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public education
in australia:
towards a new
narrative

In Australia, public does not mean universal

- federated, with education a state responsibility – like US, Canada
- but a large private sector – historical, unlike countries where faith schools included (like Canada, UK) and not part of “public” (like Netherlands)
- secular (like US and unlike UK)
- private elite is the norm against which the public sector has been judged
- public disadvantaged schools are at the bottom of the status hierarchy

In Australia, public does not mean free

- the Australian welfare state is mean- tested – so not universal entitlements to pensions for instance. Benefits historically built around employment e.g. long service leave
- unlike the US, public education has not had a clear political warrant – “government” or “state” schools. Connection is with governing
- in SA public education was never free. The first state to mandate parent contribution levels for schools

the postwar education narrative has largely been about money, and versions of equity

- science labs and libraries
- innovation
- national remediation of poverty against various measures of “need”
- poor state and faith schools made equal by financial calculation rather than being seen as different by design and purpose
- wealth and differences made by parent contribution re – storied as “saving the state money”, “disadvantaged if only some schools get money”
- value for commonwealth money via calculation of effectiveness of outcomes; always compared to - and thus need to be made like - autonomously governed private schools

public good as policy

- Usually understood by modern governments as public goods that are
 - *non-excludable* – no citizen can be prevented from accessing and using them –
 - *non-rivalrous* – the use by one citizen does not reduce their use by others.
- Markets are generally understood to be incapable of delivering public good – success and failure are built in - although this is the proposition of dominant economic regimes around the world, including Australia and most state governments.

conventional view of public good

- ... education... benefits the person being educated. To calculate the benefits, we take the income a person earns over a lifetime with education, and subtract that which she would get without an education. But that figure does not tell the whole story. What about the numerous employers the person will have over a lifetime, and the savings realized because these employers do not have to train her in-house? What about the benefits that literacy brings to all the companies that rely on the written word to advertise? The benefits to those who issue public warnings, put out signs or seek to implement laws? If one were to put a figure on all these benefits, they would dwarf the amount that accrues strictly to the educated person. **This difference between the public and the private benefits is called an *externality*. And because of its substantial externalities, education is a public good.**

Principle	Some key questions
Non-excludability – no citizen can be prevented from access.	<p>Do all students have equal access to the same school offerings?</p> <p>Do policies systematically privilege some students over others?</p> <p>Are there covert selection practices at work?</p>
Non-rivalry – the use by one does not reduce use by another.	<p>Do current school policies leave any students unable to access education?</p> <p>Do policies create uneven provision which reduces the participation of some students?</p>

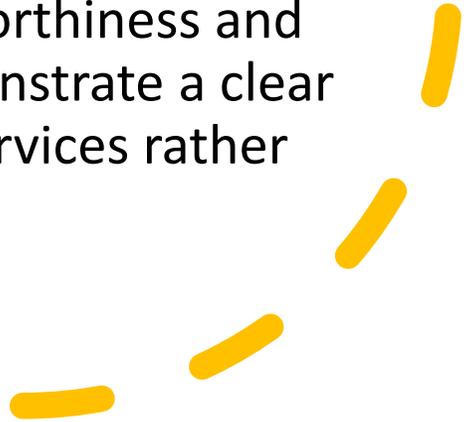
public value

- Mark Moore proposes that government is not simply a service provider, safety net and regulator, but also a creator of public value. Governments might, he suggests, move away from the neoliberal conception of a minimalist state whose primary function is to stimulate the market. They might instead take a pro-active role in shaping the public sphere.
- Moore offers a 'strategic triangle', a new process infrastructure, to align the processes necessary to produce public value. These are; (1) defining public value (broad not narrow), (2) authorisation (building a coalition of stakeholders, democratic structures and processes) and (3) operational capacity building (renewed public mission of public service).

new narratives

In Australia, The Good Society Policy Network (GSPN) says that “a good society depends on trusting people we know and don’t know as well as the institutions that govern us via common resources that foster equity and a sense of community”.

