Julian Meyrick

The Undoing of Australian Cultural Policy:

The 1976 IAC Inquiry *Assistance to the Performing Arts*

I, EDWARD GOUGH WHITLAM, Prime Minister hereby refer the following matter to the Industries Assistance Commission . . . Whether assistance should be accorded the performing arts in Australia and if so what should be the nature and extent of such assistance.
— The Reference, 6 October 1974

The past, in own utterance, is at first always alien, and its acquisition arduous.
— Jacob Burckhardt, *Force and Freedom: Reflections on History*

This article examines a critical juncture in Australian cultural policy and in the formation of influential positions in relation to it. Its focus is the *Assistance to the Performing Arts* Report (the Report), an inquiry conducted by the Industries Assistance Commission (IAC) on behalf of the federal government in 1976. The Report expresses views that today would be called neoliberal, but in 1970s Australia were more commonly referred to as economic rationalism (Stokes 2014).[1] These draw on neoclassical economics and its repertoire of free market metaphors—consumer sovereignty, market competition, value for money etc. In the Report, they are so coarsely applied it seems surprising it has acquired the reputation of a coldly analytical document (Rowse 1985; Hands 2021) or, even more remarkably, a socially progressive one (Hawkins 1997; Johanson 2008). Some explanation is required for why this is the case.

The article investigates the lives of the IAC's founding Chairman, Alf Rattigan, and the two Commissioners who wrote the Report, Richard Boyer and Peter Robinson. An Appendix supplies information on other members of the IAC, the predecessors of today's Productivity Commission (PC). The aim is to explore links between the Report's economic rationalism and what Anna Yeatman calls "managerialism considered as a mode of governance of the entire system of relationships constituted by the synthesis of neoliberalism, capitalism and technologism" (Yeatman and Costea 2018, 3). In the

1980s, this mode increasingly suffused the Senior Executive Service (SES), Australia's bureaucratic elite, whose managerialist view of the state mirrored that of the IAC (Pusey 1992). The convergence was social as well as ideological. From the time of its establishment in 1974 there was a steady circulation of key personnel through the IAC, the SES, and the higher reaches of the political and corporate world (see below).

A general observation about the Report: like all policy documents, it uses classificatory terms, sweeping instances of performing arts practice into an abstract register of re-description. What occurs in the sector is *an instance of* an ordering logic whose policy expression is categorical and criterial (Meyrick 2014). Key words provide a means of manifesting categories and criteria, and for acting on them. They are "tools that are both material and symbolic . . . Their ecology encompasses the formal and the informal, and the arrangements that are made to meet the needs of heterogeneous communities—some cooperative and some coercive" (Bowker and Star 1999, 286).[2] Thus, in competitive arts grant schemes it matters, on occasions, whether an applicant is an individual or an organisation; is amateur or professional in status; is regionally located or city based; and so on. Classificatory terms are performatives, and by their use governments call into being a world they often claim to be neutrally depicting (Meyrick 2013). It is therefore of strong interest when a new auricular orientation appears, a new vocabulary of sense, to order policy decisions. Background understanding is reshaped and new behaviours arise in both policymakers and practitioners as a result. This was the main consequence of *Assistance to the Performing Arts* when it was handed down in draft in 1976. In the words of John Warhurst a few years later, "the style of debate [was] indelibly altered. This, rather than the direct impact of the IAC's recommendations on assistance . . . stands as the new institution's greatest achievement" (Warhurst 1982, 15). Although the Coalition government under Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser rejected the Report (Gardiner-Garden 2009, 7), it marked a decisive shift in political rhetoric around the role, aims and value of arts and culture in Australia (Johanson 2000: 138–39).

