‘employed’ at any given time. When the manager of the
FBO said that his organisation wanted to ascertain client views on service delivery,
he suggested the development and distribution of a client satisfaction survey, which
evolved into the CASS. The manager and researcher agreed that questions relating
directly to this study’s aims and objectives be incorporated into the survey. Thus this
client-based data collection tool was developed and provided another data stream for
the study. The CASS was distributed in June and July of 2007. While the CASS gave
the study a statistical component, data was gathered only from clients of one major
FBO (n=80). Therefore, the results were not representative of clients in the whole of
the Hunter region but rather a case study of the main regional centre. Even so, the
results from the CASS were very important as they helped to shed light on the issues
in question from those receiving assistance from a faith-based service. Client
responses were compared and contrasted with the data from the manager and
volunteer surveys and follow up in-depth interviews. It should also be stressed that
the volunteers who were on staff at the time of this study were not involved in the
first stage of the research process: they were a totally different group involving five
volunteers and one paid staff member. Therefore, the client assessments provided, from an analytical point of view, another layer of information about the service provision of a different set of faith-based volunteers.

As indicated above, the study targeted managers of FBOs in order to gain an organisational perspective relating to the role of faith in service provision and its importance to the organisation’s aims and objectives. It was also anticipated that managers might be more ‘politically’ aware than volunteers or clients of the problems and issues confronting the poor in light of welfare reform. On the other hand, volunteers were expected to provide a non-managerial perspective. Of critical importance for this study was their face-to-face contact with clients in distress, and this gave them an opportunity to express the benefits of faith to clients. As a group, they were distinct from more general types of volunteer, such as those who sort clothes for sale in a welfare store.

It was difficult to predict how many volunteers might complete the survey since the number of volunteers depended on the size of the organisation and some might work at more than one centre at any one time. Hence they were asked to fill in only one survey and make it specific to the centre in which they first received it. Only volunteers over the age of eighteen years were included in the target group.

**Ethical considerations**

The managers were the initial contacts for the first-round mail out and all the documentation was addressed to them. They alone decided whether their organisation participated in the study. If the manager decided not to involve their
organisation then access to volunteers would be denied. Even with this possible negative outcome, it was important to initiate the research in this way since contacting participants directly might have been against the wishes of their immediate supervisor. However, if there was agreement as to the involvement of the organisation, then each volunteer and manager could decide independently whether they wanted to participate further. The recruitment of volunteer staff involved the distribution of information packages and surveys by FBO managers who were asked to do this discretely by placing the information packages in their mailboxes or in a place where volunteers could access the information privately. This was consistent with ethical considerations and directives given by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC, 2005-2007). The process was internal and undertaken by the manager of each centre without any need for the researcher to be involved directly.

Prospective participants were fully informed about the research process via the information pack which was written in plain English, outlined the research aims and objectives and confidentiality safeguards, and emphasised the voluntary nature of participation, stressing that prospective participants would not incur any recriminations for non-involvement (see Appendix 1). They were also informed that if they completed a survey, and did not want any further involvement, they should not place any identifying marks on the form. Therefore, they could not and would not be contacted by the researcher for participation in the follow-up in-depth interviews. Hence this stage of the data collection was entirely anonymous.

Participants were invited to write their contact details on the last page of the
surveys to indicate their agreement and willingness to volunteer for follow-up in-depth interviews. If contact details were provided, the researcher telephoned them to explain the research design and also to stress that they could withdraw from the research at any time without fear of ramifications to themselves or their organisation. This was also reiterated at the commencement of the in-depth interviews so that they had another opportunity to consider their further involvement.

Where appropriate, all transcripts, surveys and other data were coded. Pseudonyms were used in the research discussion to protect the privacy and confidentiality of participants. No participant or centre was mentioned by name in the final research report and no details that could lead to the direct identification of any person or centre was used for any purpose throughout the research process. All participants involved in the in-depth interviews were given a transcript of their interview so that they could make changes, add comments or withdraw their transcripts if they no longer wished to be involved. All hard copy transcripts were shredded at the end of the research process.

All research participants had access to the researcher at all times via mobile phone and email, as well as the research supervisors and the ethics department of the university. If participants wanted to take up any issue regarding the research, they had the information required to do so in the information package. At no time during the recruitment or interview process did the researcher coerce or provide inducements to any person or organisation in the target groups (NHMRC, 2005-2007).
Data collection tools and processes

Surveys

The surveys for managers and volunteers contained questions seeking relevant personal details, such as age, gender and faith denomination, if any. These were followed by questions relating to the length of service at their particular organisation, qualifications held, if any, services their centres provided and how often they attended faith-based activities, if at all. This last question was important for indicating the participants’ level of religiosity. Those who attended these types of activities on a regular basis tended to have a strong affiliation with their faith and religion. Drawing on the ideas of Smith and Sosin (2001), who argued that agencies (and those working in them) were heavily influenced by their institutional environment (original emphasis) or the belief, norms, and cognitions that are apparent in other organisations, those who engaged in faith-based activities, such as regular church attendance, would in all probability have a stronger belief system than those who did not. This was particularly important if the church they attended funded the centre in which participants volunteered. Managers were also questioned about the amount of funding they received from different sources.

The statistical ‘part one’ of the surveys was followed by ‘part two’, which contained open-ended questions. These questions elicited behavioural and attitudinal responses. For example, volunteers were asked about the techniques they used when counselling clients, such as prayer or discussion of religion, which Jeavons (1997) referred to as spiritual technologies, or religious interventions. They were also asked how important faith was to them in their counselling practice. This allowed for data
to be collected which explored their practice techniques and underlying attitudes as to the importance of faith in their interactions with clients. The managers were asked questions relating to volunteer recruitment and the importance of faith in this process, including their attitude towards volunteers sharing their faith with clients. The manager surveys also incorporated a number of questions relating to the broader policy context in which FBOs were situated. This sought to highlight the managers’ knowledge of the broader structural environment faced by their clients (see Appendix 2 & 3).

As the concept of faith was incorporated into many of the questions on the survey and was the focus of the study, its definition was a primary consideration. The surveys sought to be as inclusive as possible so as to capture a diversity of participants from different faith affiliations who would understand and respond to the definition as being spiritually based, and interpret faith in reference to their personal religious beliefs (Halverson, 2003; Smith, 1991). ‘Faith’ was defined in the surveys as: ‘Being sure of what is hoped for and certain of what is not seen’. This was a purely metaphysical interpretation and, while it was drawn from a biblical passage in Hebrews 11.1 (taken from The Message, [Peterson] 2005), the foundations of other faiths were also based on hope and certainty in the unseen, it was potentially applicable to all who believed in a higher being or afterlife of some sort, devoid of any reference to a particular religion. Such a definition had two benefits. It allowed the inclusion of people working at a Christian FBO whose faith might have differed from mainstream Christianity and allowed for the inclusion of non-Christian religious organisations in the research project.
Survey design

From the outset, it needs to be noted that the surveys were not seeking to be representative of the population of Hunter FBOs as there was only a small number in the Hunter that met the selection criteria. As has already been foreshadowed, the survey design for managers and volunteers incorporated two distinct sections. Section one contained a small number of quantitative questions to generate characteristics of people working in the FBO sector. This allowed variables, such as age, gender, qualifications, length of service, and religious faith to be compared and cross referenced. The quick ‘tick’ responses in this section were also accompanied with a space for ‘other’ responses. There were also a limited number of questions requiring a written response of approximately one to three words. This data gave an insight into the sectors volunteers. The quantitative data was pre-coded allowing for easy entry into STATA, a commonly used statistics program.

Section two of the survey contained a number of open-ended questions where informants were given an A4 page to respond to each question. At the beginning of section two, they were guided by a covering statement about what was expected in completing the qualitative responses. The open-ended questions, on the manager and volunteer surveys sought behavioural and attitudinal responses. The questions were reviewed and revised by an academic in the psychology department at The University of Newcastle, who had experience in survey and question design. The feedback from this review was taken into consideration and the questions were revised accordingly.
The participants’ responses from the survey helped in developing the framework for the in-depth interview questions and the surveys for this part of the study served as the means to recruit participants for the interviews. Before implementing the surveys, a pilot survey was undertaken to test the instrument’s adequacy in terms of ease of understanding, bias and question construction. A major regional FBO agreed to run a pilot survey. The manager also reviewed the survey for FBO managers. A covering letter attached to the surveys outlined what a ‘pilot’ study entailed and the participants’ role in its completion. This included the significance of the pilot study for the wider research project. Participants were asked to give feedback on the survey design and objectives. The centre gave them three-weeks to complete the surveys. Once the piloted surveys had been returned and participants’ comments had been considered, the larger-scale survey mail out was instigated.

**Implementing the survey: Initial mailout**

An information package addressed to managers of 27 eligible FBOs in the Hunter contained:

1. A letter to the manager requesting their centre’s participation in the study.

2. A covering letter to the manager and volunteers explaining the research project and processes including the voluntary nature of the project.

3. A survey for the manager.

4. Four surveys for volunteers.
Pre-paid envelopes were coded to a particular centre on the database. When surveys were returned, the centre from where it originated was identified and marked off the database. This process applied to centres which did not, at the time of mailing, have any practising volunteer counsellors. These centres were asked to return all surveys and write ‘no volunteers’ on a self-addressed prepaid envelope before returning the entire package. This coding process was not used to identify the centre which returned surveys for analysis. Thus this process could not link centres to completed surveys. The returned envelopes were shredded. However, the coding system allowed for centres that did not return surveys in the first mail out to be contacted to confirm whether they had received them. If they consented to be involved, they were sent more surveys if requested. If they declined to be involved their details were taken off the database and they were not contacted again.

**In-depth interviews**

Contact was made with people who sought an interview. Their personal details were kept on a database until they were no longer needed. It was important to keep an accurate record of participants’ details so that if any clarification needed to be made about their interview they could be contacted. In consultation with the participant, a time and a place for an in-depth interview was arranged. If possible interviews were conducted at the FBO where they volunteered or worked, but if this were not an option, alternative arrangements were made. Two interviews were conducted at participants’ homes. At this stage of personal contact, it was again explained that participation was entirely voluntary and there was no obligation for further
involvement. If people changed their mind about participating, there would be no adverse outcomes from either the university or their organisation.

The in-depth interviews took between one and two hours and were spread across six months. The interview cycle and analysis process used a grounded theory approach to data gathering. Once an interview had taken place, an initial reading and analysis of the data was undertaken (Strauss & Corbin, 1967; Dey, 1999; Eaves, 2001). Main themes emerging during this process led to the development of further questioning, and at times to other topics which were important to the study’s aims and objectives. All the interviews were tape recorded and brief notes in the form of theme lists detailing important data in relation to the research topic were taken during the interview process. This provided another tool from which to glean data, but was also a safety net in case there were problems with the recording of the interview. Interviewees received transcripts of their interviews and could make changes if they wished.

The interviews were open-ended. The researcher attempted to create a comfortable environment in which participants could talk freely about their opinions and experiences. Following Hunter (2005), the researcher sought to develop a conversational relationship with the informant drawing on her experience of volunteering in a FBO. Self-disclosure of this experience enabled an opening dialogue to build trust between the researcher and participant and served to reassure participants that the researcher had an understanding of and empathy for their situation as volunteers. At the same time, it gave participants an insight into the world of the researcher. The final interview framework was semi-structured and
biographical, split into four main categories developed from the responses to the surveys:

1. Personal biography
   - Faith background including what you believe
   - Reason for volunteering
   - Importance of faith in relation to social action
   - Work history
   - Church membership
   - Social networks

2. Role of faith in life
   - Impact of faith on your life
   - Importance of faith to you
   - God’s direct impact in the world

3. Counselling practice and faith
   - Use of faith in counselling practice
   - Benefits of faith in counselling practice
   - God’s intercession in counselling practice

4. Faith and client issues
   - The benefits of faith to clients
• The impact of faith on poverty
• The benefits of faith on personal behaviour
• The impact of the secular world and policies on client issues
• The benefits of their services to client

A second set of questions relating to funding and its impact on FBO services was devised. Due to the open-ended nature of the interview, this was not an exhaustive list and further questions flowed from the interview process. This list served as a starting point to allow for flexibility in each individual interview. Some themes that were important to the understanding of the role of faith in faith-based provision were discussed fully while others that were of limited benefit were not.

**Client Assessment of Services Survey (CASS)**

The CASS was two A4 pages with quick circle responses (see Appendix 4). There were some qualitative response options so clients could elaborate on their experience of service provision. The assessment survey sought to elicit clients’ responses to religion and the material services provided at the centre. It comprised a different set of questions to enable quantitative and qualitative responses.

Two of the questions asked clients to rate their level of satisfaction with or benefits derived from the services provided. Question D required clients to tick a box from highly adequate to can’t decide. Question J asked them to rate the service from very satisfied to extremely dissatisfied. Consistency in responses to these items

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23 See Appendix 6 and 7 for preliminary interview questions for volunteers and managers.
was expected. This cross checking tool led to dissimilar responses to these questions being disregarded.

The CASS assumed that volunteers would use religion during emergency relief provision with welfare clients based on the manager’s feedback that emergency relief volunteers would be more inclined to use faith with clients than those providing social support. The volunteers and one paid member of staff at the main regional centre providing ER were briefed on the CASS in relation to the study and the services provided by them. They were assured that the information gathered was confidential and that none of the assessment forms, whether positive or negative, would or could be traced back to anyone. This was important for gathering quality data from clients who might feel threatened if they thought that service providers could be linked to their responses. Those who handed out the CASS to clients were given written directions about requesting client participation and informing them of their right to refuse to participate (see Appendix 5).

After undertaking a pilot of the CASS, it was updated and subsequently distributed to willing client participants at the end of each emergency relief session by the volunteer ER provider and the one paid member of staff who had interviewed them. Participants were directed to a small table outside the interview offices away from staff members. By taking this precaution, the FBO interviewer could not influence or see client responses. A firmly sealed box was placed in a discrete setting where clients could drop in the survey without having to give it directly to anyone who worked at the centre. The box could only be accessed by the researcher. The information gathered via the CASS could not be traced back to any of the centre’s
clients so as to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of the data.

**Contact details, storage of data and confidentiality**

The contact details of eligible FBOs were entered into an Excel spreadsheet. The data included the name of the centre, physical and email address, phone and fax numbers, services offered, and faith denomination, such as Baptist or Anglican. Confidentially was assured since the ‘contact details’ database was only accessible to the researcher thus the identity of the participant organisation was protected. The privacy of the participating organisations was important given that the stakeholders included the general public, their clients, government agencies, and organisational heads (Bartkowski & Regis, 2003; Engels, 2006; Sturgess, 2001; Wuthnow, 2004). Confidentiality assured participants that their relationship with these stakeholders would not be compromised. Confidentiality and privacy were protected at all stages of the study.

**Faith-based organisations in the Hunter Region**

Phone book and Internet searches produced a database of 27 FBOs in the Hunter Region matching the selection criteria. Of these, one had closed and another had amalgamated with a sister organisation, while two services had no volunteers at the time of the research. Follow-up phone calls to two FBOs initially selected for inclusion confirmed that a major FBO had terminated its volunteer counselling service due to a change in focus to government-contracted emergency relief provision. Another FBO was endeavouring to professionalise its counselling services so volunteers were no longer being recruited. The phone book and Internet search
highlighted the unstable nature of the FB[NGO] sector since, on follow up, many of the services included in the initial database had closed or changed the type of assistance offered. Consequently, 21 centres were finally selected for inclusion in the study. However, there were probably, more FBOs providing social support and welfare services without government funding which were excluded from existing databases. Many small providers were known only to people in their local area through church networks. Further, Catholic welfare provision offered through the St Vincent De Paul Society was undertaken through home visits after a client had visited a ‘Vinnie’s’ shop or contacted the society directly. For the purposes of this study, surveys could only be mailed to larger, more formal FBOs with a physical mailing address. No surveys were returned from any Catholic welfare organisation.

Surveys were mailed to 21 FBOs, 15 of which were returned: four from managers and 11 from volunteers. Due to there being no indication of just how many participants received a survey and, therefore, did or did not respond, estimation of a response rate is not possible. However, individuals who replied came from several religious denominations, including the Salvation Army, Anglican, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Baptist, Catholic, and Seventh Day Adventist, while two indicated they were Christian but did not mention a particular denomination. Even though there was a variety of Christian belief, including Catholic, all respondents were volunteers or managers in Protestant Christian organisations that dominated the faith-based sector in the Hunter Region.

Of the 11 volunteers who responded to the survey, four had formal counselling qualifications: one in financial counselling, another in pastoral
counselling, while the remaining two were working towards qualifications in relationship counselling. Five respondents had acquired professional or social skills through work experience. One of the respondents was a retired teacher, another a retired nurse, and another had a psychology degree. The average age of the volunteer respondents was 56 years. Eight were female and three were male. The average length of service was four years and the average number of weekly volunteer hours provided was ten.

The managers’ average age was 49 years. Three were male and one was female. One manager was a qualified financial counsellor and also volunteered one day a week. Three did not have any counselling qualifications, although one was seeking a layperson’s pastoral care qualification. The managers’ average length of service was five years. One was Anglican, two belonged to the Salvation Army and one was a Baptist. One manager and one volunteer worked in what could be regarded as a large FBO, with staff, both volunteer and paid, numbering between eight and ten at any one time. All the other participants came from smaller FBOs who relied on between two and five volunteers on a regular basis. Three managers and seven volunteers drawn from eight separate FBOs scattered throughout the Hunter Region agreed to participate in follow-up, in-depth interviews.

In addition to the mailed – volunteer and manager – survey (Stage 1), the Client Assessment of Services Survey (CASS) was distributed to clients of one major regional FBO during June\textsuperscript{24} and July 2007 (Stage 2). During this time, 613

\textsuperscript{24} Clients seeking assistance due to June long weekend storms were not involved in the research.
clients sought emergency relief assistance: 124 were given in-kind support (i.e., food over the counter) and 489 were interviewed by a paid member of staff and five volunteers working alternate days during the week. From this group, 80 assessment surveys were completed and returned, yielding a 16% response rate. The volunteers and staff member were not involved in Stage 1 of the research process (i.e., the mailed survey or in-depth interviews). Stage 2, therefore, yielded insight into the emergency relief assistance practices of a different group of faith-based volunteers (n=4) and a paid staff member (in total n=5).

Data analysis

Quantitative data

The quantitative data in the surveys and the CASS was analysed with the use of a Statistics Programme called STATA, which allowed for the generation of varied descriptive statistics and graphic representations of the quantitative data. The quantitative data provided useful statistical information and but most importantly, contributed to the robustness of the study’s findings.

Qualitative data

The qualitative data was analysed via thematic analysis which accommodated prior broad concepts informed by theory and the generation of new concepts provided by the grounded theory approach to data collection ((Dey, 1999; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Kohler Riessman, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Although the data collection process mirrored a grounded theory approach, particularly during the interview stage
of data collection, the data analysis deviated from it. When using grounded theory the data is deconstructed and then reassembled by the researcher. Core concepts are then selected, which at a minimum can be generated by single words and on which the analysis comes to rest (Dey, 1999; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Thematic analysis, on the other hand, seeks to keep the data largely intact. The main objective is to generate dominant stories, key themes, broad concepts, patterns of variation, and similarities and difference between cases. Data is compared and contrasted in larger chunks, as it were, that are reflective of participants’ knowledge and experiences rather than the researcher reconstructing the data to suit particular concepts that have entered through a large number of manipulations (Kohler Riessman, 2008). In this way participants’ expertise, knowledge and underlying world views were not lost by being reassembled by the researcher. Each data set was read for its own story; each one was then compared and contrasted providing a more contextualised framework of understanding.

Therefore the first stage of the qualitative data analysis involved each open-ended question in the volunteer surveys being read to identify stories that the role of faith played in motivating the volunteers to provide services to those in need, the role of faith in service provision, addressing client issues, and faith as a solution to poverty. Open-ended questions from manager surveys were also analysed in this way. From the analysis of this data, questions for the in-depth interviews were formulated.

Another important aspect of thematic analysis is that it is case-centred, this focus dovetailed to a degree with grounded theory data collection as information was gathered from each participant and analysed straight away. Each participant’s story
was read as a standalone document before it was compared and contrasted to other
data as the data set grew (see data collection process, Table 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Stage 3</th>
<th>Stage 4</th>
<th>Stage 5</th>
<th>Stage 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information Package Sent to targeted FBOs.</td>
<td>Analyse survey data and enter it into STATA and relational data bases</td>
<td>Initiate in-depths Interviews. Each data set analysed after each interview. Data entered into a relational data base</td>
<td>Continue interviews and distribute CASS to welfare clients at main regional centre</td>
<td>Analyse CASS data using statistical data base</td>
<td>Complete all data analysis and compare and contrast to formulate findings.</td>
</tr>
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Once all qualitative data was entered into a relational data base, including survey data, the main story lines were selected and grouped together under a conceptual heading. Broad concepts were then identified for the benefit of analysis. Once a large number of concepts had been identified as important, each one was compared which led to the emergence of themes. From these story lines and concepts, the main themes emerging from the data were analysed for their consistency and importance in relation to uncovering the role of faith in FBO service provision (Eaves, 2001; Kohler-Riessman, 2008). Hence the researcher analysed the data using the following questions as analysis tools:

1. What are the common themes contained in the data?
2. What are the main points in the data?
3. Are there any contradictions between themes and the main points?
4. What words are chosen by participants to explain such concepts as faith, poverty and morality?