GPSN principles:

- We live in a society not an economy
 - We are citizens not consumers
 - We need those who have been responsible for distrusted changes to prove they are listening to voter views, not just lobbyists and powerful elites
 - Governments need to understand trustworthiness and they create social dividends. Voters demonstrate a clear preference for vital, non-market public services rather than privatised options.
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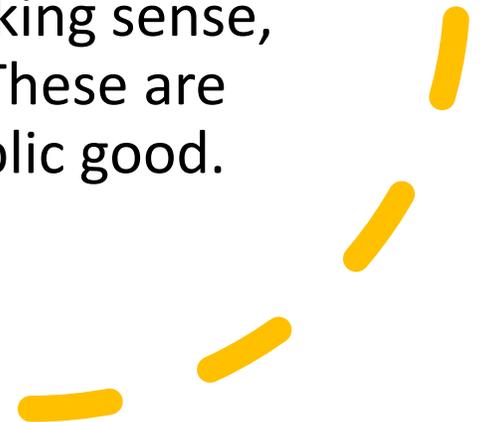
develop and explain public values

- Robert Bellah and colleagues argue that the value of autonomy has taken precedence over all other possible values.
 - The prioritisation of autonomy, they suggest, leads to the decline of other important virtues such as responsibility and care – values which can only be operationalised at a social level through institutions such as the family, the church and public services.
 - A world where autonomy underpins social life, they say, is one which is largely empty of meaning, comfort and support.
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resist
instrumentalism -
articulate public
leadership and
management

Henry Mintzberg - We've become prisoners of measurement: audits, league tables, targets. It just destroys creativity. Look, I'm not opposed to measuring things that can be measured - I'm opposed to letting those things drive everything else out. It has some destructive effect in business, but in education and healthcare it's absolutely devastating.

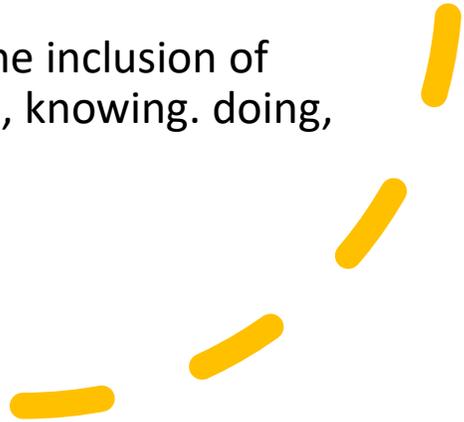
We need “quiet management” - is responsive, uses synthesis and divergent thinking for making sense, and takes a broad and long-term view. These are practices associated with producing public good.



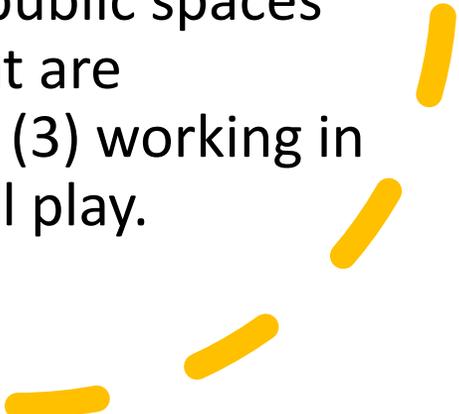
debate and clarify the public purposes of education

- Different purposes of education
 - ...democratic equality (schools should focus on preparing citizens), social efficiency (they should focus on training workers), and social mobility (they should prepare individuals to compete for social positions).
 - These goals represent, respectively, the educational perspective of the citizen, the taxpayer, and the consumer. Whereas the first two look on education as a public good, the third sees it as a private good.
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public education – for the public good and a good public

- Education for citizenship suggests that students are not simply future citizens but also citizens now in their communities and schools.
 - They are entitled to a curriculum where learning which supports them to make sense of their local and wider world, to understand how the two are connected and to participate in debates about matters of concern.
 - A democratic approach to citizenship eschews a narrow focus on civics, and critiques repressive and discriminatory approaches.
 - It offers an inclusive and cosmopolitan approach which equally values the canon and the popular and holds them both subject to critical appreciative interpretation.
 - Schools are keen to engage parents, teachers and students in governing.
 - A focus on public good in curriculum emphasises the inclusion of different knowledges, languages and ways of being, knowing, doing, and living together.
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create new public spaces for discussion

- Janet Newman and John Clarke in their book *Publics, Politics and Power*, suggest that efforts must be directed to both enlarging the existing public sphere and to bring to the surface sedimented forms of commitments to public good, justice and equity within the public services.
 - This is the work they say of “making things public”, a process which works at the “delicate and elusive intersection between what is political and what is public.”.
 - For Newman and Clarke this means three concurrent activities: (1) making new public spaces for discussion, (2) enlarging spaces that are intended to constrain public input and (3) working in resistant public spaces already in social play.
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two moves in England of interest

- ASCL Code of Ethics
- The use of public commissions

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