The article utilises, in truncated form, prosopography, or multi career-line analysis. This historical method is useful for combining context-focused biography with conceptual analysis to provide "the missing connection between political history and social history, which . . . are all too often treated in largely watertight compartments" (Stone 1971, 73). The name is drawn from the classical rhetorical figure of *prosopopeia,* where speakers attempt to recreate the character of someone dead or absent.[3] Prosopography is concerned with the 'who' of history rather than the 'what', and with network links between groups, especially elites, that generate common assumptions and views. 'Who' questions are rarely asked of policy documents, with the result that reports like *Assistance to the Performing Arts* are seen purely as precipitations of policy logics. By contrast, prosopography locates them in a concrete social and intellectual milieu and investigates the personalities and experiences that informed them. The fact that such methods have proved useful to political, social and cultural historians alike attests to their range and flexibility (e.g. Namier 1957; Stone and Fawtier Stone 1984; Coombs

1996). By bringing together the biographies of the IAC Commissioners and treating them as a discrete unit, the ideas circulating in that unit can be sociologically grounded. Historians are often concerned with *res gestae* (things done), accounting for events and their consequences. By shifting the focus to *qui facit?* (who acts?), prosopography makes policy documents available for analysis of agents' motives and interests.

The article then steps forward in time to consider why an alliance between an economic rationalist view of the state and a progressivist view of culture, enunciated at the level of public policymaking, seemed palatable to some researchers on the left in the 1990s. This was a period of renewed academic interest in the cultural policy process, using a positively-charged Foucauldian rubric of governmentality (Cunningham 1992a, 170), and the IAC Report was supportively referred to as a result. The hybrid economic-rationalist-cum-cultural-studies-discourse of the creative industries that emerged from the so-called cultural policy moment carries this entanglement as part of its conceptual inheritance (O'Connor 2016 and 2020).

By better appreciating the lifeworld in which the IAC Report was generated, and the ideological perspective it promoted, insight is gained into three aspects of Australian cultural policy. First, how economic rationalist concepts were introduced into arguments for state support for arts and culture (or for its withdrawal). Second, how a managerialist logic evolved to a point where, in the minds of some policymakers, there are no inherently valuable cultural activities and organisations, only calculations of consumer benefit (the roots of platform economics). Finally, how some cultural researchers on the left, blinded by their hostility to "the most visible and expensive cultural forms" (Rowse 1985, 21), misjudged the growing power of economic rationalism to such an extent that the cultural policy moment eventually imploded in a dust cloud of "overweening ambitions and failed efforts" (Glover 2011, 192).

The Report

The background to *Assistance to the Performing Arts* is well-known. In 1972, Gough Whitlam became Prime Minister of Australia in the first federal Labor government for twenty-three years, and support for the arts doubled six months later (Coombs 1981). Thereafter followed the establishment, restructure or expansion of a number of organisations important to the cultural sector today, including the Australian Council for the Arts, the Australian Film Commission (now Screen Australia), the National Gallery of Australia, and JJJ radio station. The thrust of the Whitlam narrative is that at this time there arose a welcome awareness of, and investment in, the cultural life of the nation (Ward 2015). The dismissal of the Labor government in 1975 was a scandal, but it did not halt culture's progress into higher policy consciousness under the next arts minister, Coalition senator Tony Staley. In 1994, this was enshrined in *Creative Nation,* Australia's first national cultural policy, which united the ministerial portfolios of arts and communications. Culture had arrived politically, but also economically. A major

justification in *Creative Nation* for government funding to culture was its contribution to GDP and its capacity to promote new economic thinking in Australian citizens faced with an ever-changing global marketplace (Radbourne 1997).

When this period is examined closely, however, a more complicated picture emerges. Events in the cultural sector were dense and confrontational. Disputes arose over the personality and actions of the Australia Council's second CEO, Jean Battersby (Macdonnell 1992, 180–85) while in 1976 the agency was under review by six different bodies (Radbourne 1992, 214). A post-Whitlam decrease in government support against a backdrop of rising inflation led to what Justin Macdonnell calls "death in real terms" for many artists and cultural organisations (Macdonnell 1992, 241). The immediate cause of the *Assistance to the Performing Arts* inquiry was the collapse of Australia's largest commercial theatre producer, JC Williamson's. But there were a range of problems in the sector that required careful handling by a government relatively new to the challenges of cultural policymaking. Macdonnell comments that had the IAC's brief been confined to issues facing commercial theatre, rather than engaging arguments for arts funding more broadly, it would have been better targeted (Macdonnell 1992, 146–47).