5. Is there evidence of interpersonal relationships and interactions and what is their significance?

6. Are social structures important to the narrative? If so what is being said about them?

7. Are specific cultural norms being upheld or transgressed? If so how?

8. Is there evidence for broader understanding of the political and secular context in which organisations are situated? Or is there a tendency for focus to be mainly on the transcendent benefits of faith (adapted from Fraser, 2004).

At all times during the qualitative data analysis process, revision of all the data sets was undertaken, anomalies were considered in relation to the outcome of the main findings and incorporated as an exception or deviation from the main outcomes of the analysis.

**Combining the qualitative and the quantitative data**

The two sets of data were treated separately. The qualitative data was analysed with major findings and themes documented. The quantitative data from the surveys provided statistics including the gender and age of participants, number of years of volunteer and manager service respondents had provided to the FBO in which they worked. This allowed for a description of those who worked with the needy to be established. The statistical data from the CASS provided information as to how
clients of these same volunteers perceived the services provided by them. For example were clients satisfied with provision, if so, what did the qualitative data say about how volunteers said it was administered? Did the two data methods uphold or counteract each other where comparison of outcomes could be made? Overall, this rigorous data analysis process established a typology of faith practices within Hunter FBO provision that could be upheld as a holistic representation of Hunter FBOs, based extensively on the real-life experiences of all research participants.

**Trustworthiness and validity of the study**

To gain a valid and trustworthy understanding of the role of faith in the FBO welfare sector, it was important to develop the appropriate research tools to achieve this goal, as well as a well thought out research design being at all times cognisant of the two approaches being undertaken, that of statistical and qualitative collection of data. The three distinct data tools used in this study were designed and structured to draw out from the specific target groups the importance of faith, its use and relevance in the FBO sector, as well as clients’ feelings towards those driven by faith to provide services and its manifestation during client-volunteer interviews.

In line with a critical understanding of the topic under investigation, questions, particularly the qualitative in-depth interview questions, were constantly reviewed to make sure they were pertinent to the aims and objectives of the research. The qualitative data and emergent concepts and themes were reviewed constantly for credibility, i.e., did what the participants said make sense and was it trustworthy? For example, were the data from each story providing themes which where consistent with what other participants had said or did they differ and if they did to what
extent? (Babbie 2001). The volunteers’ faith was an important aspect of this study and understanding the degree of relevance their faith had on their interaction with clients was pertinent to the rigour of the study. Therefore, continual review of the in-depth questions as they developed during the data collection and analysis stages was also undertaken so that the study remained within its aims and objectives even as new avenues for investigation came into being.

To bring about statistical validity, the CASS was strengthened by the inclusion of an alternative question seeking the same line of enquiry thereby providing internal validity in relation to services rendered (Foddy, 1993). However, in relation to external validity for the study as a whole, and the extent to which the outcomes of this research can be extrapolated to make assumptions regarding the role of faith in FBOs in a broader context, such as on a national level, some caution is advised. The study has a regional focus and a much broader and larger research project would need to be undertaken to provide data that could be used to make assumptions as to the wider network of Australian FBO providers including those of a non-Christian background.

**Reliability**

The research design also took into account the reliability of the data-gathering process. The targeted populations were located through FBO centres listed on the Internet via online databases, phone directories and local council information. Any researcher could undertake this process with access to these resources. The only difference in the target population that might arise in future would be because of the
transient or temporary presence of centres and volunteers within the faith-based sector. However, as there has always been a strong FBO sector in Australia, there is little doubt of its future involvement in welfare provision employing both managers and volunteers of faith.

**Problems encountered, interview issues and further considerations**

One problem that might have had an adverse impact on the study arising from the first mail out was the interpretation of the word ‘counsellor’ by those working in the sector. The term counsellor for this study incorporated a broad definition, which included those supporting or ministering to people in need. Some managers might have misinterpreted the term ‘counsellor’ to include only those working towards a professional standard. Therefore, they might have thought their centre had no volunteer counsellors to participate in the research. However, this was rectified in the second mail out by an explanation of the broad interpretation of the word and in follow-up telephone calls to centres which had not replied to the initial mail out. The term counsellor in its broadest sense was explained to managers and volunteer participants at the commencement of each in-depth interview so that they had a clear understanding of what was meant by the use of the term. Once they had acknowledged that they understood its relevance and that the term held meaning as to what they did or the people they supervised the interviews commenced.

As noted previously, the researcher was personally acquainted with some of the interview participants. At the beginning of interviews with acquaintances, the personal relationship was acknowledged by both parties with the researcher also
acknowledging participants’ rights to hold views and beliefs that may or may not be held by the researcher. The researcher stressed to participants that it was their information that was important and that the researcher was there to gather data without recourse to judgement or condemnation of their views. It was also stressed that the act of providing an interview would have no detrimental impact on the personal relationship held between the researcher and the participant outside of the interview process. With these acknowledgements, it was hoped that these participants would be forthright in their responses. If knowing the participants had any adverse impact on the discussion or answers given by informants, such as they were hesitant to respond to a question, the researcher was ready to note down the question and why there was reluctance, however this did not happen as all respondents were happy to answer all question asked. Therefore, all interviews were conducted in a professional and friendly manner through conversational discourse with willing participants.

When undertaking research, careful consideration needs to be taken in relation to its impact on participants especially during the interview process (Hunter, 2005). The researcher sought to allay feelings of unease by using the model described above, taking into account the life experience, age, worldview, and educational level of participants so as not to make them feel uncomfortable and, therefore, inadvertently jeopardise the research outcomes. Also as one centre was experiencing tension between various members due to a change in management, the researcher became aware of her own feelings on this issue and was very careful not to let the situation affect the research outcomes. She remained cognisant of what could realistically be achieved within the limited timeframe and number of
questions. Allowance was made to accommodate, wherever possible, the busy lives of the research participants and their work schedules. However, participants were asked whether they minded the researcher contacting them by phone to ask follow-up questions for clarification, to which they all readily agreed. This contributed to making the research process and outcomes more robust. Also, the week in which the CASS was going to be handed out to clients, the Hunter region suffered a ‘natural disaster’ \(^{25}\) known colloquially as the Pasha Bulka Storm (Verdon-Kidd & Kiem, n.d). People who would not normally access the services of the FBO in the following days attended the centre. Therefore, after a discussion with the manager, it was agreed that these clients would not be included in the study. A staff member was employed and allocated to deal with the disaster clients, with volunteers and one paid member of staff operating as normal. Therefore, clients who were representative of people accessing the FBO for ER were not mixed up with the ‘one-off’ disaster clients.

**Conclusion**

This chapter described the epistemological framework of the study, which influenced the research design, methods and processes, and reflected an underlying acknowledgment of the many ways of knowing and gaining knowledge. This position was especially important due to the nature of the topic under investigation, namely, faith, which is a metaphysical concept, needing a creative approach to its understanding. However, the study was also guided by research protocols, which

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\(^{25}\) The Hunter region was declared a 'natural disaster area' after severe storms and flooding hit the Newcastle area over the June long weekend in 2007.

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sought to make the processes valid and reliable by working within social and political science research conventions and normative practices. Feminist concerns regarding ethics and the impact of power imbalances on the research participants, process and outcomes were also important.

The next two chapters focus on the findings and results of the study and provide an understanding of the role of faith in FBOs within a market-state environment. Chapter 6 highlights the importance of faith to those working or volunteering in the faith-based sector, its transformative properties and how faith is implicit rather than overt in service provision. Chapter 7 highlights the increasing complexity of client’s needs, limitations of service provision, budget constraints, and the perception that government views their services as ‘cheap welfare’.
Chapter 6: God is in the service

This chapter presents the study’s findings on the role of faith in faith-based service provision at 14 FBOs in the Hunter region from the perspective of managers, clients and volunteers. The key research questions related to the role of faith in faith-based services. The study sought to throw light on the benefits of faith at a time that favoured faith-based welfare within the neoliberal market state. The chapter begins with a discussion of the role which faith plays in FBOs as shown by the study’s findings. It examines this concept from the clients’ perspective and ends with a brief review of the policy of faith-based welfare as a solution to poverty.

Role of faith

Seven main findings on the role of faith in FBOs emerged from the study:

1. *Faith as pivotal:* Faith was deemed crucial to providing a compassionate, caring environment for volunteers and clients. Every attempt was made to convey acceptance and to respect the dignity and worth of clients. Hence most of the clients who responded to the Client Assessment of Services Survey (CASS) experienced FBO services as welcoming.

2. *Faith as transformative:* FBOs saw their services as transformative given the benefits of faith and the way in which it changes lives. Even if only one person came to know Jesus through their works, reminiscent of the
parable of the lost sheep\textsuperscript{26}, their efforts would be viewed as successful. Respondents did not emphasise the moral benefits of faith nor did they think about the client’s problem in moralistic terms though they attributed client difficulties to individual behaviour. Though not a complete solution to need, faith was seen to help clients who were coping with poverty, as God was viewed as being in control regardless of a person’s situation.

3. *Faith as implicit*: Even though the helping environment was steeped in faith and religion, overt expressions of faith or discussion of religion with clients were seen as inappropriate unless the client initiated such discussions. The language used to describe faith-based services was overtly religious with frequent references to the ‘philosophical work environment’, ‘God is love’, ‘two worlds perspective’ (meaning the religious and the secular), and ‘God is active in the world’.

4. *Faith as daily practice*: Though FBO managers said being a Christian was not a prerequisite to volunteer, daily Christian practices, such as prayer and asking God to intervene in people’s lives, would have made this an uncomfortable environment for non-Christians.

5. *Faith as service*: Most volunteers were motivated by faith to be of service – to do something worthwhile for others in the service of God.

\textsuperscript{26} Matthew 18: 12-14; also see Luke 12: 6-7.
6. *Faith as inherent moralism:* FBOs overwhelmingly viewed client problems as stemming from personal failings and behaviours arising from their lack of faith. These judgmental views were inconsistent with the organisations’ value systems and led to frustration among volunteers.

7. *Faith as a client need:* Since faith was seen as integral to human well-being, a lack of faith was seen to constitute a client need. Yet the majority of clients had not heard any religious messages and just over half said they would have felt comfortable hearing one.

**Faith as pivotal**

Faith was central to the way in which FBO volunteers and managers attempted to meet the immediate emotional and material needs of clients struggling with an array of issues. Volunteers and managers alike hoped that, by providing a welcoming, caring, compassionate, and Christian environment, clients might glimpse the Christian God by osmosis rather than through direct proselytising. Their focus was individualistic and there was a strong belief that, through coming to faith, people could change their lives and overcome their problems. Clients were viewed as equal in the eyes of God and deserving of care and compassion. On the whole clients acknowledged that they had been treated well. Volunteers were strongly motivated by faith and this set FBOs apart from secular agencies. However, they had limited knowledge of, and were not overly concerned with, broader welfare policy and its impacts on clients and service provision.

Faith was a central motivating force for all the respondents of this study. A
caring persona and ‘philosophical work environment’ was seen as pivotal by volunteers and clients alike. The maxim ‘God is love’ encapsulated the respondents’ Christian beliefs which led to an overriding acceptance of clients in need regardless of their circumstances. This was seen as God’s bidding and a response to the call to all Christians to help the earthly poor through an expression of neighbourly love. These charitable activities were seen as evidence that God was ‘active in the world’, a world in which the living Jesus transcended and affected the lives of believers and non-believers alike.

Just how important faith was in the lives of the participants was revealed by the survey data as all respondents engaged in some type of faith-based activity at least once a week, including church services, group Bible studies, prayer, and reading the Bible and other religious literature. For all, volunteering was a natural expression of their faith. One respondent described it as ‘hands-on Christianity’ (Volunteer interview 2), while another had ‘a sense of following the Bible’ (Volunteer interview 6). Engaging in faith-based activities like attending church created an awareness of the teachings of the social gospel, particularly the message of good Christian works. Sermons or talks in church often prompted people to turn to volunteering:

Our priest at that time talked to us about starting a ministry centre ... I decided that morning in church that whatever we did here that I would be a part of it (Volunteer interview 2).

Similarly, a manager revealed that he:
... became involved because of a series of sermons our pastor preached back in 1986, from the book of James. It talks about works of faith, saying that, if a person has faith, works will be a part of that ... If I have faith, then my works should be part of that but I don’t see works as earning brownie points OK, it’s not, do this then I will get more brownie points sort of thing, I mean, my salvation is wholly dependent on Christ, not on what I do, yep (Manager/volunteer interview 3).

**Faith as transformative**

Faith was viewed as transformative despite the fact that few emerged from poverty merely as a result of their faith-based activities. Nevertheless, faith was seen as beneficial for those in need since it helped them to face their difficulties and cope with poverty while reassuring them that God was in control. Respondents felt strongly that faith could provide peace to clients struggling with poverty, even though this would not necessarily provide a way out of it. Most respondents did not see faith as an immediate or even long-term solution to client need. However, though faith had turned some people’s lives around, incidents of complete personal transformation were rare. Faith merely helped people cope with their problems. With faith, clients were more able to accept their lot in life as they could rely on God to help them with life’s difficulties in an imperfect world. Faith could help clients overcome their drug and alcohol dependency and made ‘it easier for people to make choices between right and wrong’ (Volunteer survey 5). Clients could make better choices if they had faith, which would, in turn, impact positively on their life. Faith as an outpouring of God’s love, rather than judgment, was of the upmost importance.
Faith as implicit

Faith underpinned the ‘philosophical – caring and compassionate – work environment’ of FBOs. When asked about the difference between faith-based and secular organisations, all respondents felt that faith made the difference as it gave rise to genuine care and compassion: the provision of ‘hope’ and a strong ‘sense of unity’ within a Christian community, which they assumed secular organisations lacked. Although, two volunteers acknowledged that Christians might also work in secular organisations and display a Christian attitude within a non-Christian environment, they nevertheless would not have the same impact as they would in an FBO where faith flourished. There was a collective insistence that a shared faith-based approach was needed for a caring and compassionate environment to flourish and respondents felt happiest working among like-minded Christian people.

For some respondents, this sense of unity with other Christians led them to associate mainly with the larger Christian community away from their centre. Others stated that even though they had a variety of friends and colleagues, they also tended to associate with other Christians ‘most of the time’. However, two managers under contract to the government stated that having a Christian faith was not a requirement for volunteers at their centres. Although preference was given to Christians, others with a similar worldview, philosophy or demeanour might also be accepted:

No, they certainly don’t have to have a faith themselves; one certainly does not demand that. I guess when I am recruiting, I am looking to see people’s values and how they treat or respect other people, particularly those people
who some sections of the community would consider to be bludgers and it’s all their own fault ... I am hopeful that they are coming from a faith background themselves, particularly a Christian faith ... that they will have a love of mankind type philosophy and that would be in keeping with the centre’s philosophy (Manager interview 1).

Two people who are involved with the op shop (now working in the centre) ... they are well, both of them wouldn’t be practising Christians sort of thing, but by the same token that’s okay, we set the example and they know what our beliefs are and our tenets of belief (Manager interview 3).

Whatever happens here is a flow on from Church and the people that volunteer here for the most part see that as well ... Care for the people (Manager interview 2).

Nevertheless, Christian volunteers were preferred and at the time of the research there were no non-Christian volunteers in the FBOs included in the study. This situation highlights a type of gatekeeping process during the recruitment of volunteers, which may have been undertaken in a subtle way. It also highlights reasons why Christian churches were used as the main recruitment site and how FBOs as collectives were homogenous in their views and beliefs.

While volunteers from other faiths (non-Christian) might be welcomed, they would be restricted in discussing their faith with clients. Influencing clients to adopt a non-Christian faith would not be in keeping with the philosophy of the organisations studied: ‘But because it is a Christian organisation, I guess I’m
discouraging about sharing it ... If (their) faith (is) not the same as the organisation, it is not appropriate to share that faith’ (Manager interview 1).

There seemed to be little evidence to suggest that this situation would ever occur as managers, vetted prospective volunteers so as to maintain a Christian work environment either through a formal interview process or informally via a brief introduction at their particular centre. In the words of one manager, you have to be ‘choosey’ as to who you let in. Even though care was taken to ensure volunteers would uphold expectations of a caring attitude, another manager stated that ‘you don’t always get it right’. Here the role of the manager appeared crucial in upholding the philosophy of the centre. One volunteer, who thought the work environment was heavily influenced by the attitudes displayed by the manager of her centre, doubted that all faith-based organisations had the same caring ethos as the one in which she worked in that provided:

a whole environment of care, especially where I feel I am working now ... The people are really caring, and I don't think you get that anywhere... I was talking to someone recently that works with an 'organisation' in Sydney ... it might be because of the manager who has those values and it ripples down through to the others. But even other ‘organisation’ places, where they’ve worked in Sydney, they haven’t felt what they have felt here (Volunteer interview 7).

A key question of the study was whether volunteers openly discussed religion with clients. In this regard, the truism ‘action speaks louder than words’ aptly describes
the way in which respondents went about their voluntary work. Volunteers said they did not openly express their religious views or discuss religion with clients. Outward physical or verbal expression was seen as unnecessary, or, if clients did bring up religion, they often struggled to accept God as loving due to their situations: ‘They don’t understand why God does this ... Why does God allow this?’ (Volunteer interview 7) For this reason, demonstrating a loving God to clients was very important for the volunteers, dovetailing with the expectation that faith was shared by all who worked in the faith-based centres studied.

Respondents felt that faith could have a positive impact for many in the community who did not currently have a Christian faith. They told a number of stories of people they had heard about, and others with whom they had direct contact, finding faith. Those that relayed these stories believed that faith led people into a more positive lifestyle, away from errant behaviours, such as drinking, addictions or criminality. However, even with the strongly held belief that faith could change lives coupled with an individualist outlook on client issues, when it came to the articulation of faith to clients, managers and volunteers reported that they were hesitant to speak of their faith to clients unless the client requested or spoke of faith first. Nevertheless, it is clear that faith was of central importance in how respondents saw themselves and their contributions within their centres.

Managers, including the one in the FBO not contracted to the government, were united in their views about the role that expressions of faith (by counsellors) played in discussions with clients accessing services. For example:
We take the opportunity of speaking the gospel if the clients give us the opportunity. It is not like you have got to do so many Hail Marys or recite your Bible verses to get any assistance, that (assistance) is always based on the need the client presents ... they will make up their own mind about their spiritual welfare and all that sort of thing, we are not here to Bible bash people, but if the opportunity to present spiritual things comes up, we will talk to them (Manager interview 3).

St Francis of Assisi got a great saying, something like ‘go and tell as many people as you can about Jesus Christ even if you gotta use words’. So in our actions we would hope that people would see Christ, and that would be unreal (Manager interview 2 non-contracted).

I think primarily our actions should speak loudly about our faith, even though many people don’t understand it and may even interpret it or see that it is God in action, but certainly the actions should be representative of our faith, whether we talk about it or not (Manager interview 1).

This highlights yet again the importance placed on faith manifesting as action rather than overt moralisation. The term ‘Bible bashing’ was used derogatorily more than once during the interviews. It became clear that welfare relief and counselling assistance was not dependent on clients being exposed to a religious message. As one manager put it: ‘we should not thrust faith down a client’s neck because we have a captive audience’ (Manager survey 1). At one centre, the role of faith was so understated, that the manager remarked:
As far as our clients are concerned, some of them wouldn’t even know that we are part of the church except that we are right next door. I mean, if people ask us ‘are we part of the Baptist church?’ We always tell them ‘yes’ (Manager interview 3).

All managers and volunteers regarded the imposition of faith onto clients as inappropriate if clients did not ask or seek it. This view permeated the ethos of their centres. For most however, it was a personal preference not to do so:

I am not keen on packaging my belief system and imposing it on others, but I certainly don’t hide the fact that I am a Christian to the clients, but I don’t seek to impose. I try by example, and by my conduct, to show a Christian attitude, without coercing them in any way to accept my beliefs ... By their fruits you will know them (Volunteer interview 4).

Only one volunteer in a contracted service made reference to government as a possible reason why proselytising would be inappropriate. As she explained, she was unsure exactly what the parameters were in relation to it, but felt there must be something due to her centre being funded by the government: ‘We don’t have any guidelines, but I think the government has quite a bit to do... because they finance, they finance a lot of the welfare’ (Volunteer interview 1).

If there were guidelines in relation to the verbal expression of faith to clients, the managers were unaware of it. One manager gave a detailed analysis as to why imposing faith onto clients was inappropriate when in partnership with the government:
In view of the fact that these services are community social services, which are being paid for by the community via the government, then it is quite realistic that these services should be available to everyone and not just to those who agree or abide by the standards set by the philosophies of the FBO. If the organisation is government funded, but they oppose for example counselling in regard to pro-abortion or pro divorce or pro gay marriages, then they are not meeting their obligation to provide a counselling service to whosoever that may be seeking counselling in those areas. If it is self-funded, however, then I believe they should have a right to counsel in accordance with their faith and belief standards (Manager survey 2).

Therefore, the reluctance of imposing faith onto clients was strongly related to the perceptions that if they did, it could be construed by clients as Bible bashing and alienate the very people they seek to service as Christians. This would undermine what they were trying to do via social action. As one manager reported:

Well, um once upon a time I used to have to tell people about my faith but I found that um, you sort of just drive people away so now I would have to say that works is a vital part of my faith and I have found it is probably more effective in reaching out to people. It also says that faith without works is dead, so you have got to be able to follow your faith up with some good works (Manager interview 2).

I’m a Presbyterian elder, and the weakness of my faith is that I’m not prepared to proselytise to the extent that I want to make everyone believe exactly the same as me. I admire and support people who have such faith, it’s
not where I am ... I don’t see our sessions as an opportunity to teach Christianity but rather to give financial counselling as a Christian (Volunteer interview 4).

Therefore, there was an overwhelming reluctance to moralise or proselytise overtly. Even though managers and volunteers all held a strong belief system and believed in the benefits of faith. They did not want to be viewed as imposing their beliefs onto others but hoped that clients would just ‘pick up’ on the benefits by receiving help in a loving and caring environment. Clearly, faith was a strong motivating factor as to why volunteers and managers worked in an FBO.

**Faith as daily practice**

The creation of a caring environment, compassionate values and social consensus on the benefits of faith were transmitted through daily group prayer. This ensured that faith remained central and each worker ‘sang from the same hymn book’. Prayer also provided solace for some volunteers, especially when they felt out of their depth. Faith was important to their sense of need, especially when dealing with clients in difficult circumstances. So strong was respondents’ belief that they prayed in groups with other workers to ask for God’s guidance:

... we have a prayer session here every Monday morning ... that I really enjoy (Volunteer interview 4).

Because we can pray together talk about our Lord (together) offer help in the way of love and support and we are not afraid to cuddle people. Just loving,
caring and smiling and being happy they are all important things and I think we do them all here (Volunteer interview 2).

We pray that through our giving that they would see Christ (Manager interview 2).

They asked God to intervene directly on behalf of clients and sought His guidance to help them assist clients with complex issues. For example, a student counsellor said prayer comforted her when she felt totally out of her depth and faced with complex problems that she could not resolve. At such times, she prayed: ‘Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy’ (Volunteer interview, 7). She convinced herself that God would reach out to the client in a way that she was unable to do. At times, the complexity of the issues facing clients led to feelings of inadequacy: ‘I am really worried about that person and there’s nothing I can do for them at that point but just listen ... issues so huge, only so much you can do’ (Volunteer interview 7). Some of the issues she faced included suicidal clients and, in these circumstances, she was totally out of her depth.

All respondents highlighted the increasing complexity of client issues and the important role prayer played in helping them to cope from day to day. One counsellor said asking God to guide her prior to her meetings with clients bolstered her self-confidence and helped her overcome her feelings of inadequacy, especially when she did not know how to help:

I pray, everyday, before an interview, before a session I pray every day that the Holy Spirit will be with me, I don’t rely on my own say so ... So, I
suppose I can say there definitely is God in my works (Volunteer interview 3).

She admitted that she ‘hadn’t had much luck so far’. Another agency had told her that she wasn’t professional enough for their counselling program, compounding her feelings of inadequacy. As a consequence, she had had ‘suicidal thoughts ... and I thought … what’s the point of ministering to people when I can’t even minister to myself?’ (Volunteer interview 3) Stories like this suggest that volunteers were out of their depth and were sustained by faith and prayer as this provided the assurance that God was in control. These stories also highlight the plight of the poor as having very complex needs that in all probability need much more support than they are able to gain from FBOs but they have little option but to attend their services, even if they were less than adequate. Respondents, however, believed that through prayer they could discern what God willed for the client. They were confident that, ultimately, prayer would deliver the best outcome.

Respondents were guided by faith. For them, God was not a remote figure casting judgment on the world. Though not physically manifest, God was spiritually present. God was active, directing their interactions and responses to clients. Not only was He always looking over their shoulder, but He also made things happen. They viewed God as an active participant in the lives of believers and non-believers alike. He was a caring father who intervened in everyone’s life and this belief sustained them. God was helping and directing them and, in all probability, pleased with their efforts to help those in need. They were comforted by this knowledge. Their ‘two worlds’ perspective enabled them to focus on God’s will. God would
manifest Himself, not only through their work, but also in their day-to-day lives:

… I think, taken as a whole, [the Bible is] a message of love and reconciliation and I think that there is assurance that God is in control (Volunteer interview 4).

You can change people’s lives around, or God does, and we help (Volunteer interview 6).

Jesus ... I can feel Him walk in the door (Volunteer interview 2).

God [is] opening doors ... just seemed to me that was where God wanted me to be [a volunteer] (Volunteer interview 3).

God has opened doors (Volunteer interview 7).

Respondents were thus convinced that they were ‘doing God’s work’ and a number thought that God had personally directed them to volunteer. They believed that God was acting through them in their work with clients and that He could help them to overcome or cope with their problems. Ultimately, faith carried a message of hope conveyed to clients via care and compassion.

**Faith as service**

Recruitment of the faithful from churches was common, especially when volunteer numbers were low. One manager (interview 1) said the number of available volunteers came in ‘waves’ making it necessary, at times, to reach out into the church community to recruit volunteers. Some of the volunteers in this study
reported that: ‘They were calling for volunteers, so I decided I would help’ (Volunteer interview 6). However, the volunteers were not only recruited from churches. Some were students on placement and, while technically volunteers; they represented a slightly different category. Unlike most of the other volunteers, they were using their volunteer position as a way to gain employment and, therefore, some had no long-term plans to stay in their voluntary role. Also, they were motivated to a higher degree by personal gain, namely obtaining a qualification. Even so their faith was important and working in an FBO was viewed as beneficial since their beliefs resonated with those of their organisation. As one volunteer student said, her placement could have been anywhere but she believed that she was ‘fortunate’ to be doing her placement in an FBO, and that even if she found future employment she would continue to volunteer one day per week.

Their reasons for volunteering differed somewhat from one financial counsellor who had been very active in another area of faith-based administration before he took up a volunteer role. He chose financial counselling due to his belief that there had to be a ‘better way than just handing out money to try and resolve the issues of people on the bottom rung of society ... It is the work I believe in and I am happy to put my shoulder to the wheel’ (Volunteer interview 4). In his view emergency relief did little to change the lives of those in need. Therefore, he thought he could make a difference, he said he would have taken the position whether or not he was paid. However, he went on to express disappointment that he had failed to achieve his initial objective of significant change: ‘When I started I thought I was going to change the world but the welfare side is still there’ (Volunteer interview 4). Being a long-term and regular churchgoer, he went on to say that his volunteering
role was ‘not a direct result of my faith but I suppose it does affect everything you do’ (Volunteer interview 4).

None of the volunteers took up volunteering of their own volition. Their faith guided them in this direction, either directly or indirectly. Mostly, they had responded to messages about ‘the need for the faithful to contribute as volunteers’ or their faith had placed them in situations where they were amenable ‘to be of service’, e.g., they were studying to be counsellors or felt the call to minister to those in need or be involved in other areas of faith-based welfare provision. None of the volunteers suggested that they volunteered for political reasons. Regardless of why and how they entered volunteering, creating a caring and compassionate work environment for themselves and their clients, reflected their belief in Jesus and his love for humankind and was very important to them. This was a major theme. It was an important reason why they kept coming back every week. Volunteering provide them with a social outlet where they could meet with like-minded people and gave them a sense of solidarity, a shared mission and a way in which they could live out their spiritual beliefs in the earthly realm. Hence faith was a strong factor in volunteer motivation even though only one volunteer, who was directly involved in the ministry, explicitly made this link:

I believe God chose me for the ministry and counselling course ... I believe he directed me to work in this institution ... I believe it is an outlet for my very strong faith and compassionate personality (Volunteer survey 7).
Most respondents saw themselves as ‘giving something – love – back’ in ‘gratitude for a good life’. They felt that being part of a Christian community was their reward for helping others or *vice versa*. The sense that they could help others gave them a feeling of personal well-being, satisfaction and enjoyment.

Volunteering also enabled them to apply their skills and gain further qualifications. Hence respondents’ motives were personal, religious, and altruistic. A manager of a major faith-based welfare centre stated that most counsellors at his organisation were, in fact, people … studying counselling and either want to put their knowledge into practice, or need to do a placement (Manager survey 2). Once their placement came to an end, they hoped to provide counselling services in another arena. One student counsellor did not know where she would ‘end up’, preferring a paid position in another FBO to her voluntary one. Another stated: ‘It’s a very hard industry to get into if you don't have the experience and I was just very fortunate to get the placement’ (Volunteer interview 10).

For many younger respondents, working in an FBO was a transitory experience that provided a way in which they could gain the much-needed experience they required to pursue their careers. For the older respondents, who had retired from the mainstream labour market, voluntary work enabled them to use their skills and life experience to benefit of others. ‘Finding something to do’ was important to them: ‘What else would I do if I wasn't going in on a Tuesday?’ (Volunteer interview 3). A number of respondents also had volunteer connections outside of their church activities. For example, one belonged to his local state emergency services (SES), one to her local band that played at concerts for the
elderly, and another worked at the local community op-shop. These volunteers were socially active and had strong community ties.

The volunteers’ place of work provided them with a social outlet where they could mix with like-minded people, especially their fellow volunteers and workers in FBOs. They expressed caution about letting people in who would cause ‘disunity’. Respondents felt that it was very important for the organisation to manifest Christian faith or ‘love of humankind’ in actions taken and in relationships with fellow staff members and towards clients. As one manager stated:

I think, for the organisation, it [faith] is probably the real crux of why the organisation exists. It is because of their faith and their belief that man is created by God and to our service to man is also a service to God. So I think for the organisation if it wasn’t for the faith, the rest of the organisation wouldn’t exist. Because it’s very much biblical based. The social arm, it comes from the faith (Manager interview 1).

All respondents referred to following Jesus, doing what Jesus wants, being Jesus ‘with skin on’, and manifesting a ‘Christ-like persona’ through the love and care of each other and clients. In particular, they hoped that clients might see Christ in them as they provided assistance and, as a result, see the benefits of faith to fill the emptiness in their lives. As one volunteer commented, ‘God is in the service’. The hope that clients would recognise faith as the main underlying reason for the service was consistent with Liberal-Coalition government policy but respondents did not make this connection. Instead, they hoped that their actions would be conveyed as a
demonstration of God’s love and that clients would get more than their basic needs met by recognising the transformative power of God’s love.

**Faith as inherent moralism**

Respondents viewed client problems as personal failings, including their tendency to overspend their benefit payments, and addiction to drugs and/or alcohol. A volunteer financial counsellor alluded to client ‘mistakes’, such as signing up for Foxtel or buying a car they could not afford. One respondent stated that many of the volunteers at her centre were on the age pension and could manage on their benefits so ‘why couldn’t they’. These attitudes were infused with moral judgments about clients and suggested that there was a barrier separating those who helped from those who needed help: the moral from the immoral. Even though respondents referred to their centres being there to connect with the community, there were no firm social connections beyond the FBO though some volunteers had invited clients to attend mothers’ groups or church services. Also, since respondents attributed client need mainly to personal behaviours, they were reluctant to see small budgets and limited resources given to those whom they viewed as contributing to their own problems. Therefore, they saw resources as wasted on those deemed less deserving:

I have seen people come in here for a food parcel and then you see them on (the street) five minutes after buying a packet of smokes or they go straight up to the club and put money through the poker machines (Volunteer interview 5).
They have spent all their money on other things that they shouldn’t have spent it on (Volunteer interview 6).

They blame everybody else but themselves ... skewed values (Volunteer interview 7).

They might tell you a story but it is nowhere near the truth (Volunteer interview 2).

Respondents’ stereotypical assumptions and distrust of the poor were consistent with the political rhetoric of conservative governments. There is little doubt that a strong moral undertone within the provision of faith-based assistance exists and at times is directly felt by clients during provision. Their narratives on client behaviour mirrored that of the Howard government and general public. They were very judgmental and highlighted the volunteers’ perceptions that some, if not all clients, contributed to their own impoverishment and need for assistance. There was nevertheless a tension in faith-based service provision. On the surface, volunteers tried to help in a caring and compassionate manner by showing the love of God to all in need. However, on deeper reflection, their views of the poor were no different from those on the right of the religious and moral political debate on poverty. As one manager stated, ‘we are only human’, by which he meant that it was natural to judge a person’s situation. In short, FBOs were highly moralistic communities even though faith and the tangible, omnipresence of God led to discernment and curtailed judgmental attitudes towards clients:
Because I sort of knew that there were things that they were saying here that weren’t quite true ... so it took me a while to accept that. Once I did, once I had this message from the Lord saying to me you know, ‘this can’t be, you can’t be judging’ um, I just settled here. So now I am happy to discuss or talk or help with whoever comes in now (Volunteer interview 2).

Most respondents tried to be accepting and tolerant and most felt comfortable with clients. However, one male financial counsellor stated that he was uncomfortable with scantily clad women (Volunteer interview 4) and another had issues with clients who could not speak fluent English (Volunteer survey 1). However, there was no overt moralising in discussions during the interviews relating to single parents, welfare dependents or the long-term unemployed. This is not to suggest that respondents were not frustrated, at times, with client behaviour. Some wanted to intercede in client affairs and take over their finances or to point out that their behaviour was causing their dire situation. Some felt exasperated: ‘I couldn’t do this every day’ (Volunteer interview 1). One found her role ‘very stressful’ (Volunteer interview 7). As frustrating as they could be, respondents tried to show a loving, caring and compassionate persona to clients: ‘love of the people who come in here week after week’, ‘faith helps me love everybody’, ‘acceptance’, ‘everybody is equal’, and ‘[I am able to show] God’s love of humankind’. Even so, the provision of services was closely aligned to an individualised perspective on need, which sat neatly within the expectations and policy direction of the Howard government.
**Faith as a client need**

Over half of the ER clients (42 or 53%) indicated that they would not have minded if religion were mentioned during assistance (see Figure 4). One client said ‘I would not have minded because I am a Christian’. Alternatively, one volunteer thought that people only sought help via prayer or the support of religion when they got into difficulties (Volunteer interview 1). This tends to suggest that clients sought help in a spiritual sense, as a way of dealing with their issues but did not ask for this type of assistance when seeking emergency relief (82% did not hear a religious message). At the same time, even though volunteers might have a willing audience to the message of faith, at least half of the time, there was a generalised reluctance to speak about faith to clients. However, even with a reluctance to push faith onto clients, it was hoped by all, especially the managers, that clients would present the opportunity for the gospel to be spread. This was a very important qualification in regards to religion being mentioned. Clients’ immediate needs came first and, if clients were searching for a religious message then access to it would be as easy as asking ‘but sometimes you know the door will open for us to actually talk about our faith, well then we will’ (Manager interview 2), ‘if the opportunity to present spiritual things comes up, we will talk about them you know’ (Manager interview 3) and ‘they might ask questions about the Bible, they often do that. They sort of say you know, I have found this, can you help me with it. People come back, they are searching’ (Volunteer interview 3).
Another thought that it was a personal issue, one to be explored and initiated by the client: ‘That’s not for us to decide, you know, they (the clients) will make up their own mind about their spiritual welfare and all that sort of thing’ (Manager interview 3). Even though there was reluctance to speak to clients about faith if not asked by a client directly, both volunteers and managers felt that if clients adopted a personal faith it would help them gain an understanding as to why they were facing difficulties: ‘If you practice faith then life will fall into place much better. Doesn’t mean we don’t have struggles but the struggles start to make a bit of sense, life has its ups and downs’ (Manager interview 1). The importance of faith in relation to clients was placed on finding God’s ‘peace and love’: in other words accepting their circumstances while placing their belief in God’s will and the peace that it brings.

Instead of earthly problems being lifted, clients who found faith would have the ability to comply with God’s will. In so doing, they would be more likely to change their behaviour and be better able to live within their limited budgets. The
respondents believed that this morally infused aspect of faith was very important for those struggling with poverty:

… once they have got a faith they can overcome the demons that are causing them to do that and turn their lives around, and so they will discover that they then have got more money, so yes it does help them out of the poverty cycle (Volunteer interview 6).

If the claims of the respondents were true, that faith could provide a way for clients to find peace and in exceptional circumstances lift some out of poverty, then this aspect of faith-based provision was not being fully used. If this were an option that clients were looking for in faith-based services, as over half would not have minded if they heard a religious message, then this type of support would be largely lost due to the reluctance of volunteers and managers being seen as ‘bible bashers’. Clients’ not asking about faith and the hesitance of volunteers and managers to articulate faith unless requested contributes to its non-verbalisation. This hesitancy, however, fails to put how they deliver services at odds with the perception of Howard Coalition government. As discussed above, FBOs are very moral environments. Therefore whether they do or do not verbalise faith, just the process of accessing an FBO for assistance delivers clients into highly moral environments. As respondents sought to highlight care and compassion, this aspect of their provision and how it fit into the broader policy context tended to be downplayed. However, most volunteers had little knowledge of the welfare reforms as their focus was on helping clients with their immediate needs. For those respondents who had some knowledge of the
broader social welfare context, tension arose as to the fairness of policy for clients and for their own services.

**Clients’ perspective: Keeping the customer satisfied**

The Client Assessment of Services Survey conducted at one regional FBO revealed that clients accessing emergency relief felt welcome (n=58), supported (n=10) and understood (n=18). Only two respondents felt judged by a volunteer27 (see Figure 5). In regards to negative client experiences, one manager acknowledged that the ‘actual quality in the delivery of services … can vary enormously depending on the outworking of faith of the individual staff or volunteer member’ (Manager survey 2).

Figure 5 indicates that there were times when volunteers had not lived up to expectation and clients had been treated in a negative way. However, this seemed to be the exception rather than the rule. But caution must also be applied here, as some might have been denied adequate assistance and, as a result, might not have filled out the assessment surveys. This is not to suggest that the denial of assistance was poorly handled but merely that those who did receive assistance might have been more likely to provide positive feedback. This was confirmed by contrasting these results with the responses given by clients as they waited for assistance. Even though the majority of clients were hopeful, some felt desperate (n=10); ashamed (n=13), depressed (n=5), and apprehensive (n=7) (see Figure 6 below) but, once seen by a volunteer, their outlook seemed to improve.

27 The volunteers providing services to the ER clients were a different set of volunteers and did not participate in the data collection process.
Clients’ highlighted the positive nature of their ER experience: I was treated with respect and compassion and encouraged through my trials; when I needed food and clothes and shelter you were there; I was extremely happy with interview. It was non-judgmental, non-invasive, and dignified. Thank you very much for your help in my time of need. It is very much appreciated. I feel very much relieved; I don’t know how I would get through without the ability to access this [wonderful] service; and I was taken in trust and self-value which is pleasing to me as I believe in honesty.
Overall, these results supported respondents’ claims regarding their caring environment. The CASS also showed that 82% did not hear a religious message while seeking assistance (see Table 5). This faith-based centre had a large clientele and was open five days a week for six hours a day. This centre was also contracted to the government to provide emergency relief assistance.

| Table 5: Clients who did not hear a religious message during ER assistance |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------|
| No response | Male or Female not recorded | Male | Female | Total |
| No | 5 (8%) | 26 (44%) | 28 (47%) | 59 |
| Yes | 2 (15%) | 6 (46%) | 5 (38%) | 13 |
| No response | 4 (50%) | 2 (25%) | 2 (25%) | 8 |
| Total | 11 (100%) | 34 (100%) | 35 (100%) | 80 |

The interviews with volunteers revealed when clients deemed that it was appropriate for counsellors to speak about faith:

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28 There were a total of 106 responses with 26 individuals offering multiple responses.
We don’t usually approach people, but quite a few of them will say ‘will you pray for my family and this and that’ (Volunteer interview 1)

It is not appropriate unless the client instigates it (Volunteer interview 7)

I only talk (about faith) to those who want to hear the word of God (Volunteer interview 5).

No, I didn’t (when asked if faith was mentioned to a particular client during a counselling session), because it wasn’t appropriate I thought, but given the circumstances, had he been a believer, you know that would have been appropriate (Volunteer interview 3).

Even though all believed in the benefits of the Christian faith, these comments highlighted a personal reluctance to impose personal beliefs onto others unless the client sought it. As such, religious and moral messages were not automatically passed onto clients.

**Policy and poverty**

Secular concerns relating to the impact of government policy on clients, particularly the welfare-to-work reforms being introduced within the faith-charged environment, seemed to take a backseat in FBOs. Most of the volunteers answered ‘no’ when asked if they knew about them. This did not mean that all volunteers had no idea about the problems faced by clients arising from the reforms. One financial counsellor expressed his view on the requirements clients had to meet to keep their benefits:
I feel the whole system has a long way to go to be really equitable. While I don’t see many that have been breached we see dozens and dozens that have got several debts. And the business of reporting income all the time or reporting circumstances, is part of the mutual obligation, it really causes people a great deal of angst and pain and problems. I don’t know what a perfect system would be but each time you move in one direction to solve one issue you seem to create another issue. I mean the baby bonus is terrific if you’re having a baby and you get that money but then some of the kids see it as an incentive to have a baby, which is not the purpose of it at all. How can you reward the one not the other. So a lot of these things are great in theory but they have a side effect and it’s the least able of the community, well the least vocal and the least articulate that are most severely penalised (Volunteer interview 4).

On further questioning, only one other volunteer (Volunteer interview 1) had some knowledge of the reforms in that she had come across clients who had faced a breach of their benefits. However, most had no clear idea of what the welfare reforms entailed or their impact on clients. To a degree this highlighted a disengagement from political concerns though one volunteer believed the breakdown of family life being faced by most of her clients was rooted in the rift between Adam and God:

Adam being disconnected from his father, as in God. That’s the pattern, that’s where it started and then you know, you just see the cycle going on all through the Bible and then now in our society you see it going on and it’s just
getting worse and worse and worse. I mean it’s a very dismal outcome, very negative and hopeless and all that sort of thing (Volunteer interview 7).

Most of the volunteers were well acquainted with (recognised) the non-religious issues that impacted on the poor as they often became relevant during face-to-face consultations. Managers were much more aware of the welfare reforms and the increasing harshness of the breaching system. Even so, there was a resignation from one that they would have to work around it, even though it placed stress on their budget:

Yes there is an increase (in breaching) because a couple of years back there wasn’t any. Why they (the clients) have no income is not the main issue. We determine what their need is then we meet that need ... probably don’t concentrate on that sort of thing. However, clients having no income is a real burden for us. You cannot live in this society without cash. There is greater pressure on us to provide something and provide it on a regular basis. This is a dilemma we are faced with (crisis assistance versus regular support) coming up more and more with breaching because that is just another aspect of cutting people’s income off (Manager interview 1).

It does happen (breaching). Every second person who was coming in was breached by Centrelink ... every man and his dog was getting breached (Manager interview 2).

Due to pressure to provide ER for those who have been breached, another manager was much more political in his response to this policy and refused to see anyone who
had incurred an eight-week breach. Because Centrelink had imposed the breach, he let his local Centrelink office know: ‘the reason why we don't see them is because we have told Centrelink that we will not accept them as a client. They are Centrelink’s problem’ (Manager interview 3).

Managers were aware of the fiscal impact that the breaching policy had on their services and on their clients. They were well aware of the harshness of the policy. However, in dealing with it, they confined their actions to their own centres by trying to help clients either in a small way each week or by cutting them off from service provision altogether, something they did not like to do. In this situation their clients suffered as they stood to lose all or some of their government benefit and receive very limited access to resources from FBOs on a regular basis. The worst case for clients was the loss of all state income and for FBOs to refuse assistance on an ongoing basis, as they could not afford to help in any substantial way. Agency budgets needed to be protected. Those who were breached placed too much strain on their services. However, the threat of contracts being withdrawn might have also played a role in managers’ policy negotiations over the impact of budget cuts on their centres. At such times, they went into ‘damage control’ mode. Few were proactively engaged in policy change. Manager 3, the most vocal in his opposition to government policy (who took the drastic action of cutting off breached clients from his services), stated that he would not hesitate in taking someone on at a political level if he felt something was not fair. However, he also stated:

What is happening with the charities, particularly the ones who are getting involved in these government contracts, they (the government) are now
saying to people, look this is what you have to do and if you don’t do that well then we can’t assist you (with funding) (Interview manager 3).

As he was also under contract to provide emergency relief assistance, his lack of political involvement in regards to the policy at a higher level other than his local Centrelink office could have been linked to his knowledge of the Federal government’s threat to deny contracts for his service in the next funding round. He was well aware of the tendency of government to provide funding to other organisations in his area that had ‘set up’. In regards to policy reforms, and trying to provide a caring and compassionate environment to meet needs of the poor, FBOs seemed to be in a difficult position, especially when confronted by those who had been directly targeted by the welfare reforms.

Conclusion

The most important aspect of faith-based provision involved doing God’s bidding and looking after those in need with a caring and Christian attitude. Although faith was not overtly pushed onto clients, it was an undercurrent of service provision pulling volunteers and managers into what they felt was a stronger relationship with their God. For them, serving the poor was their right as part of their Christian tradition:

In Bible times, it was the church who looked after widows and the poor but government came in and took over. They have found that they haven’t done a very good job or it's using up too much of their money so now they are
sending them back to us. We are doing what Jesus tells us to do (Manager interview 2).

Our whole philosophy is that Christ died and God’s love of mankind. Therefore, welfare is not just for humanitarian reasons. We are doing it out of our Christian faith (Manager interview 1).

Therefore, the faithful were doing what they had always done, providing care and support for the less fortunate.

During the period of the Howard Coalition government, FBOs were looked upon as particularly beneficial to the poor, largely due to their faith-based morality, which, it was hoped, would be passed to the poor. As the above evidence suggests, the overt expression of faith or religion did not happen without client consent. Therefore, as the study highlights, most clients were made aware of the benefits of a belief in God even though religion was not forced upon them. However, the clients who accessed faith services during the time of the study entered a conservative and morally infused environment. Instead of faith being overt, and scaring people away, it was hoped that the benefits of faith would manifest via the actions of the workers who strove to provide a caring and compassionate environment where clients could catch a glimpse of God. Unlike the political rhetoric about faith as a solution to poverty, the participants saw it predominantly as a way for clients to deal with or live within their means.

As faith provided a strong undercurrent for the provision of services to the poor, did it mask the ‘poverty of provision’ to clients? The next chapter highlights
findings relating to the increase in the complexity of client issues, particularly the high incidence of mental illness in the community, the lack of resources, the impact of limited funding, and what was perceived to be needed by managers and volunteers to better meet the needs of their clients. It also explores the perceptions of research participants as to why the Howard Coalition government was seeking to increase the role of FBOs in meeting the needs of the poor within a contractual policy environment.
Chapter 7: Limited resources and ‘cheap welfare’

A number of key themes emerged concerning how clients and their needs were perceived by volunteers working in resource-strapped faith-based organisations. These included the recognition that:

1. Clients approached the organisations at times of crisis for emergency short-term assistance and usually had longstanding social and economic problems requiring long-term counselling and support.

2. Clients’ issues were increasingly complex compounded by mental illness, unaffordable rents, threats of homelessness, and the danger of losing welfare benefits.

3. Faith-based organisations were attempting to make do with less in the face of severe budgetary and human resource constraints, which volunteers alleviated to some extent, but the stressful conditions made the retention of ‘staff’ extremely difficult.

4. The contractual environment made it difficult for FBOs to engage in long-term planning to maximise resources yet, ironically, the perception of FBOs as sources of ‘cheap welfare’ led to a focus on economic efficiency within a value-charged faith-based environment. In this ‘God space’ of ‘poverty provision’ many staff within FBOs felt that their agency was ‘running on empty’.
These themes capture well the complex dynamics within which the volunteer staff of FBOs worked. In these stressful conditions, faith was often a means of strength and survival for clients and volunteers.

This chapter examines how FBOs have fared in the face of welfare reform austerity measures while attempting to assist clients with increasingly complex needs. Some of the details about the challenges confronting FBO volunteers will be discussed in this chapter. The overall finding is that, largely under-resourced and dependent on volunteers doing what they could in the service of God, FBOs could do little more than provide emergency assistance to stave off homelessness and family breakdown. The increased cost of living, rising rentals and frustrations with navigating Centrelink regulations, provided additional stresses for FBO volunteers.

**Increasing complexity of clients’ issues**

A number of complex issues were raised by participants relating to the needs and problems faced by clients in their everyday lives. They spoke of a lack of local youth and family support services, low-skilled jobs and affordable accommodation. Cash-strapped clients with mental health, addiction and family problems, were often faced with threats of eviction, and found it extremely difficult to find employment. Hence in light of these complex issues, it was no surprise to find that there was ‘only so much that could be done’ (Volunteer interview 4). Drawing on the views of the volunteers, a number of key areas will be explored, such as mental health, rental issues, and income management.
Managers and volunteer counsellors commented on the overwhelming number of clients presenting with feelings of hopelessness and suicidal thoughts. Many suffered from depression, loneliness and social isolation, low self-esteem, and severe financial problems. Some were suffering from severe mental illnesses, such as chronic schizophrenia. For many volunteers there was a general feeling that their clients were on the bottom rung of society, forgotten and abandoned with little opportunity for self-improvement. The paucity of unskilled jobs and failed attempts to secure paid work left many clients feeling demoralised: ‘Welfare just destroys people’ (Manager interview 1). Volunteers attempted to help by showing loving care and praying that clients might catch ‘a glimpse of God’ and see the benefits of faith: ‘faith often helps people overcoming suicidal thoughts’ (Volunteer survey 5).

You know some people just want to come in and have a coffee, they need clothes we give them clothes, they need food and we pray (not with clients but with each other) that through our giving that they would see Christ ... people might come in here in tears and we can give them a hug and they may see Christ in that hug (Manager interview 2).

Creating a ‘God space’ was seen by some as opening up the possibility for clients to find ‘faith’ as a means of coping with mental illness, poverty and behaviour problems. Volunteers believed implicitly that having trust in – or placing faith in - God would help clients ‘find peace’. Faith could fill an ‘emotional emptiness’ borne of neglect of their spiritual dimension, particularly for those who were mentally ill.
Even listening or just ‘being there’ was seen as a way of helping desperate clients to cope with depression and suicidal thoughts:

... she didn’t ask for food, she didn’t ask for anything except for us to listen to her, and she was suicidal, and I mean she was in a bad way ... she’d have tears streaming down her face, and she’d be saying, ‘I don’t want to be here, I’m sick’ and all that sort of thing, and we just listened, and she was grateful (Volunteer interview 3).

The issues are so huge and so varied and there’s only so much you can do and basically, when it all boils down to it, you can apply all the techniques, you can try and teach them all the skills, but basically the most helpful thing you can do is just sit there and listen (Volunteer interview 7).

It is clear that volunteers were often unable to do more than listen. They were well aware of the severity of mental health problems in the community and the dire lack of family support and mental health services.

Continuity of care in regional areas was a serious concern. ‘Intermittent’, ‘unavailable’ and ‘inaccessible’ were words frequently used by volunteers to describe social workers in part-time and job-sharing positions. One volunteer stated that psychiatric care in her part of the Hunter Valley was less than ideal because there was no guarantee that it would be the same doctor who had been in attendance the previous week. Clients often had to repeat their stories to different professionals. Quality and ongoing care for those in need of psychiatric help was a rarity. One manager (interview 2) stated that contacting the mental health team was ‘hard when
[the phone keeps] ringing and there’s just an answering machine’. The depth of concern regarding mental health services was also highlighted in the largest city in the Hunter:

There is urgent need for better care of mental patients, because mental health issues seem to impact on so many people. We see so many people who are on medication for depression or bi-polar. Often they’re on some sort of medication but they are not taking it as they should be. The number of people who have a degree of depression is quite extraordinary and many go untreated (Volunteer interview 4).

One volunteer stated that ‘a lot of young mothers have mental health issues’ (interview 1) and another from a rural location said: ‘The people that come in here have long-term mental illness problems’ (Volunteer interview 5). Some clients even caused disturbances at the centres. One volunteer had to call the police as a last resort. Another made sure that a regular client received his injections since without them he went ‘off the wall’. One regional centre had become a place for a number of people who suffered from an array of mental health problems to gather on a regular basis: ‘there is a group of [mentally ill] people who come in, as a long term sort of thing’ (Volunteer interview 6).

These accounts indicated that problems associated with mental health in the community were widespread. Those working in welfare and social support roles in FBOs and volunteers came into contact with people with serious mental health needs on a regular basis. One manager felt that this situation would only get worse. He
referred to the difficulty of gaining access to disability payments that have a higher monetary value than Newstart: Like now, mental health does not necessarily get you onto a disability support pension these days, whereas a few years ago if you had a mental health problem, that’s an automatic thing (Manager interview 3).

This situation left those who, in the past, would have been eligible for disability support, not only on a reduced income, but also open to the possibility of incurring a breach. This made them even more likely to need the services of an FBO. Among the volunteers, there was strong support for those suffering from mental health problems to be able to remain on welfare benefits without threat of sanction. This was articulated by one volunteer who had what she termed a ‘vague’ idea of the breaching system, as her clients were directly affected by it at times. She felt that they did not understand the ‘forms’ and the ramifications involved in staying on a benefit. This was causing stress among some clients and affected those with mental health issues the most:

... they didn’t get enough [income] or they were cut off because they didn’t fill in a form. When you get into it, you find they have had the form for weeks but they didn’t fill it out. That’s where I think mental health issues come in, they are probably threatened by the form, don’t even understand it or realise the importance of it and then find they’ve got no money in the bank

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29 Newstart clients need to fill in participation forms linked to their benefit contracts on a fortnightly basis to keep receiving benefits in conjunction with attending meetings with Job Network and Centrelink staff on a regular basis.
... because they had to have an appointment (at Centrelink) (Volunteer interview 1).

As noted in the Chapter 6, breaching has impacted on FBOs in one way or another. While this study cannot show any strong causal links between breaching, mental health and increasing demands for faith-based services, those with mental health problems can and do receive free counselling and social and material support from Christian volunteers. Yet few of the volunteers have any formal qualification or training to deal with severely ill clients with complex issues. Nonetheless, they were very caring and faced people with these issues on a regular basis despite the fact that FBOs were never meant to provide this type of critical, highly specialised assistance. Clients with mental health issues often had little option but to seek assistance from FBOs, where volunteers recognised that there was ‘only so much they could do’.

**Rental affordability**

It was not unusual for volunteers in FBOs to encounter clients in need of accommodation or rental assistance. However, FBOs were only able to assist in extreme circumstances. Since government funding did not cover this type of assistance, FBOs often had to draw on private funding sources. Before large amounts of money were dispensed, serious consideration was given to whether paying the rent would keep the family in accommodation or whether more help with rent would be needed in the immediate future. Dispensing large amounts of money invariably had an impact on other clients in need. Hence FBOs could not help every time a client sought help with rent because they ‘just don’t have the money for that’ (Manager interview 1). This issue emerged quite strongly during the research period.
because of the housing boom, which resulted in some low-income clients paying a higher percentage of their benefits on rent as competition for accommodation intensified.

Four clients who responded to the Client Assessment of Services Survey (see Figure 10 below) at the main centre had requested help with rent. Though small in number, this was an ongoing problem with requests being frequently denied except in extreme circumstances. Each client seeking rent assistance asked for between ‘$300 and $400 in assistance and that is only for a week’. Clients who had no rental history, because they lived in a family property which was being sold, found it very hard to get accommodation: ‘But at the moment, because tenancies are so tight, because rentals are so tight, property managers are very, very hard to deal with’ (Manager interview 3); ‘people are paying very high rental and that leaves a lot of them struggling’ (Volunteer interview 1); ‘rent is half of their income’ (Manager interview 1).

One volunteer was so concerned about the lack of accommodation in her area for young people that she took several to live with her until suitable arrangements could be made. She had been a teacher during her working life and caring for the young was something she felt strongly about, even overlooking the issue of her own safety:

We also don’t have any emergency housing for young kids who have left home. We have got a women’s refuge and we can place people there, and younger children but we can’t place older children there. We have had a boy
16 who we have been trying to find accommodation for quite some time. As I said he stayed with me for a couple of weeks and another guy from here has stayed for a while (Volunteer interview 6).

The rental issue was deemed to be very important and of great concern, along with mental health. For those providing ER assistance, however, their main concern was feeding the needy, which, at times, was hard due to the limitations of the budgets and excessive demand for assistance.

**Budgets versus client need: ‘Running on empty’**

Even though there was flexibility in the type of assistance given, there was less room to manoeuvre in relation to the amount of assistance supplied as most FBOs were ‘running on empty’. All except the main regional centre operated with budgets of between $35,000 and $50,000 for emergency relief annually. Given these meagre budgets and the high demand, many clients were denied assistance while others received smaller amounts than requested to ‘help more with less’, which the government preferred, according to one manager (interview 3). This was unreasonable given the number of clients who relied on provision. At times, food in kind was often given to help people overnight as a way of limiting expenditure. As can be seen during the time the data for CASS was collected, 124 people were given food in kind. Manager 3 highlighted how government funding for ER was based on the number of welfare beneficiaries in a particular location, especially those on a Newstart benefit. This, he said, was ‘garbage’ as his client base was a lot wider than
the funding allowed for. All the centres had a wide client base, including old-age pensioners and low-paid workers (see Table 6).

As Table 6 highlights, FBOs help a wide selection of community members, not just those deemed undeserving, such as those on Newstart allowances. Funding does not cover those in the community who work but still need the help of an FBO. For example, Manager 3 pointed out that he had clients who were ‘working’ yet still struggling to pay their bills:

The number of people that are under employed is absolutely phenomenal. For instance, I have, I know of a young fellow that works, he is a casual landscape gardener, he works casually as a trainee, and the thing is on the days it rains he doesn’t get work. And straight away he is unemployed you know, he has a family that is trying to live ... these days you know, like if you are employed one hour per month you are not in the unemployed (Manager 3).

Accommodating a wider variety of clients not covered by the funding for ER at times left FBOs without the means to assist with electricity payments (called EAPAs) as demand often exceeded supply. When this happened they sought additional assistance from sources other than government.
Table 6: Clients of Hunter FBOs drawn from quantitative and qualitative datasets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantitative data indicating client base of FBOs</th>
<th>Examples of benefits they may be in receipt of</th>
<th>Qualitative data indicating client base of FBOs</th>
<th>Examples of benefits they may be in receipt of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>YA</td>
<td>The mentally ill and disabled</td>
<td>DP, NS, AP,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sole Parents</td>
<td>SPP, FTB AB, CP</td>
<td>Single mothers/fathers</td>
<td>SPP FTB AB</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Unemployed</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>The elderly</td>
<td>AP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Families</td>
<td>NS/PP, FTB AB, CP</td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>NS, SPP, FTB AB, AP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled</td>
<td>DP</td>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>YA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>NS, SPP, FTB AB, DP, AP, CP</td>
<td>Families on benefits</td>
<td>NS/PP FTB AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>NS, SPP, FTB AB, DP, CP</td>
<td>Low wage families and workers</td>
<td>FTB AB, PP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The elderly</td>
<td>AP, DP</td>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>NS, DP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALD*</td>
<td>NS, SPP, YA, DP, AP, CP</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CALD = Culturally and Linguistically Diverse, YA = Youth Allowance, SPP = Sole Parent Pension, NS = Newstart, DP = Disability Pension, PP = Parenting Payment, CP = Carers Payment, FTB AB = Family Tax Benefit A and or B.

Occasionally agencies needed to request extra voucher ‘books’ from other agencies in their area but, as one volunteer stated: ‘There is one other welfare agency in the area but they do not always have vouchers’ (Volunteer interview 1). If no vouchers could be sourced, then clients were obliged to wait for the next allocation to arrive, usually the following month. Therefore, any hope of FBOs being a solution to poverty via the allocation of their limited material assistance was misguided as far as participants of this project were concerned:

There just isn’t enough money. They (the clients) expect us to give more. But we are setting the limits due to budget. We want to help all year and try and make a difference in their life ... we get them through a crisis. If you had lots
of money you could actually make a difference in their life, pick them up and turn them around (Manager interview 1).

However, when pressed, this manager felt that there were times when this was not necessarily a solution because ‘some people will never manage whatever you do for them, they will never manage’.

Resources at all the centres were tight. Food cupboards were often empty and there was a heavy reliance on the community for donations of food for in-kind support which, at times, was all that could be given: ‘Most of the food is funded by the Church and the community’ (Volunteer interview 1); ‘we only have overnight food packages’ (Volunteer interview 2); ‘I gave a food parcel to a guy who just moved to town with his pregnant fiancée and a three year old’; ‘you have given them some food to eat for the night which they wouldn’t have had if they hadn’t come in’ (Volunteer interview 6). The material assistance given by FBOs, along with their social support and counselling, was never going to be enough to solve the problem of poverty. Assistance was based on short-term help for an immediate need.

**Emergency needs of clients at a time of austerity**

Austerity measures and the contractual environment made it difficult for FBOs to engage in long-term planning to maximise resources yet, ironically, the perception of FBOs as sources of ‘cheap welfare’ leads to a focus on economic efficiency within a value-charged faith-based environment. Nevertheless, FBO activities were perceived

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30 This client had moved his whole family interstate to work at the mines in the Upper Hunter, once he arrived the company told him he was no longer required.
by their clients as valuable. As one client wrote, ‘it enables me to cope with life and didn’t make me feel so isolated’.

When the FBO volunteers were asked what they thought was successful about provision, most suggested that clients were able to get ‘food, financial help, and have a chat with someone’, in particular with someone ‘who cared’. The results from the CASS suggested that overall clients of the main regional centre thought the assistance they received was beneficial (see Figure 7). These results correlated, to a high degree, with the responses indicating satisfaction with service provision shown in Figure 8.

![Figure 7: Was the assistance you received beneficial? (CASS)](image)

The combination of ‘very satisfied’ (39, 49%) and ‘satisfied’ (24, 30%) gave an overall satisfaction rate of 79%, 10% lower than the ‘beneficial’ responses. However, there was an increase in the non-response category of 14 (18%) in Figure 8, which might be due to clients skipping over this question as they had already answered the ‘beneficial’ question. When the differences in the non-response rates
were taken into consideration, the results were the same as Figure 8, indicating that services were of benefit and satisfactory to clients.

Contrasting these results with the qualitative responses from CASS, it can be seen that most provision was much-needed food: ‘Now I have food for my son’; ‘I am in desperate need of food for my daughter’; ‘Yes, I was hungry’; ‘Now I have food and clothing’; ‘I struggle living on my own while I’m not working’; ‘It was very helpful having assistance during these hard times’; ‘When I needed food and clothes and shelter you were there. Thanks’; ‘I was able to manage through to my next payday’; ‘It helped when I had nothing’; They ‘gave help with food and bills’ and ‘something to eat’; ‘I was in need of food and comfort’ and ‘I really needed help’; ‘My children will eat for the next few days’; ‘I have food and clothing’.

Figure 8: Level of satisfaction with service (CASS)
Examination of these qualitative responses indicated that clients were trying to manage with little or, at times, no income, struggling from one fortnight to the next. Any assistance would be deemed helpful in these dire circumstances. This was especially true when a client had had an eight-week breach imposed:

We put them on an auto voucher just so they can continue to eat. But what about electricity, rent? We just do not have the resources to fund a person’s total living expenses (Manager interview 1).

In their quest for survival, clients could access other services once the assistance given by the main regional FBO had run its course. In some cases, clients were referred to another service, particularly when the FBO could not help them. However, gaining access to alternative services was not always straightforward. All the volunteers at one time or another had referred clients to other services in their local area in the hope that they might provide further assistance.

Transport, however, for those in regional areas, was an issue. For some, making the journey to the city was not a popular option if services in their area were unable to help: ‘And they don’t even want to go up to (the city). ‘It’s an awful long way, especially if they have kids’ (Volunteer interview 1). For those from regional areas, access to the larger city-based FBOs was an alternative if there was no suitable provision in their community. However, all FBOs worked within their local areas. Clients who just turned up to an FBO from outside their jurisdiction would be

31 An automatic food voucher is given to a client facing a prolonged period of time without income. They only have to prove need at the initial interview. They are then given a food voucher on a weekly basis until their benefit is reinstated by Centrelink or they find an alternative income such as paid work or receive an insurance payout.
referred back to one in their local area. Arbitrary borders, such as a bridge were described in some instances to give clients an indication of whether they could seek assistance. This was a modern-day reflection of the parish borders of the poor laws.

Some responses from clients of the main centre suggested that they did not know where else to go for assistance. As one stated, ‘I am unsure where to get assistance’ and another ‘don’t know’. Even though the main centre had a list of alternative organisations, accessing alternative sources of support was difficult for those living on limited resources. Some services were not listed in phone books or on the internet, and sometimes these databases were out of date. FaHCSIA (2008) itself relied on the organisations to keep their databases updated, but this did not always happen. In addition to the difficulty faced by clients in locating FBOs, opening hours were also limited. Some of the smaller centres were only open for a couple of hours one or two days a week. None were open on the weekend or at night. Added to this was the difference in what was available to clients at the various FBOs. There was a lack of uniformity in what they could and did provide as shown in Table 7. Finding alternative assistance was not always easy and opening times and hours were not always apparent. Therefore, the hungry had to ‘wait’ (Manager interview 1) until a suitable service was available, which, in some circumstances, could be days.
Table 7: Indication of services provided by Hunter FBOs by volunteers and managers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey mail out data</th>
<th>Vs 1</th>
<th>Vs 2</th>
<th>Vs 3</th>
<th>Vs 4</th>
<th>Vs 5</th>
<th>Vs 6</th>
<th>Vs 7</th>
<th>Vs 8</th>
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<th>Ms2</th>
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VS = volunteer survey

MS = manager’s survey (MS3 indicated on survey that centre not contracted also added qualitative responses, such as tea and coffee, drop-in centre, baby change table, and a listening ear).

†=Government-funded ER. •Food vouchers were funded by the government in some instances, usually the larger FBOs. However, not all FBOs had funding specifically for food vouchers and relied on community support.

32 Volunteer survey 11 did not fill out a survey but was involved in the in depth interview process. Thus there were a total of 15 responses.
Even with these barriers to provision, as shown in Figure 9, most of the replies about accessing help (57 responses) centred on nongovernment alternatives, such as other FBOs, family and friends. In comparison, Centrelink was nominated in 21 responses. Even though Centrelink gained the highest number of responses in total, this was not impressive given that it is the key organisation administering welfare benefits.

Only two clients stated they could access another government service. This indicated that, other than Centrelink, other government services were not a viable option for clients, possibly because they were not known to them or were not available. Eighteen respondents (23%) indicated that isolation was an issue as they reported that there was no-one locally to whom they could turn in times of need. Only four of the respondents in the category ‘No-one’ were linked to another option: one indicated Centrelink and another three indicated alternative FBOs.
These findings point to a ‘poverty of provision’ for those in dire need in a service sector that is extremely difficult to negotiate. Nevertheless, clients of FBOs expressed some satisfaction with the services provided though few could claim to have found their way out of poverty on the minimal assistance available. The key government agency in welfare provision, Centrelink, made the situation more difficult.

**Centrelink**

In commenting on Centrelink, one manager highlighted why he thought that clients might find the organisation to be less than helpful. In his view Centrelink used faith-based services to offload those they could or would not help straight away:

... a person arrives at Centrelink and says ‘look I am in hardship’ and Centrelink says first of all you have to do a phone interview and that will take place next Thursday and then after that you have got to have a face to face
interview and we will try and get you a payment in 14 days and that might not happen. We have had people in here and for three weeks they haven’t got a benefit. Centrelink staff are so stressed that the easiest thing is to shuffle them off to some charity (Manager interview 3).

This was not an isolated view. Another Manager commented that:

Centrelink will often refer people up here (if they won't help). It gets me a bit cross sometimes ... We aren’t under any obligation to help, but (clients) they say (Centrelink) said you would (Manager interview 2).

These comments would seem to indicate an uneasy relationship between FBOs and Centrelink in which clients were being sent to FBOs with an understanding that they would automatically receive help. However, FBOs, even though the government funds many FBOs, they were under no obligation to help clients, particularly if the clients did not have the required documentation.

Herein lies a fundamental difference between FBOs and Centrelink. Faith-based provision is driven by a mission to help the poor: it is not rights based. Participants upheld the right to deny assistance to clients (which was done at times, especially when budgets were tight) but, in turn, clients were viewed as being ‘offloaded’ onto FBOs by Centrelink. The erosion of clients’ rights to government welfare and their replacement with participation requirements and mutual obligations might be seen as an attempt to devolve responsibility onto families and communities, but the major view from FBOs was that Centrelink could not be bothered with them (poor clients). Most participants felt that Centrelink treated
clients like numbers, while those of faith working in FBOs truly cared for the clients on a deeper personal level (due to their underlying mission). One manager spoke of how the manager of Centrelink in her area had been helpful, but with the arrival of a new manager that had now changed. There was some appreciation on the part of the FBO managers that Centrelink staff members were operating under a great deal of stress. One manager of an FBO (interview 3) related how the stresses faced by Centrelink staff in addressing issues surrounding access to benefits impacted on the personal safety of staff (including himself) at his centre:

Well the other person who I have the AVO against basically she calls in occasionally and I have just said to her you are not allowed to be here you need to leave right now ... sorry but away you go, and if you don’t leave right now I will ring the police and have you arrested. You know I don’t muck around with that. Um, the safety of the staff, you know people get a bit angry at times in here because, and I have taken issue with this with Centrelink on occasions when I let them in, as you can see I am here by myself, so I am a lone worker. I actually had a Centrelink person send somebody down here to me, if he had been any higher on drugs you would have had to shoot him down with an air pellet gun. I had some Centrelink managers come down to talk to me about things and that is one of the things you cannot do, you have got to tell your staff that if you have got somebody as high on drugs you just don’t push them down here. Because to get them out of, you know they are causing a problem in your office, so the way to get away from them is (send them to us) here this is the person you see. Because if they say no then where else? So yeah you do worry about those sorts of things, but I do think we
have reasonable access in and out of here, you can get out the back door and
the side door and all that sort of thing (Manager interview 3).

Two volunteers reported that they had been yelled at by clients who were not able to
get what they wanted from the FBO, or were dissatisfied with what they had been
given. FBOs were a last resort for those turned away from Centrelink. In such
strained circumstances it was surprising that more volunteers and managers did not
mention safety concerns. Volunteering in these circumstances, along with other
frustrations and concerns, was not always rewarding and, at times, very difficult.

Feeding the hungry: The limitations of funding provision

Apart from seeking to show clients the love of God, meeting clients’ material needs
was also important if faith was able to play a role. As one volunteer (interview 6)
stated:

I am thinking of Maslow’s hierarchy of human needs, if the person hadn’t
had enough sleep or they were hungry or thirsty or whatever, you looked
after those needs first and then you could work on the spiritual needs.

Therefore, the provision of material support opened up the possibility that clients
might come to faith through concrete assistance. However, this assistance differed
from one organisation to another.

The main regional FBO received government funding for a number of programs,
such as the distribution of food vouchers and part payment of utility bills, including
electricity, gas, phone, water, and Council rates. Such assistance was also available at other participating FBOs contracted to supply emergency relief assistance. Organisations not in contracted government partnerships had less assistance to dispense and relied solely on private donations and volunteer hours (see Table 8, p. 217).

As indicated in Figure 10, most clients on emergency relief at the main regional centre needed food, and help with utilities. However, rent, transport costs, clothing, furniture, and in-kind assistance with food, medicines, toiletries and baby needs, for example, were funded via allocations from head office and private donations from the public or business sector.

Funding for ER, as the name indicates, was based on crisis or emergency criteria, for example, when an unexpected expense left them unable to buy food or pay their utilities bill such as a malfunctioning fridge leading to spoilt food when children had to be fed, or an individual or family facing an unexpected move. Therefore, there was an expectation on the part of governments and built into the funding structure that people would only seek services in an emergency, as a one-off situation. However, this framework was only loosely adhered to as a number of clients tended to request ER more than once a year.

33 Electricity Account Payment Assistance (EAPA)
Table 8 shows that the average number of client visits was 2.5 per annum. The standard deviation shows that a number of clients accessed ER four or five times over this timeframe, the highest number of visits being 11, almost one a month. To counteract these behaviours and follow government guidelines, mechanisms were put in place to counter the perceived or potential dependency of clients. For example, in relation to ER, clients had to produce receipts for the last fortnight’s expenses which were then compared to their income from benefits or wages. Receipts had to total at least 85% of their income as proof that they had spent most of their income and had little leftover for food and other expenses. If they could not provide the correct documentation, they were refused assistance or asked to return with the correct documentation for further consideration.
Table 8: Client access to emergency relief services at main regional centre in 2007

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If clients requested ER too often, they were told that they would not be given further assistance until a set number of weeks had passed. Sometimes the amount of assistance was reduced to encourage independence and discourage reliance on the centre’s resources to ‘top up their income’ (Interview manager 1). Not wanting clients to become ‘dependent’ on services reflected the aims of the government’s welfare-to-work policy (Centrelink, 2006) to pressure the unemployed to find work and not depend on the state. However, most clients were receiving state benefits and many were referred to financial counsellors for assistance with budgeting their meagre resources. However, attendance was voluntary and even clients who attended spasmodically still received further assistance.

Decisions about helping clients with the payment of large amounts of assistance, such as rent, for example, were discussed with the manager of the centre who had the final say. For the most part resources were distributed based on the discretion of faith-based volunteers in face-to-face contact with clients. This could lead to feelings of animosity when assistance was denied. Many clients requested ER more often than was allowed under the program showing that they were living in a constant state of crisis. As one manager said ‘for some, day to day living is a crisis’. The main regional FBO, which participated in the CASS, set a timeframe of four
weeks between visits but others extended this to six weeks, depending on opening hours and the availability of volunteers. Those seeking assistance from the main regional centre with proof of need might be considered more often. Proof of need was an important determinant of whether or not clients were assisted regardless of how many times they had previously been assisted. Another manager brought it back to religious belief by stating:

There is a standard in the Bible that says ‘if someone is hungry you have got to feed them’ so you know, we are happy to help people through their crisis and sort of not adhere to that four weeks (Manager interview 2).

Nevertheless, some clients took advantage of the system and became adept at ‘getting through the hoops’ (Manager 3). However, it was deemed better for an ‘undeserving’ minority, such as those who could not show a definite need, to gain assistance rather than tightening restrictions and refusing those who were deemed to be genuine in their claim for assistance. Those clients who were perceived by FBO volunteers to have spent their money unwisely, on alcohol, drugs or cigarettes, for example, would not necessarily be turned away as many were supporting families and FBOs tried to be as non-judgmental as possible:

If we make the criteria tougher as to 'identify where every dollar is gone' over a longer period of time rather than just the fortnight, say over a month, then some people will miss out and others would manage the criteria and get help even if they didn’t need it. You have to trust people, and sometimes you get ripped off. We are not here to judge them. We are here to provide a service
OK, look there are always going to be clients in the system that will take advantage of it, I don’t dispute that, the smart cookies out there. My experience is, you know the biggest percentage of people and I would say over 75% are genuine and I don’t know how close to 100% it gets but certainly over three quarters of people are genuine (Manager interview 3).

The manager of the non-contracted centre argued that people who asked for help needed it, and ‘proof of need’ was not required at her centre ‘as God has given freely to us’ (Manager interview 2). Her centre operated on an annual budget of between $2000 and $3000 dollars depending on donations from the general public, community organisations and the church to which the centre was attached. She also stated: ‘We don't cover our costs in anyway. Church donations are not regular ... our resources are limited’ (Manager interview 2).

All the centres had to manage their resources carefully to get through the financial year or funded period. Guidelines as to the amount and frequency of assistance were often tightened to cope with high demand, especially when budgets were running low. Managers like the one cited above were reluctant to refuse assistance but refusal was often unavoidable, especially with ‘dependant’ clients. A constant balancing of needs and resources was required. There was never enough to meet the full range of client need leading to a ‘poverty of provision’ (Manager interview 3): ‘the service that we provide here, if a government agency were to do it, it would probably cost you half a million dollars a year. And you know we are here five days a week’. He went on to say that his centre operated on funding of $38,000
annually for EAPA, and had between 2000-2500 clients on their books. Private donations allowed for some flexibility. Clients could also be given occasional assistance with bus fares, rent payments or other needs not covered by ER funding. This centre relied on a regular donor who paid the manager’s weekly wages. Without this, the centre would close. This was a common plight.

The main regional centre of this FBO operated on an ER budget of $195,000 per annum, including approximately $100,000 for food vouchers and serviced between four to five thousand clients a year. It relied heavily on two substantial private donations that allowed some flexibility in helping clients with rent payments and other needs outside the government funding criteria. The total running costs of this centre approximated $500,000 annually, including additional funding of $200,000 for food vouchers and staff salaries. The shortfall in government funding approximated $300,000 per annum:

Flexibility [comes] from other sources of funding. If they need a green slip, (for their car) and there would have to be medical issues. Funding from other sources allows us to make life changing differences at that particular time in someone’s life. Under emergency relief we just couldn’t do that. If it wasn’t for the extra funding from other sources, we would have to be more conscientious (Manager interview 1).

Most FBOs would close their doors if private donations were to cease and would certainly lose their flexibility. Results from the CASS survey (see Table 6.2) indicated there were 44 requests for non-ER funded assistance, including four for
rent. A great deal of assistance provided by FBOs was not related to government funding but to private and organisational funding. Besides limited resources, increasing demand, coupled with frustrations with Centrelink, and the occasional disruptive client, did participants feel the government appreciated the service they provided? For most, the answer was ‘no’.

**Cheap welfare**

When questioned about the government’s increasing reliance on the faith-based sector, a number of participants thought it was probably because they were seen to provide ‘cheap welfare’. Most centres ran on small budgets, operating out of buildings supplied by churches, or the larger organisations to which they were affiliated, and most depended on volunteer labour. They paid their own electricity and water bills, land rates and staff salaries: ‘The church owns the building and pays for electricity’ (Manager 2) and ‘ER funding does not pay for rent’ (Manager 3). On top of these costs, those under contract to the government also had the extra cost of paying for yearly audits of their books, which ate into their budgets:

> We used to get our funding and we didn’t have to report it all just (overview). Because we (now) get more than $10,000 we have to provide an audited account each year for the funding we do get. I mean that sticks in my claw (sic) because it costs us over $1000 a year to get our audit done and as a consequence of that there is 10 families I can’t assist straight away sort of thing (Manager interview 3).
In a context focused on addressing clients’ need, stringent auditing criteria were more trouble than they were worth. Because of these types of issues, the manager of the non-contracted centre was ambivalent about seeking government funding. Even though more people might be helped, she could do without the paper work: ‘Yeah, I am not into the admin, I am just into the people’ (Manager interview 2). In addition, a volunteer at a non-contracted centre felt that contracts limited their activities, such as making sandwiches for the hungry. She was of the view that government contracts would not allow for this.

A manager of a small FBO operating on $23,000 a year in EAPA and other utilities funding, linked to a larger chain, felt the organisation in which he worked had ‘done itself a disservice’ (Manager survey 1) by becoming too closely involved with the welfare provision, by which he meant government contracts. One manager of a small independent centre expressed his frustrations with large FBOs:

Government will give everything to the cheapest tender and that’s why the Job Network is no good. They have conned the major charities like St Vincent de Paul, the Salvation Army, Wesley and all those people for bidding for these contracts and underbidding one another to get the price down. They are doing it cheaper and cheaper (Manager interview 3).

Though he also tendered for contracts, he felt that the larger FBOs were undermining the contracting process. Similar tensions were expressed by a manager of a national FBO:

It’s a cost saving mechanism. It would cost double for the government to
provide the service. It’s not only volunteers but smaller remuneration for
staff. No bonuses or overtime. One of the things that I get very disappointed
in, is the fact that because FBOs do some of this work and the government
funds them because they do it cheaper than anyone else (Manager interview
1).

Many centres could do little more than provide band-aid assistance. As one volunteer
said: ‘They’re still handing out vouchers and paying bills and putting band-aids on
things’ (Volunteer interview 4). Nevertheless, the notion of ‘cheap welfare’ was
offensive to these services. Respondents wanted recognition of the value of their
services to the community. The notion of ‘cheap welfare’ was seen to undermine
their sense of purpose and pride in doing God’s work but most would not allow the
government to rain on their parade. Service to the poor was a requisite of faith.

**Conclusion: Heaven of unlimited resources**

Participants were asked what they would wish for in an ideal world. Some pointed
out that due to ‘sin’ there could be no such thing. That sentiment aside, first on the
list was an increase in mental health services. One volunteer thought a lack of
political ‘will’ led to the neglect of mental health since it was ‘not a great vote
winner’. More income for those struggling on benefits was needed, especially in
light of the high cost of accommodation: ‘I would say twice as much income... [and]
cheaper accommodation. People are paying very high rental and that leaves a lot of
them struggling’ (Volunteer interview 1). Another volunteer felt that there was
‘nowhere [for clients] to turn (and) a lot more support [was] needed’ (Volunteer
interview 3). Much more could be done for their clients if government were to increase funding for faith-based services and focus directly on helping the poor:

Financial resources are needed to meet people’s needs ... Things like (professional) counselling, behavioural, all those sorts of things. A service that helps people work through their problems, other than day to day life, other than just their day to day budget’ (Manager interview 1) and ‘more trained people in counselling’ (Manager interview 2).

For one manager the answer was more volunteers:

Could always do with more volunteers for office staff and even for what I do (mix of financial counselling and manager). There are times when I am often flat out and I could really spend an hour with a client but because we are half hour appointments ... when you get into the conversation other stuff may come up and you don’t have anybody else here, so you are still stuck with that half hour or you get way behind in your appointments. I mean we may throw a person out at the end of half an hour if they’ve got something that they’ve got to talk about then ... (Manager interview 3).

Another manager mentioned FBOs’ ‘frugality’: ‘It’s God’s money. We look after it and do not over spend’ (Manager interview 1). Hence the evidence seems to suggest that FBOs supply economical services even given the high cost of government service provision but most objected to advantage being taken of a sector showing clients the love of God.
As Chapters 6 and 7 have demonstrated, the Howard government’s expectations that FBOs would provide a moral environment when helping the poor was well founded. Faith and its correlating morality played a major role, but not in an adverse directive sense where volunteers sought to openly modify welfare clients behaviour, but in a caring and compassionate expression of their faith and the moral directives, linked to their faith and works to help the poor. Volunteers - and the sector in general - followed the dictates of the social gospel. Religion and faith-based dialogue was not directly part of client-volunteer conversations; religion was, nonetheless, a constant undercurrent since participants believed that faith - their belief in God - would bring the greatest benefit to clients. Even so, there were major qualifications involved in relation to a faith-based moral dialogue being part of the volunteer-client interviews, as conversion was not a condition of provision as was proof of need or deservedness. Clients were deemed ‘deserving’ despite their behaviour if they were in need and no specific moral instruction was given to clients: unless clients sought it themselves. All were equal in God’s eyes. Those in need deserved comfort. The hungry deserved to be fed. Rather than being judged negatively on moralistic grounds, clients were treated with compassionate care even if there were strong undercurrents of moralism surrounding the actual delivery of services.
Chapter 8: Care and compassion ... but where is well-fair?

As shown in Chapters 6 and 7, government funding fell far short of the costs of running welfare services. Through welfare reform, the government restructured the way in which services were rendered and funded by introducing tendering and contracting. However, the cost of provision continued to escalate. In fact, government investment in nongovernment services has led to a huge increase in human service provision within this sector, constituting the fastest growing employment sector. FBOs benefited from this increased welfare funding due to their perceived expertise in poverty alleviation, via a moral framework, even though they could not solve the problem of poverty by themselves. Those on the margins of society, outside the employment market, such as the long-term unemployed, remain a challenge. It is these groups of clients that FBOs, as vehicles for emergency relief and related assistance, are contracted to help. In taking on this role, are FBOs complicit in applying stringent measures of welfare reform or have they been placed in an invidious position in relation to helping the needy? Welfare now means targeted provision for those most in need and has little to do with broader notions of human and social well-being or social justice - ‘well-fair’.

FBOs were concerned that policy processes were undermining their mission to help clients in need. Whether punitive welfare measures helped or hindered attempts to alleviate poverty for the most disadvantaged remains an ongoing question. Punitive welfare does not sit easily in a sector motivated by care and compassion.
This chapter draws conclusions on the role of faith in faith-based provision and the benefits and limitations of that provision. Chapters 6 and 7 showed that a governmental focus on morals overshadowed the complexities of client need and that FBO provision did little to combat the problem of poverty. Where then do the solutions lie?

The role of faith-based organisations in the Hunter

This chapter attempts to address this question. As noted in Chapter 2, the key questions regarding the role of faith in faith-based provision in the Hunter Region addressed by this study were:

1. How did faith-based volunteers view the discussion of faith with clients during service provision?
2. Were clients of FBOs likely to hear a moral message in relation to the issues surrounding their poverty?
3. Morality aside, what other benefits accrued for the Howard government in relation to contracting FBOs?

Key findings in each of these areas were highlighted in Chapters 6 and 7. The role of faith in Hunter FBOs was manifested in compassionate care for those in need. Though not overtly moralistic, this value-charged, faith-based environment delivered exactly what the Howard government needed: ‘economical services’. Rather than provide high-cost government services, welfare reform sought to divert funding into the community services sector through funded or contractual partnerships. FBOs were favoured in this system as they delivered the added value of moral reform.
The relationship between faith and morals is undeniable but whether the cause of poverty lay in the lethargy of a ‘moral underclass’ (Levitas, 2006) was debatable. Rather than strike at the structural causes of poverty, FBOs played into the Howard government’s individualistic agenda through its faith-based mission to ‘show clients the love of God’. It focused on individual rather than structural causes. Ultimately, Jesus was at the forefront of provision. He - not the client - was in control. If only clients could accept God, they would come to understand His transformative power. Faith embedded provision in ‘charity’ and prevented any real structural solution to poverty. The question arises whether faith-motivated volunteers are qualified to deal with the increasing complexity of client need: with complex mental health issues, housing shortages, rising rentals, family breakdown, and declining socioeconomic conditions. The theory of social capital went some way to explaining the inward-focused bonding capital within faith-based services but they were found wanting in bridging capital, in reaching out to the broader community.

More important than this, however, when entering faith-based provision, clients encountered a highly moral charitable rather than a punitive moralistic environment. They were helped by managers and volunteers seeking to show the love of God through compassionate care but this did little to assuage their poverty. Even though volunteers and managers operated within a highly charged moral environment, their collective attitude contrasted with the highly paternalistic, overtly judgmental and punitive disciplinary welfare reform measures introduced by the Howard Liberal-National Coalition Government from 1996 to 2007 and further embedded under the subsequent Labor government.
FBOs in the Hunter attempted to ‘include the socially excluded’ to borrow from Third Way parlance. They were ‘gray zones’ (Evans, 2010), attempting to steer a middle course to assuage their faith-based social justice orientation within the punitive demands of reformed welfare. Influenced by developments in the UK and USA, politicians extolled the benefits of faith-based welfare as a moral solution to poverty, because of their charitable focus, goodwill and economically beneficial volunteer workforce (Bartkowski & Regis, 2003). But the conditional government contracts created value conflicts and tensions for faith-based providers at the grassroots level. Volunteers and managers sought to be inclusive while government agencies, like Centrelink, sought to be punitive by excluding welfare clients from benefits, by keeping benefit provision low and breaching clients who failed to conform to Welfare to Work dictates. Incorporating FBOs into welfare policy without adequate funding or recognition of the grass-roots issues has overburden FBOs with more clients struggling to survive on state benefit provision that is increasingly difficult to access and retain.

*Faith, hope and charity: The role of volunteers*

The evidence suggested overwhelmingly that it was unlikely volunteers deliberately imposed faith on clients *unless clients requested it.* Nevertheless, 50% of clients would have been comfortable with this. Clients were free to reach their own conclusion on faith, religion or spirituality. Volunteers were there to guide them as instruments of God’s will. For a Christian, when it comes to matters of conscience, ‘force is … a profoundly inappropriate instrument’ (Little, 2002, p. 129). Faith cannot be forced upon people despite gospel proclamations (1 Samuel 12:23; Acts,
Volunteers were reticent to force religion onto people who they felt were vulnerable. Rather than seek to indoctrinate clients, volunteers in Hunter-based FBOs sought to lead by example: ‘to walk the walk’ so to speak. Therefore, there was little evidence to suggest that the sector sought to ‘govern’ the poor through overt control. Instead, they hoped that, by example, faith might provide a way for clients to accept their plight and not lose hope. There was comfort in knowing that a loving and compassionate God was in control and watching over them.

**Jesus is watching: The machinations of faith**

Jesus was ever-present, guiding volunteers as they administered to, counselled and supported clients. He was manifest in their demonstration of compassionate care to those cast out by society (1 John 3:18, Proverbs 14:31, Mathew 9-13). Hence God indirectly determined the quality and amount of assistance provided. Faith-based provision might best be understood as ‘faith-centred’ as ‘always and everywhere’ coloured by ‘God’s presence in their [volunteers’] lives and work’ (Shen, 2003, p. 2). Faith was an FBO’s *raison d’etre*. All else was of secondary concern.

Volunteers genuinely believed that God took care of His flock and could be a source of comfort for those struggling with poverty. But clients did not share their optimism and most attributed their need for FBO assistance to their own personal failings: ‘we could all do a little better’. The act of seeking assistance was itself demoralising no matter how well people were treated. Evidence from the CASS showed that over 10% of clients felt ashamed of failing to live up to society’s
expectations even though 72.5% felt welcomed by FBO volunteers. Volunteers and managers, in turn, felt sorry for clients and struggled to do the best they could in the circumstances. They did not question the harsh and punitive policies that brought clients to their doors but assessed them individually in their particular circumstances. They focused on immediate needs. Food was the predominant need and help was not always available. FBOs only opened one or two days a week and their hours of operation were inconsistent. Mostly, they depended on the availability of volunteers. There was no uniformity in faith-based provision across the region. Therefore, FBOs could in no way be seen as playing a major uniform and coherent role in solving poverty. They provided band-aid solutions: a balm with a sting in its tail, the stigma of charity.

The benefits of faith-based services were minor in the broad scheme of things. Nevertheless, they provided a politically popular alternative to state assistance (Cox, 1998, 2006). In other words, the sector could absorb the risk of abject poverty for those unable to conform to or negotiate their way through the complexities of the market state (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Giddens, 1998; Kemshall, 2002). Regardless of changing welfare policy, this study showed that Christians would continue their long tradition of reaching out to the poor via faith-based provision. Whether or not this tradition was being exploited by the ideological and political objectives of the Howard government remains a debatable point. Religious leaders were part of the welfare reform process and carried some political clout. The government’s policies, therefore, were accepted by large and powerful FBOs benefited from the new funding arrangements. Those in cash-strapped small, local FBOs would, however, bear the brunt of the burden faced by those living in

**Faith-centred social capital in a sinful world**

Putnam (2000) linked social capital to voluntary work and religion. Faith-based social capital was inhered in volunteers’ and managers’ quest to show God’s love to strangers in need. Faith led them to undertake ‘public works’ as taught in the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-34). Volunteers gave their time freely (Thaut, 2009) to reach out to those who did not know God. However, there are major caveats to whether or not the faithful fulfil the optimistic expectations of the theory of social capital (Putnam, 2000; Olasky, 2000). Whether or not bonding and bridging capital emanated from interactions between volunteers and clients is hard to determine. This study found little evidence of this, perhaps due to the way in which centres operated, offering short-term support and limited face-to-face interaction.

Most were one-off encounters for emergency assistance. There were no expectations that relationships would become anything other than what they were: the needy seeking assistance from the faithful, in other words ‘charity’. Even though one volunteer took young people home to stay with her for a few weeks, this was borne out of frustration that no local services were available and that she could not abandon them to the street. Once they had left her home, no further contact was made. Others made reference to inviting mothers to play groups attached to their

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34 The Samaritan and the person he helped were from different classes and therefore would not have normally interacted. The Samaritan was from a lower class, but he still helped a person who may not have helped him if he, the Samaritan, was injured.
church but there was no follow up on whether they had gone, or if the invitation had led to them attending church, in other words there was little desire expressed by volunteers to form any type of social relationship outside the service-delivery setting.

Therefore, there was little evidence to suggest that faith-based social capital provided strong networks of inclusion for those who were marginalised in the community. This could also be due to the fact that most of the volunteers were elderly and had working- and middle-class connections with past and present working lives. All undertook a faith-based activity at least once a week, within the main community in which all were involved. Faith itself might be the very reason why stronger social bonds did not emerge. Rather than containing all the elements needed for the faithful to reach out and form broad social relationships, the moral framework within which volunteers and managers operated, and the type of provision and services they provided, actually contributed to the conception of an ‘us’ and ‘them’ type of scenario resonating with Belcher and Deforge’s (2007) negative findings on faith-based volunteer attitudes towards clients.

Clients’ behaviours were conceptualised via a religious discourse as being either right or wrong. The highly contested concept of sin, being an inherent human trait, and pivotal in Christian belief, played a large role in the viewpoint of volunteers and managers towards human nature (including their own) which inevitably falls short of God’s expectations35 (Mitchell, 1984; Neiman, 2002). By

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35 ‘… all fall short of God’s glorious standard’ (Romans 3:23b)
having faith, people can try to overcome this human deficit – they can try to better themselves by following the dictates of their faith. Within this conceptualisation of human behaviour, volunteers referred to the inherent sinfulness of humanity which, of course, included their clients and their ‘immoral’ activities, such as wasting money on gambling or drinking, and they accepted this would happen from time to time. As a consequence, volunteers and managers did make judgments and often attributed client misfortune to individual behaviours and mistakes. For example, there were times when volunteers wished they could intervene and take control or when they did not believe what clients were telling them. However, volunteers reported that these judgments were largely kept to themselves, although in all probability discussed among themselves, given that volunteers exhibited a high level of bonding capital. In other words, due to clients being seen as ‘other’ and presumed to be unbelievers, elements of distrust and judgment towards clients could emerge, spilling over into a generalised view of clients in the form of a mixture of ‘benevolence and cautious pessimism’, an attitude that has (always) co-existed in faith-based charities (Gibelman & Gelman, 2003, p. 8).

Therefore faith-based provision in the Hunter, at its core, was a balancing act between wanting to show clients the love of God via their compassionate care - the dominant transcendent objective - while also holding onto an element of distrust in relation to those who sought their services - an all-too-human trait. However, faith played an important role in helping volunteers to overcome what Manager 3 suggested was the all-too-human tendency to be judgmental. The role of faith in this context was transformative as it mitigated, to a large degree, the distrust and judgments made in relation to why clients sought assistance. One volunteer believed
that God had spoken directly to her about her tendency to judge, an experience she claimed impacted on how she interacted with clients. Therefore, if faith were stripped away, particularly in regards to volunteers and managers always being cognisant of God’s presence, interactions with clients could have tended to be more openly judgmental. Even so, this is not to say that distrust is eliminated as judgments are tempered. It is not.

Social capital theorists view distrust of others as part of the dark side of social capital because it can lead to barriers between diverse groups, which, in turn, can limit access to resources or impact negatively on assistance being sought (Putnam, 2000; Putzel, 1997). Hunter FBOs were no exception in this regard. Keeping guard or being ‘gatekeepers’ of their limited resources was something they did do, particularly with those clients who were perceived to be as being using FBO services to ‘top up’ their incomes. However, volunteers were also aware that an increasing number of clients were not coping and hesitated in tightening access to resources – keeping in mind that their underlying aim was to show the love of God to all in need - so they adapted by being more flexible. They dealt with this by going against government objectives and seeing more clients and providing each with a little less. It was not what they wanted to do - they wanted to be able to provide more - however due to budgetary constraints they had to compromise. In this respect they could be described as ‘street level bureaucrats’ (Lipsky, 1980). At the grassroots level, they adapted to the demands placed on their services to try and help all in need rather than to reach government targets and government expectations (helping less with a little more in the way of resources). Therefore, faith-based social capital, at least in Hunter FBOs, aimed to be inclusive but only in a very narrow sense which
did not reflect broader social acceptance by way of bridging capital promised by
social capital theory. The whole point of faith-based assistance in regards to helping
those who were excluded from mainstream services and resources was to include
them as best they could at the point of service provision. The FBOs were ‘gray
zones’ (Evans, 2010) in which the love of God could manifest predominantly
through their works via care and compassion – but inclusion did not extend to social
relationships outside of the service setting.

Although volunteers and managers sought to be inclusive during service
provision, this is not to argue that overt judgments never happened or assistance was
never denied based on negative perceptions of clients’ behaviour. Volunteers had
direct control and power during the interview or counselling processes, but the
importance of showing clients a loving God, and the perception of God’s
omnipresence overcame the desire to chastise most of the time. Counselling,
particularly financial and general counselling, sought to change behaviour but it was
based on helping clients to budget on their limited incomes or talk through personal
and family issues. There was little evidence to suggest that these processes contained
any element or direction that would lead to resources being denied if they failed to
take the advice, moral or otherwise, of the counsellors. And there was no evidence to
suggest that counsellors gave advice in regards to their clients taking on a moral
framework based on religious dictates such issues could have included the faith-
based view of single parenthood or the lack of a work ethic. That type of assistance
was not viewed as being the volunteers’ responsibility. Therefore, the hungry were
fed; those in need were comforted, including those who ‘did the wrong thing’.
Even though there was little evidence of bridging capital between volunteers and clients, there was evidence of bonding capital between volunteers and managers. The collective Christian consciousness contributed to FBOs being a nice place to work, for volunteers and managers. Apart from social and economic similarities, all held the commonality of faith. Other studies have shown that homogenous groups, those with similar beliefs, norms, social background or economic status, are much more compatible and experience fewer tensions as there is less likelihood of conflicting views and prejudice emerging (Chatman, 2010). In other words, those with similar types of capital, in this case predominantly religious, are much more likely to form strong cohesive groups which provide benefits for those who fit in (Bourdieu, 1986). Enjoymment is a major aspect of this cohesiveness even if the volunteering role brings with it some difficult situations, and complex issues. If centres were cohesive, and there was limited tension between volunteers, managers and, most importantly, clients (particularly during assistance), services would be focused on their underlying objective; to show those in need the love of God. Angst or tensions arising from denial or unavailability of services was something the volunteers and managers wanted to avoid. Therefore, most of the time clients were given some help, even if it was not the assistance they sought. This was thought to be a better outcome than outright denial of assistance and lessened the risk of the work environment becoming conflict ridden, as working in an FBO that was ‘a nice place to be’ was also a very important aspect in relation to volunteering.

In wanting to show clients the love of God in an environment of care and stability, the overriding importance and benefit of faith in the relationships between volunteers and clients becomes abundantly clear. These ‘short-term’ connections,
within the confines of the FBO, could be seen as a temporary bridge. Thaut (2009) contends that faith is the ‘mechanism’ in which the desire to show clients from a diversity of backgrounds, habits and socioeconomic status, a loving God took precedence in the delivery of services. This mirrors the sacrifice of Jesus’ said to be perfect, as he is the ‘bridge’ to God for a sinful world. As John 3:16 highlights: ‘for God so loved the world that He gave His only Son so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life’. The bridge analogy has provenance in theology. This is where the importance of showing unbelievers the benefits of faith manifests through the faithful into the larger ‘sinful’ world and how faith-based assistance provides the vehicle in which the wider world can be reached without clients actually having to go to church, an important aspect of faith-based services.

As this study has shown, faith-based capital was limited: relationships did not exist outside of the faith-based client-volunteer scenario. Interactions took place only within the work setting with little in the way of any long-term relationships evolving between clients and volunteers. The focus of provision was for volunteers and managers to create the opportunity for clients to form a relationship with God. They were merely the vehicles which could make this happen. As far as the volunteers were concerned, a relationship with God was the most important relationship clients could have, as God would provide understanding, patience and support in regards to their situation and the complexities of life in general.

The social capital and faith-based literature speaks of the importance of trust building between diverse groups. Relationships are built and, therefore, reliant on trust developing between social agents, and indeed trust is important for social
cohesiveness and individual well-being (Nicola & Martin, 2011; Putnam, 2000; Tonkiss, 1999; Wuthnow, 2004b). This study indicates that even though many of the volunteers had spent a number of years working with the poor from a range of backgrounds, distrust was at times a defining element in those relationships reflecting both the ‘dark and light’ view of volunteering (Cox, 2000). Could distrust and overcoming it play a greater role in social relationships than is taken account of by the social capital literature? And if it does, what are the mechanisms other than faith that contribute to overcoming it? These are important questions in relation to social cohesiveness as even those who felt God was watching them harboured distrust of those they sought to help. Faith bridged the distrust and judgments allowing for a short-term connection to be established with those in need (even those viewed as doing the wrong thing). Clearly, however, relationships between volunteers and clients were no more than a short-term faith-based intervention with little broader political or social considerations. This did little to help people get ahead and did little to resolve the problem of entrenched poverty.

Faith and the well-being of others

It may seem counterintuitive but even though volunteers and managers were often sceptical of many client ‘stories’ they still wished to have more in the way of resources to be able to help in a substantial way. Having limited resources clashed with their underlying mission to show those in need the limitless love of God, as God was perceived as generous. However, due to the constraints of their budgets, they were limited in what they could do, and what they would have liked to be able to do for clients and this led to tensions. For the volunteers and managers working in
FBOs in the Hunter, Jesus’ concern for the poor was an inherent value, illustrating what Baker (2009) calls the spiritual capital of faith-based groups. The combination of faith and undertaking works resulted in volunteers and managers exhibiting a strong and inherent faith-based moral ethos as a guide for living for themselves and for their clients. All wished that clients would come to faith. However, this was coupled with a concern and an attitude of what could be called resigned acceptance of those clients deemed to be doing the wrong thing, which may or may not have led to their disadvantaged position.

It is at the intersection of the wish for clients to come to faith and the recognition that those in the direst need deserved support regardless of why they were in poverty, that the role of faith in faith-based provision differs from the paternalistic expectations of the state. Through its various administrative processes, the state sought to punish those who did not conform to the community’s high moral expectations, particularly the long-term unemployed, single mothers and even those who the state accused of exaggerating the extent of their disabilities. From the perspective of the state, the worth of clients was linked to their ability or inability to gain employment. They were often denied services if they failed, including access to a pension rather than a Newstart benefit and their needs at a state level were not met. Their worth was mediated through an economic discourse of dependency viewed as deviant from mainstream values which placed a higher value on individual responsibility than on universal rights (Travers, 2005). However, volunteers and managers sought to ‘meet people where they were at’ (Manager interview 1) and to address their needs based on their conception of clients being creations of God and, therefore, deserving of assistance (in line with how they felt God would have wanted
them to treat His ‘creations’). The needy merely had to prove their need.

Political assumptions and faith-based provision

As the discussion has already highlighted, faith-based provision does not solve the problems of poverty. The awarding of contracts to faith-based organisations as a large-scale moral solution to welfare was not based on any hard evidence in this Australian context. Ostensibly, these claims drew on evidence from the USA. There was virtually no evidence drawn from Australian conditions, and the little that could be identified was anecdotal (Bartkowski and Regis, 2003; Costello, 2005; Maddox, 2005; Mendes, 2005; Olasky, 1992, 2000; Wallis, 2005). As policy or political rhetoric these claims were embedded within a conservative ideology in which a number of assumptions arose in regards to the poor, the people of faith who sought to help them, and the economic system with increasingly individualistic and paternalistic neoliberal markets (Evans, et al., 2005; Lewis, 2007; Mead, 1986; Morgen & Gonzales, 2008; Schram, et al., 2008; Stilwell, 1993; Yeatman, 2004). Firstly, the Howard government assumed that the poor had no religious inclination, morals or work ethic. Faith, in the form of Protestant Christianity, embraces a high regard for an individualistic work ethic, and this ethic was all that was needed to rescue the idle from their impoverished situation (Olasky, 2000; Sejersted, 2011; Walsh, 2000; Weber, 1958). Little thought was given to alternative structural impediments. Instead paternalistic measures were put in place to make people seek independence from the state.

Secondly, in regards to the people of faith, politicians upheld, and some
commentators argued, that staff of FBOs who have a high rate of religiosity, placed a high value on proselytising (Costello, 2003, 2005; Ebaugh et al., 2006) but this was not true for the FBOs in this study, even though the participants were highly religious. Thirdly, the purely ideological assumption held by the Liberal-Coalition government was that the market economy could accommodate everyone who sought and wanted work, hence those on benefits could be demonised as lazy, workshy, addicted or of poor character, a stance not even the volunteers and managers adhered to, thereby seeking to close the debate in relation to other causes of poverty (Adams, 2002; Engels, 2006; Mitchell, 1984; Olasky, 2000; Walsh, 2000).

Although this study did not seek to gain data on the religiosity of clients, in regards to the first political assumption, it is important to address the claim that poverty is linked to the relationship someone does or does not have with the Christian God. As the data highlighted, nearly half the clients would not have minded if religion were mentioned during assistance. This is not to argue that all respondents held a religious mindset, but to a degree, the evidence indicated religious tendencies. This was not totally unexpected. Christianity has influenced Australian society since colonial times. Therefore, a majority of people would hold, whether they were cognisant of it or not, a moral framework influenced by Christian values (Frame, 2006). Of course, this data was drawn from clients during times of stress resonating with the conclusions of Norris and Inglehart’s (2004) ‘security thesis’ in which religiosity goes up in times of fear of external safety, particularly when alternative solutions to problems faced were not available. The Howard

36 Conceptualisation of religiosity by Ebaugh et al., (2006)
government sought to imprint on the minds of the mainstream voting population the argument that those who were dependent on the state, and fit into the moral conceptualisation of the ‘undeserving’ were immoral and lacking values.

This is a generalised view of the poor, which was not substantiated by the government and instead has been attributed to its tactic of using wedge politics to maintain its political ascendancy (Walsh, 2000; Wear, 2008). This is not to argue that welfare policy did not contain an embedded moral undercurrent at its inception, for example, the categories of those to be included in the very first payments provided by the fledgling Australian state were regarded as the deserving poor, in particular the aged and disabled (see Parliamentary Library, 2011). What was different under the Howard government, from a post-welfare state perspective, was the total focus on immorality as being the main, if not only cause of poverty, and the negative stereotype the Liberal-National Coalition government upheld aimed at those claiming benefits underlined all their political discussions in relation to welfare policy and reform. This grouping of the poor together could be viewed as the ‘undifferentiated poor’ (Handler & Hasenfeld, 1991, p. 46) where complexity of need was distilled down to the problem of personal behaviour. Therefore, all had their problems cast as belonging to the same issue: lack of morals. In the modern era of welfare policy this, ‘back to the future’ take on welfare dependency, aligned with the claims of the Christian religious Right (Maddox, 2005; Wallis, 2005; Walsh, 2000). The convergence of political conservatism and Christian moral judgement left the vulnerable in the Hunter with little recourse but to seek the services of FBOs.

The volunteers and managers of this study however were aware that many
issues impacting on their clients were structural in nature. In particular, they highlighted the increasing cost of accommodation and the daily struggle of trying to survive on limited incomes. They were well aware of the deprivation faced by clients but within the confines of the FBO they did not seek to politicise the issue of poverty but intervened on an individual basis despite this broader awareness.

Reviewing the typology of FBOs provided by Sider and Unruh (in Chapman 2009, 209-210), it can be seen that those in the Hunter held some aspects of both the faith-centred and faith-affiliated classifications as highlighted in italics:

1. **Faith-permeated organisations** where the connection with religious faith is evident at all levels of mission, staffing, governance and support. Social action projects incorporate extensive and explicit religious content.

2. **Faith-centred organisations** which are founded for a religious purpose and remain strongly connected with the religious community through funding sources and affiliation. The governing board and most staff share the organisation’s faith commitments. Social action projects include explicit religious references or activities, although allow for opt-out of religious content by participants.

3. **Faith-affiliated organisations** which retain some influence of their religious founders, such as their mission statement, but do not require staff to affirm religious beliefs or practices. *Social action does not*

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37 600,000 Newstart beneficiaries live on $35.00 per day and are classified as living in poverty due to insufficient indexation of benefits (ACOSS, 2011).
typically incorporate explicit religious content, although religious tenets may be included in a general way, for example, by making spiritual resources available to participants or through conveying messages through non-verbal acts of compassion.

4. **Faith-background organisations** which tend to appear secular although they may have a historical tie to a faith tradition. Some personnel may be motivated by religion, but faith commitments are not part of the selection process for staff or boards. Social action projects contain no explicit faith content, besides perhaps their position in a religious setting.

5. **Faith-secular partnerships** which arise where a secular organisation joins with one or more explicitly religious organisations. The organisation is typically secular in its administration but it relies on the religious partnership for volunteers and support.

Chapman (2009) points out that this typology should be applied loosely and that FBOs and the way they administer services are much more complex than these categories can capture. They can contain, as Hunter FBOs do, a mix of characteristics from different categories.

This highlights the divergence between what may be expected of FBO provision in relation to a verbalisation of a moral discourse across the sector and the reality of it. The Howard government claimed that FBOs would have faith-permeated characteristics. However, those in the Hunter sat lower down the scale in regards to the manifestation of overt religious dialogue. In other words, making
assumptions in regards to how organisations, may or may not work at the coalface makes policy formulation difficult, misguided and bound for failure. If faith-based organisations form part of the shadow state, in regards to being offshoots of government (Wolch, 1990), how they actually operate in regards to individual interactions is shadowy once again giving rise to ‘gray zones’ where the excluded are included in ways that may differ from policy expectations (Evans, 2010).

The end result, of the study indicated, that many, including those with mental health issues, missed out on adequate services. Being ill and poor severely limited their options in getting their basic and mental health needs met. For those in faith-based provision, although undertaken with the best intentions, their services were less than adequate in meeting the needs of the community in this regard. In comparison, the middle classes were deemed more deserving, and were provided with welfare (not referred to as such) via mainstream schemes, such as the 30% rebate for private health insurance introduced in 2002 by the Howard government, which helped secure those who could afford it top-quality health services (Ford, 2002). This cost the taxpayer two billion dollars per year; of course the privatization of health was based on the belief in market forces, which the government ironically subsidised for the wealthy (Ford, 2002; Saunders, 2002). It seems that in seeking to cut back on welfare state spending, there was one rule for the very poor and another for the better off who constituted the bulk of the electorate the Howard government courted through populist politics (Aulich & O’Flynn, 2007; Wear, 2008).

As has been demonstrated in the case of those Hunter-based FBOs with government contracts, funding is not directly linked to need in the community but on
the ability of organisations to provide services within a very tight budget. Therefore, in relation to the funding pie, those who cannot cut down on the cost of provision may miss out on funding and in all probability have to close their doors. It impacts not only on the ability of the local community to access much-needed resources but also on the ability of the faithful to follow their faith by way of works and, indeed, any thought of the sector to make any long-term plans.

The provision of services via the reliance on volunteers is one of the ways faith-based organisations can keep costs down, and why government was keen to use their services. But this reliance also brings with it a number of issues, which in turn, impact on the stability of the sector. There were times when providers had enough volunteers to administer services, and times when they did not, leading to a reduction in services when volunteers were unavailable. For example, the main regional centre relied on four to five volunteers to come in each week to provide services. This gave them the ability to see approximately 30 - 40 clients a day. If one volunteer could not come in on any given day, their client count would be reduced, meaning that needy people would miss out on assistance on that day. This underlines the premise of faith-based assistance in that there is no guarantee that services will be available and accessible to those in need on a regular basis. In other words, there is no accountability in relation to services always being available; contracts have not changed this situation. Also, if clients need more assistance than the first centre they approached could provide, they had to seek assistance from another FBO or NGO and relate their hardship story all over again to another person who, in all probability would be a volunteer. Assistance for welfare, once Centrelink is no longer an option, is rather piecemeal. In other words, there is no uniformity or consistency in faith-
based provision from a regional perspective in the Hunter Region.

The study also highlighted that service providers across the region differed from each other in regards to services and resources, including their hours of operation. Databases such as phone books and those located on the Internet directories can be misleading due to the instability of the FBO sector and contain unreliable information about availability of services. People were expected to help themselves but within this system there are no clear pathways to uniform assistance. Some communities only had smaller providers with very limited resources. If clients were not able to travel to larger centres away from their communities, access to services outside their area was limited due to a boundary rule (clients must live within the community the FBO services) regarding FBO provision. Clients in need had to wait for their local centre to open and this could mean waiting over the weekend. For some clients and their dependents, this could mean going hungry for a couple of days.

As the Hunter people working in them readily acknowledged, FBOs do not represent in any way, a long-term solution to poverty. The volunteers and managers viewed their role as helping the poor in a caring and compassionate way so that they can experience the love of God through their actions. This aim, however, became increasingly difficult as they were drawn into a welfare system underpinned by economic concerns that benefitted the better off. All clients who accessed Hunter FBOs had little in the way of resources, particularly money. Therefore, they could do

38 FBOs where the volunteers and managers worked were not open over the weekend. If in need of food at this time clients would have to seek out alternative sources of support.
little to meet their own needs other than access faith-based services in the hope that their particular need would be met.

If the faith-based sector wants to emerge stronger from this situation, it needs to acknowledge that, under the current system of contract for service, little is being achieved to reduce the incidence of poverty. This is not a criticism of faith-based provision in regard to their place in a neoliberal welfare state, but a collective acknowledgement that this type of emergency provision does not solve poverty. By not acknowledging this (particularly at a managerial and head-office level) and taking government monies, FBOs should be more forthcoming as to what their services might realistically achieve. Their services do bring people into the realm of God, which is one of their main objectives, but for all intents and purposes, provision is still charitable assistance.

**Future Directions and Recommendations:**

Those in the FBO sector who make the arrangements to enter into contracts with governments need to recognise that they may be contributing to a situation which results in governments increasingly limiting funding due to competition between providers. In turn, this results in fewer resources being directed to the most vulnerable not only due to FBOs providing an alternative to state provision, but due to the focus on moral behaviour which allows governments to withdraw welfare from those deemed undeserving. As a consequence there also needs to be a recognition that new groups of those in poverty may well have emerged as a result of FBOs’ (at least the larger FBOs) acceptance of breaching and participation
requirements. This would appear to be a necessary prerequisite to any further political collaboration to change the welfare system to be more inclusive of the marginalised poor. Hence a starting point for the social and welfare FBO sector would be the need to be realistic and much more critical of itself in relation to what is actually being done to help the poor. Many of the sectors advertisements give the impression that they change lives; this some may do, but for those in the Hunter Valley the supply of welfare and social support is, at best, a short-term solution to the long-term issue of entrenched poverty. As the situation currently stands, welfare policy subsumed to market state objectives, which seeks to put the economic health of the nation above the needs of its most vulnerable will continue to be about making sure the poor are fed, and at the very least have somewhere to turn in times of emotional and financial stress. The FBO sector provides much needed resources but makes up for its limitation with care and compassion. Largely, FBOs remain autonomously and have little to do with each other on a day to day basis except when referring clients to organisations supplying the same sort of service. In this scenario, clients can be led on a merry go round in search of assistance. So truth needs to come from the faith-based sector in relation to what they actually do to help and how their contractual relationship with the state impacts on those in need as they currently operate. A much more honest and open account of poverty which has been missing from the debate for a very long time needs to once again take centre stage (Adams, 2002).

Collectively, the sector holds considerable power and hence has the potential to shift the focus of the debate away from the needs of the economy back to the needs of people based on structural and policy impacts rather than purely focusing
upon moral issues. It is recommended that the faith-based sector reinvigorate the
debate surrounding the long overlooked issue of poverty by using all its resources,
especially the knowledge and experience of their counsellors, volunteers, staff and
clients. In other words, what is needed is a grassroots revival where those who
understand the issues can be heard by those who make the decisions, both at the
managerial level of FBOs and government. An alliance of providers would hold
quite a significant level of power in relation to having their voices heard, as opposed
to ACOSS, which no doubt does a wonderful job speaking for social service
providers across the board, but does not provide any direct services to the public; it
is uncertain whether any criticism of government policy would be tempered by their
reliance upon government funding. The FBO sector, in contrast, provides much
needed services in partnership with the state (now driven by a Labor government),
which is also seeking to reform welfare and tighten up access to benefits by invoking
the need for increased individual responsibility (Australian Labor, 2011). In this
respect, the dynamic of neoliberal welfare provision and its favoured discourses of
free market outcomes and economic objectives above social needs remain dominant.

The faith-based sector must once again become the voice for the
marginalised. Collectively, the sector has the potential to leave a major gap in state–
funded welfare provision. Hence it has the leverage to force the government to listen
to its claims with regard to its clientele. The global financial crisis has shown once
again the volatility of the market and the problems associated with free market
objectives. As more people from the middle and bottom of the economic ladder feel
the effects of the rising cost of living, the faith-based sector will have a much firmer
platform upon which to raise its concerns, and to keep poverty at the forefront of
political debate.

Therefore it is also recommended that, due to the contractual relationship that the FBO sector has with government, and the ever present risk of defunding, (particularly of individual organisations that speak out on policy issues), that the only way to secure their position is to form an alliance. Those working in FBOs in the Hunter could establish a committee to coordinate their welfare and political objectives, engage in advocacy, and undertake research. They could also pool organisational and financial resources to overcome the fragmentation of services in the Hunter. This has already been achieved to a limited degree by the Salvation Army, The Samaritans and Wesley Mission for the provision of ‘Christmas Cheer’ which is undertaken during the months of November and December each year. Clients attend one of these service providers and databases between these organisations are linked allowing the provision of Christmas toys and food to be streamlined and well-coordinated. Importantly, by coming together they would create lines of communication across the sector that could speak with one voice about the complexity of issues facing their clients. It could be unashamedly regionally focused. Therefore the sector could use its grassroots knowledge to establish alternative programs other than giving limited assistance to those struggling with poverty who face little help from those at the federal government level.

Though it is unlikely that services would amalgamate, an alliance is the most that can be hoped for in the current context. Representatives from the FBO sector across the Hunter Region could be invited onto a faith-based committee. One of its
main aims would be to involve local government representatives, both state and federal, and high level managers of FBOs by inviting them to meetings and highlighting the needs of their clients which are not just based on a lack of morals, but include welfare policy itself. By opening up the lines of communication with each other, the committee could also establish a much more comprehensive overview of the services in the region, by way of service mapping. A database could be continually updated and available to clients on request. This would not only help clients, but also volunteers who are often unaware of what other services are available. It does not have to include only FBOs, but also other services in the region. FBOs in each council area could have their own comprehensive database which is incorporated in to the regional one. This would achieve a number of outcomes: it would assist clients to negotiate the minefield of fragmented services in the Hunter Region; it would allow the committee to evaluate FBO provision across the region; and to develop strategies for meeting unmet need. The role of the committee would include the election of one or two people to develop a database for the collection of this information. Client feedback would be very important in highlighting these gaps in provision. Client feedback tools such as the CASS could be developed for FBOs across the regions to capture this data. However FBOs also need to engage clients in dialogue in relation to what they need to help them in a much more substantive way, particularly with the obstacles they face in gaining employment. Finally, FBOs need to be open and honest about what their services can achieve, and also, the detrimental effects their contracts may have on their clients – in particular, involvement with Centrelink and the breaching obligations. Each centre or service provider should understand what the other is doing, and the impact that it
has on their services. A Hunter faith-based alliance would help highlight issues that are particular to the Hunter region. Currently, welfare policy is homogenous and individuals in different regions are treated in the same way, even though they may face different issues. Welfare needs to be more targeted: an alliance could open up avenues for understanding which is much more compatible to the needs of those they seek to assist.

This study has shown that FBOs in the Hunter have struggled to meet increasing and complex needs on limited resources within market-driven economic and welfare policy based on highly moralistic and paternalistic aims. In this environment, care and compassion became the most important aspect of faith-based provision. Bringing faith into the policy arena focused predominantly on morals and responsibility-based contractual obligations to manage rather than overcoming poverty. It put more pressure on the seriously underfunded and ill-equipped FBO sector that could do little more than plug the ever-widening gap in the availability of services and the unfair redistribution of society’s resources. Volunteers and managers wished they could help in a much more substantial way. As a collective, they would have the power to advocate and make changes for those in need, in the broader policy environment but with a focus on the needs of those in the Hunter. Many believe it is not the role of the faithful to be political even though they witness the daily struggle of those in need and feel a duty of care towards them. By gaining their collective voice, the future of faith-based provision should be in upholding the rights of the clients to access their basic needs, through adequate state provision and well-funded services such as FBOs. This will only be achieved through an alliance that takes advocacy seriously and highlights the complexities of poverty that are very
real and have little to do with the assumed individual moral failings of the poor.
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APPENDICES
Appendix 1: Information Package

22nd August 2006

INFORMATION ON PARTICIPATION IN THE PhD RESEARCH PROJECT

Title of PhD Research Project


Researchers and Contact Details

Ms Sandra Reeves (PhD Candidate)
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Email: Sandra.Reeves@studentmail.newcastle.edu.au

Dr Jim Jose (Co Thesis Supervisor)
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Phone: 02-49215026
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jim.jose@newcastle.edu.au

Professor Mel Gray (Co Thesis Supervisor)
PhD, Professor of Social Work
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Sandra Reeves is a PhD candidate from the University of Newcastle who is currently undertaking a study that seeks to understand and explore the role of faith in the practice of volunteer counselling and emergency relief in faith based (non-government) organisations (FBOs) in the Hunter.

**WHAT IS THE RESEARCH ABOUT?**

The research is an exploration of the role of faith in the provision of face-to-face volunteer counselling and social support in the FBNGO sector in the Hunter. The first stage of the research involves the collection of information by survey from both volunteer counsellors and centre managers working within the FBNGO sector. The second stage involves follow up in-depth interviews with survey participants who indicate a desire to be involved. You can choose to participate in both stages, or just complete the survey, or not be involved at all. The following information is provided to answer any questions you may have about the research.

**HOW IS THE DATA BEING COLLECTED AND MANAGED?**

The research involves two types of data collection. The first stage is a survey mail out to all FBOs in the Hunter. Volunteer counsellors and managers are asked to complete a survey that is specific to their role at the centre. This process should take approximately 20-25 minutes of your time. Please note that if you work at more than one centre, you only need to fill in one survey. Please make it specific to the centre at which you first received it – i.e. only one survey per person. The second stage involves follow up in-depth interviews with willing participants who forward their contact details, along with a completed survey, to the researcher.

An information package containing surveys was sent to the manager of your NGO. It has been requested of managers that your centre participate in the research project. If you have received a survey then your manager has agreed for your organisation to be involved in this research.
All participants have been given a self-addressed pre-paid envelope so that you can return your survey anonymously. However, the envelope will have a number on it. This number indicates the centre you are from. Once the researcher receives the envelope, your centre will be marked as having returned surveys. The envelope will then be destroyed and will not be linked to you or your centre again in any way. This process is undertaken so that centres that participate and return surveys in the first round will not be included in a second mail out of surveys. Once surveys are returned, they will be given a unique coded identifier, the information from the survey will be entered into a computer database.

At all times when not in use by the researcher, the survey will be securely locked away in a cupboard at the University of Newcastle in a designated room. All surveys and contact details will only be accessible to the researcher. Contact details will be separated from surveys and kept in a different locked cupboard to the surveys at the University of Newcastle. This will prevent the identification of survey results to contact details maintaining the privacy of participants. Participation in any stage of the research process is entirely voluntary and this includes completion and return of surveys and contact details.

If you decide to participate further in the research process by including your contact details with the survey, you will be contacted by phone by the researcher. Due to the design of the research it may be the case that not all participants who provide their contact details will be needed. However, that does not mean that your voluntary involvement is not important. For the research to be a success, all individuals who are willing to participate are asked to be involved. The researcher will discuss this aspect of the research design with you, if you decide to be involved further, so that you understand the research process. The researcher will also remind you that your involvement is entirely voluntary.

The second stage of the research involves in depth interviews. The interviews will take approximately 1 to 2 hours of your time. The interviews will be conducted at a place and time that suits you. You will be asked by the researcher for your
permission to tape the interviews. All participants will be given a pseudonym, which will be used in any written, verbal or visual representation of the research. However you can refuse to be taped if you feel uncomfortable about it. In this event the researcher will take notes instead. The tapes and written data collected during in depth interviews will be stored, when not in use by the researcher, in locked cupboards at the University of Newcastle. You will be sent a copy of the interview in a word document so that you can make changes and ask questions about the information if you so wish. Once you have indicated to the researcher that you are happy with the information the researcher will start to analyse the data. This will include putting information onto a computer database. Databases used in the research process for both surveys and in-depth interviews will only be accessible by the researcher who will have a password in which to access them.

HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE DISTRIBUTED AND USED?

The information obtained is being used to gain an understanding of the role of faith in the FBNGO sector in the Hunter. The information informs and contributes to a PhD study undertaken by a student researcher. Information will be discussed in articles and at conferences written and attended by the student. This information will be useful in understanding the provision of services provided by the faith based NGO sector in relation to the reforms of the welfare state; therefore the information is also relevant to changes to social policy. The FBNGOs that participate will be given a report, written in lay terms, outlining the research findings. It is hoped that this information will help inform the FBNGO sector about the role of faith in the provision of their services.

WHO CAN PROVIDE FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESEARCH?

If you have any questions about the research please do not hesitate to contact the researcher, Sandra Reeves on: 0406348134 or by email:

Sandra.Reevess@studentmail.newcastle.edu.au
If you have any concerns regarding the manner in which this research is being conducted please speak to Sandra’s supervisor, Dr Jim Jose, School of Economics, Politics & Tourism, the University of Newcastle, on: 49 215026. Or by email: Jim.Jose@newcastle.edu.au.

WHAT IF I DON’T WANT ANY INVOLVEMENT?

Involvement with any stage of this research project is entirely voluntary. There will be no adverse consequences for any one individual or FBNGO if you decide against participating in this research.

WHAT IF I JUST WANT TO FILL IN THE SURVEY?

If you would just like to be involved in the first stage of the research but not the second involving the in-depth interviews, just fill in the survey questions and return it in the self-addressed prepaid envelope. Do not write your contact details anywhere on the survey.

Complaints

This project has been approved by the University's Human Research Ethics Committee. Approval No H–199-0306.

The University requires that you be informed that if you have any complaint concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted it may be given to the supervisor or, if an independent person is preferred, to: Human Research Ethic Officer, The University of Newcastle Callaghan NSW 2308, Telephone: (02) 49 216 333.

We hope that you would want to be involved in this important research. However, if you do not wish to, thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Thank you for you for considering this request.
Dr Jim Jose
Co-Research Supervisor
Professor Mel Gray
Co-Research Supervisor
Sandra Reeves B.Soc.Sc. (Hons)
Student Researcher

22nd August 2006
Survey Cover Sheet

Title of PhD Research Project


Researchers and Contact Details

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Thank you for your time in filling out this survey.
Appendix 2: Volunteer Counsellors: Survey 1

This survey seeks to explore the role of faith in the provision of volunteer counselling in the Hunter Region. Faith in this survey is defined as:

*Being sure of what is hoped for, and certain of what is not seen*

(If you work at more than one centre, please only fill in the first survey you received and relate your answers to the centre in which you received it)

Section 1 (please tick appropriate box)

1. Male ☐ Female ☐

2. Age

____________________________________________________________________

3. Length of time as a volunteer counsellor with current organisation

_____________________

4. Hours per week you work as a volunteer counsellor

_________________________________

5. Do you work at more than one centre per week as a volunteer counsellor?

   Yes ☐ No ☐

6. Please circle the number of centres you work at:
7. Qualification in counselling *(please tick the highest qualification that you have)*

Certificate  □

Diploma  □

Advanced Diploma  □

Degree  □

Post Graduate Degree  □

Other  □

None  □

Please write down the institution where you obtained your qualification

____________________________________________________________________

8. Is this organisation faith based?       Yes □ No □

9. Qualification in religious counselling (please tick)       Yes □ No □

Please write down where you obtained your qualification
10. Target group/s of your organisation

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Groups (CALD)  

Youth  

Sole parents  

The Unemployed  

Families  

Disabled  

Indigenous people  

Women  

The elderly  

All of the above  

Other (please state)  

11. Type of services your organisation provides (Please tick)
Utility vouchers ☐ Grief counselling ☐

Food vouchers ☐ Drug and Alcohol counselling ☐

Food in kind ☐ Financial counselling ☐

Clothing ☐ Relationship counselling ☐

Household goods ☐ Individual counselling ☐

Transport assistance ☐ Referral to specialist services ☐

Infant needs ☐ Advocacy for client needs ☐

Cash assistance ☐ Negotiation ☐

Home visits ☐ Street relief ☐

Other forms of assistance your organisation may offer not listed above (Please write below)

__________________________________________________________

12. Faith affiliation of organisation (Please tick one)

Catholic ☐ Orthodox ☐

Anglican ☐ Buddhism ☐
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salvation Army</th>
<th>Judaism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>Hinduism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh Day Adventist</td>
<td>Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniting Church</td>
<td>Latter Day Saints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostal</td>
<td>Oriental Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brethren</td>
<td>Presbyterian and Reformed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churches of Christ</td>
<td>Australian Aboriginal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jehovah’s Witnesses</td>
<td>Traditional Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Please state)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. What is your faith?

8. What type of faith based group activities do you do regularly? For example, attend church service, bible study, men’s or women’s group (Please tick one).

More than once a week □
15. What type of individual faith based practices do you undertake regularly? For example, daily prayer, meditation, and reading religious text (please write down)

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Please turn over for section two of the survey

Section Two: This section seeks your own personal thoughts on the questions asked. How much detail you provide is up to you. Write as little or as much as you think is needed to explain your view. Only answer the questions that you decide are appropriate.
1. Please write down why you volunteer as a counsellor in a faith-based organisation

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

2. In what ways do you think faith can help deal with difficulties in life?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
3a. Describe the importance of faith in your counselling practice

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

3b. Describe how faith can help clients overcome problems

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
4. Describe the techniques you use to help clients overcome their problems: For example, do you use prayer, scripture, non-religious techniques or a mixture of both?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
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____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

5. Describe generally how you think clients respond to the use of the techniques you use

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
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____________________________________________________________________
6. In your opinion, can miracles happen if clients turn to God for help with their problems?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

7a. During your work as a volunteer counsellor, describe one or two issues that you have felt uncomfortable dealing with

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
7b. Describe how you dealt with them

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

8. If you have any other comments in relation to this research please feel free to write them down in the space provided below

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions. We know your time is valuable and we appreciate both your time and your interest in this topic. Please return this survey in the self-addressed reply paid envelop that you where provided with when you received this survey.

If you would like to volunteer to be involved in the next stage of this research, please read on for the relevant information, and include your contact details on the last page.

All personal details will be securely stored away in a locked cupboard and will only be used to make contact with you. At no time will your personal details be used in any other way in the research process or outcomes.

**Stage two of the research process**

The next stage of the research process will involve follow-up in-depth interviews with individuals, both volunteer counsellors and managers, who elect to participate further. The in-depth interviews will be conducted at a suitable time and place for participants. The interviews are expected to take approximately 1-2 hours of your time. The interview questions will be based on the answers given in the surveys, drawing on the themes and perspectives of the volunteer counsellors and managers in relation to the role of faith in volunteer counselling practice.

Due to the research design, not everyone who puts their name down to participate further will be required to be involved. However, that does not mean the research is reliant only on a few people providing their contact details. For the research to be successful, everyone who is willing to be involved is asked to complete the information below. All individuals who do so will be contacted by the researcher to inform them of the requirements involved in further participation, this process however, may take a few months.

Throughout the research process no-one will be named or identified in any way. No personal or identifying information will be reported or written in any reports,
articles, the final thesis or presentations. All contact details will be stored confidentially. Only the researcher will have access to them. Once the research has been completed all personal information will be destroyed.

Again, thank you for your time and patience with this survey.

Please provide your contact details on the next page.

**Contact details:** Please note that supplying these contact details means that you are agreeing to be contacted to participate in a face-to-face interview.

Name ______________________________________________________

Phone number _______________________________________________

Email ______________________________________________________

Position held at centre (please tick one)

Manager ☐ Volunteer counsellor ☐

If you would like to be contacted through your organization please indicate the work number and state that it is a ‘work’ phone number.

On receipt of these details the researcher will make contact with you as soon as possible. The researcher will explain the research process, including the research design, how much of your time will be needed if you participate further and the time frame of the project. If you have any queries regarding any matter to do with this research project, you can contact the researcher Sandra Reeves on 0406348134.

*Thank you*
Appendix 3: Manager Survey 2

This survey seeks to explore the role of faith in the provision of volunteer counselling in the Hunter Region. Faith is defined in the survey as:

*Being sure of what is hoped for, and certain of what is not seen.*

Section 1 (please tick appropriate box)

1. Male ☐ Female ☐

2. Age ______

3. Length of service as manager at current organisation ______________

4. Faith Affiliation of organisation (please tick one)

   - Catholic ☐ Orthodox ☐
   - Anglican ☐ Buddhism ☐
   - Salvation Army ☐ Judaism ☐
   - Baptist ☐ Hinduism ☐
   - Seventh Day Adventist ☐ Islam ☐
   - Uniting Church ☐ Latter Day Saints ☐
Pentecostal  □  Oriental Christian  □
Brethren  □  Presbyterian and Reformed  □
Churches of Christ  □  Australian Aboriginal  □
Jehovah’s Witnesses  □  Traditional Religion  □
Lutheran  □  None  □

Other (please state)

5. Target group/s of organisation.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Groups (CALD)  □
Youth  □
Sole parents  □
The Unemployed  □
Families  □
Disabled  □
Indigenous people  □
6. **Type of services your organisation provides (please tick)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Type</th>
<th>Ticked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Utility vouchers</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grief counselling</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food vouchers</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug and Alcohol counselling</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food in kind</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial counselling</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship counselling</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household goods</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual counselling</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport assistance</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral to specialist services</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant needs</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy for client needs</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash assistance</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home visits</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street relief</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other forms of assistance your organisation may offer not listed above (please write below)

____________________________________________________________________

1. Is your organisation under contractual obligation with government to provide any of the services listed above, such as emergency relief, counselling etc.? (please tick)

   Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please write down type of welfare service/s and approximate amount of funding received for per annum for service/s.

____________________________________________________________________

9. How many volunteer counsellors are currently providing a counselling service at your organisation?

____________________________________________________________________

Are your counsellors subject to any type of regulation or regular review of their services? (please tick) Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please write down type of regulation/review and by whom it is imposed, i.e., Federal Government, head office, your own centre etc. For example, audit of services provided under contract to government, debriefing sessions at centre.
Section 2: Please write down your own thoughts in relation to the following questions. How much detail you provide is up to you. Write as little or as much as you think is needed to explain your view. Only answer the questions that you decide are appropriate

1. Describe how you view your organisation. For example do you view it as predominantly a religious organisation with a welfare arm or exclusively as a welfare service?
2. Describe how you recruit your volunteer counsellors.

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

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____________________________________________________________________

3. As manager, describe how important is it for volunteer counsellors to have a faith that is in accordance with your organisation’s philosophy and aims.

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

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____________________________________________________________________
4. Give your opinion regarding volunteer counsellors sharing their faith with clients.

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
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____________________________________________________________________
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5. Give your opinion regarding increasing government regulation of services provided by faith based NGOs to your organisation's aims and objectives.

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
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____________________________________________________________________
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____________________________________________________________________
6. In your opinion, what can faith based NGOs provide in relation to counselling services that state services fail to deliver?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

7. If you have any other comments in relation to the survey topic please write them down here.

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions. We know your time is valuable and we appreciate both your time and your interest in this topic. Please return this survey in the self-addressed reply paid envelop that you were provided with when you received this survey.

If you would like to volunteer to be involved in the next stage of this research, please read on for the relevant information, and include your contact details on the last page.

All personal details will be securely stored away in a locked cupboard and will only be used to make contact with you. At no time will your personal details be used in any other way in the research process or outcomes.

**Stage two of the research process**

The next stage of the research process will involve follow-up in-depth interviews with individuals, both volunteer counsellors and managers, who elect to participate further. The in-depth interviews will be conducted at a suitable time and place for participants. The interviews are expected to take approximately 1-2 hours of your time. The interview questions will be based on the answers given in the surveys, drawing on the themes and perspectives of the volunteer counsellors and managers in relation to the role of faith in volunteer counselling practice.

Due to the research design, not everyone who puts their name down to participate further will be required to be involved. However, that does not mean the research is reliant only on a few people providing their contact details. For the research to be successful, everyone who is willing to be involved is asked to complete the information below. All individuals who do so will be contacted by the researcher to inform them of the requirements involved in further participation, this process however, may take a few months.

Throughout the research process no one will be named or identified in any way. No personal or identifying information will be reported or written in any reports,
articles, the final thesis or presentations. All contact details will be stored confidentially. Only the researcher will have access to them. Once the research has been completed all personal information will be destroyed.

Again, thank you for your time and patience with this survey.

Please provide your contact details on the next page.

Contact details: Please note that supplying these contact details means that you are agreeing to be contacted to participate in a face to face interview.

Name _____________________________________________________

Phone number ______________________________________________

Email _____________________________________________________

Position held at centre: (please tick one)

Manager ρ Volunteer counsellor ρ

If you would like to be contacted through your organisation please indicate the work number and state that it is a ‘work’ phone number.

On receipt of these details the researcher will make contact with you as soon as possible. The researcher will explain the research process, including the research design, how much of your time will be needed if you participate further and the time frame of the project. If you have any queries regarding any matter to do with this research project, you can contact the researcher Sandra Reeves on 0406348134.

Thank you.
Appendix 4: Client Assessment of Services Survey

Please take a few minutes to fill in this form. This will help us to improve the counselling services that we provide to you. Please do not place your name on the form. The information you give us is confidential and will only be used for the internal assessment of counselling practice and research into the services provided by community welfare organisations.

A. Please indicate why you needed to access services at the centre today

(Please circle appropriate number or numbers. You may circle more than one)

1. Assistance with phone bill  
2. Assistance with electricity bill  
3. Food parcel  
4. Food voucher  
5. Clothing  
6. Furniture/Household goods  

7. Transport assistance  
8. Infant needs  
9. Cash assistance  
10. Pharmacy needs.  
11. Rent assistance  

19. Other (please write in the space provided)

B. How did you feel while waiting for your appointment at the centre?

(Please circle the answer that best describes your experience)

1. Hopeful  
2. Desperate  
3. Confused  
4. Depressed  

6. Apprehensive  
7. Isolated  
8. Relieved
5. Ashamed  9. Other (please write down) ________________

C. How did the person you saw for assistance make you feel?

(Please circle the answer that best describes your experience)

1. Welcome  5. Angry  9. Other (please write down)
2. Judged  6. Supported  ________________
3. Uplifted  7. Understood
4. Hopeful  8. Not understood

D. How would you describe the assistance that you received?

(Please circle the answer that best describes your experience)

1. Highly adequate  4. Very inadequate
2. Adequate  5. Can’t decide
3. Inadequate

E. How did you feel after your interview for assistance?

(Please circle the answer that best describes your experience)

1. Relieved  5. Unsupported  9. No different
2. Cared for  6. Uplifted  10. Other (please write down)
3. Hopeful  7. Depressed  ________________
4. Let down 8. Angry

F. Did the person who interviewed you talk about religion or express their faith to you during the interview? (Please circle appropriate number).

1. Yes 2. No

If yes, were you comfortable with it? If no, would you be comfortable with it?

1. Yes 2. No 1. Yes 2. No

G. If you did not have this centre to attend in times of need, who else could you turn to for assistance? (Please circle appropriate number or numbers).

7. A government service 8. Other faith-based welfare service 9. No-one
10. Can’t decide.
19. Other (please write down)

H. In the last 12 months how many times have you requested assistance from this centre? (Please circle)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I. Overall, was your request for assistance beneficial to you?

1. Yes 2. No

Please write down why briefly on the space provided below

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J. Please indicate, by placing a mark on the line below, your level of satisfaction with the service you received today.

Very satisfied    Satisfied    Not Satisfied

K. What is your age? ________

L. Are you:  1. Male  2. Female (please Circle).

M. Are you (please circle one).

5. Divorced

*If you have any other comments regarding the interview process please write them down in the space provided below.*

Thank you very much for taking the time to help our centre by filling in this assessment form!
Appendix 5: Instructions for ER interviewers for CASS

For ER volunteers

This survey will in no way be traced back to you – it will be completely anonymous. Therefore you do not have to worry about any negative feedback, if any, being traced back to you personally. Anything negative will be looked from an organisational level, therefore please go about you interviewing as you would normally.

For clients

- Give Clients CASS after interview for ER
- Make clear to clients that filling out the CASS is voluntary – i.e. they do not have to if they do not want to and that it is completely confidential – they are not to put their names or any other identifying marks on survey.
- Tell them that if they don’t want to fill it in, this will not jeopardise future assistance or access to services.
- However also explain that survey will help to inform centre as to how it is supplying ER to clients and if changes need to be undertaken.
- Once client agrees, give them the CASS and direct them to the table in foyer where they can fill it out confidentially. Let them know that there is a pen at the table.
- Once they complete form they are to fold it up and put it in the collection bin that is provided.
- Let them know that only the researcher will be collecting the surveys.
- Thank them for participating.
Appendix 6: Preliminary In depth interview questions for volunteers

Personal biography

1. Length of time and hours spent volunteering.

2. What is your motivation for working as a volunteer?

3. If faith motivated, how long have you been a Christian? – (Historical context). If not faith motivated, own personal belief system.

Role of faith in life

4. How does faith impact on your own life?

5. Could you lead your life successfully without your faith?

Counselling practice and faith

6. Do you draw on your faith to help counsel those in need? If yes, in what way? If no, why not?

7. Are there any situations in which you would use prayer, bible readings etc. to help people seeking your assistance? And describe how they can help.

8. Do you think it is important for a client to focus on their spiritual health rather more than material concerns?

9. Describe any ‘miracle’ changes in people who have sought assistance from a FBNGO who have come to know Christ?
Faith and client issues

10. In what way do you think faith can help people overcome the problems they face?

11. From your personal experience, are people in crisis due to personal behaviour or are their problems related to wider social issues or a mixture of both?

12. What can make you angry with clients?

13. What type of issues would make you or have made you feel uncomfortable?

14. How would you deal/dealt with it?

15. Are there any issues you would refuse to help with, such as abortion, homosexuality, abuse of resources?

16. Do you ever feel that a client is beyond your help and if so why?

17. What do you view as being the main benefit of a FBNGO as opposed to a secular or non-faith organisation such as a government department, in relation to helping those in need?
Appendix 7: Preliminary In-depth interview Questions for Managers

Personal biography

1. Length of time as a Manager of a FBNGO

2. Faith background.

3. What is your personal view of the government welfare reforms, i.e., mutual obligation policy?

Faith and its links to welfare

4. Could you explain the importance of faith to your organisations aims and objectives?

5. Is it important to you that your organisation is a gateway for people who may not know Christ?

6. From your perspective is it more important for your organisation to be known as a church with a welfare arm or a welfare arm of the church?

7. Where do you recruit most of the people working as volunteers and do you have a high turnover rate?

8. Is it important for those working here as volunteers to have a strong faith?

9. Do you think it is appropriate for them to share their faith with clients and in what situations?
10. What do you think faith can give to those needing assistance?

11. Do you think that people need to be less reliant on government and more self-sufficient? And how can faith help?

**FBO services and structure**

12. What type of services does your organisation provide?

13. Are you able to be flexible in the delivery of those services?

14. Do or would contracts with government make your services less flexible?

**FBOs and Government Policy**

15. What is special about the way FBNGO can provide services that Government departments fail to do?

16. Is it, in your opinion a good thing for the government to be increasingly turning to the faith-based sector for the delivery of its welfare services?

17. If under contract with the government, have you any restrictions on you in regards to spreading the word of God or any other types of government directives that impact on your mission base?

18. To be more able to provide for the people your organisation seeks to help what would you need?