Running 196 pages, the Report is 58,000 words in its main text, 10,000 in its eight appendices. An Overview and two opening chapters lay out its approach and thinking, while the remainder of the document is more empirically focused. The Report claims it "eschewed any narrow or elitist definition of culture" (2), eliminated "faith, emotion, subjective judgement [and] political pressure" (3), and generated "an alternative, logically sustainable approach to assisting the performing arts" (5). It found "no coherent rationale" (2) in the 200 submissions from artists and cultural organisations for existing levels of government funding. Witnesses confused "unalloyed entertainment and artistic activities", made "unsupported assertions", and failed to demonstrate a commitment to the "widest possible flow of public benefits" (10).

Without reprising my earlier work on the Report (Meyrick 1997, 2013 and 2017), a number of critical points can be made about both its writing style and its arguments. In respect of language, the document is frequently muddled and contradictory. For example, despite acknowledging that "the performing arts can directly influence . . . the fundamental characteristics of cultural growth, since they . . . express almost every facet of individual experience, aspiration, expression and attitudes that furnish a nation's culture" (5), the Report states on the *same page* that, "the evidence presented . . . suggests most of the benefits attributed to [them] are of limited community significance". Six pages later it has changed its mind again, saying there are "demonstrable benefits from the performing arts" (11).[4] Key words receive erratic treatment. The Report is scathing of 'excellence', for example, arguing it is vague and imprecise (34). 'Innovation', a more favoured term, is left undefined. Other passages are diffuse to the point of opacity:

> The development of a responsive educational-cultural infrastructure depends, fundamentally, insofar as the performing arts are concerned, on making those arts more relevant and more readily available to all members of society. Their availability and relevance in turn depend on the provision of adequate education in the basic art forms, on encouragement of innovation in the arts and on their dissemination to the extent necessary to achieve these ends. (7)

The first sentence is a tautology: is it possible to imagine development *not* reliant on making the performing arts more relevant and available? The second is a self-fulfilling condition: naturally, they require innovation and dissemination "to the extent necessary to achieve these ends". How could they need more? How could the Report recommend less? All terms are subsumed by the nebulous notion of an "educational-cultural infrastructure", which is again undefined.

The Report is also inconsistent in its handling of the concept of culture. It repeatedly stresses that "the performing arts are no more than means to cultural ends, not ends in themselves" (5), and "the main justification for assisting [them] is that they can provide a means of achieving the goals of improved education and greater cultural awareness" (12). The relationship between the performing arts and benefit gets more tenuous as the Report wears on. Initially, it criticizes the identification of culture with high art, maintaining "it is . . . a confusion to equate culture with the existence of certain activities (including performing arts activities) which are alleged, or believed to be, of a cultural nature" (14). Then it abruptly makes "the individual, not the institution (or the art form) the focus of endeavour", observing that while the performing arts "may enrich the culture of a community by influencing its citizens . . . they do not themselves constitute culture, as would be most evident if they had no influence on any citizen". On this counter-intuitive basis it declares government funding of culture should have three aims only:

> Improving education especially in the basic elements of the performing arts, that is, the principles of music, drama and dance.
>
> Providing positive encouragement for innovation and development in the performing arts, particularly as they relate to the specific needs and character of the Australian community.
>
> Expanding dissemination of the performing arts in ways and to the extent necessary to provide the awareness and appreciation requirement to complement these initiatives. (D.3, 20)

Analogous problems can be identified with the Report's demand-side arguments. First, there is the question of what meaningful choices consumers can be expected to make without the appropriate level of prior cultural knowledge. The Report's definition of cultural education—assisting people "to choose between alternative careers, lifestyles

and interests" (49)—is of no help because it is equally true of culture itself. Cultural choices always involve *some* level of "aesthetic and spiritual imposition" (46), partly because there is no "ideal world where the market operates freely" (47), partly because it is unclear how culture can exist outside such parameters. Second, there is the characterisation of cultural organisations as monopoly suppliers, with all the odium that term implies, and the Report's anti-institutional bias. This reduces the substance of the performing arts to their economic and social impacts, and dephenomenalises culture as an object of policymaking, just as it was achieving better footing under Whitlam.

Finally, there is the issue of whether economic rationalism is the right method for evaluating culture at all, whether there are alternative approaches that capture its benefits better. The Report does not reflect on its hallmark assumptions, however. Rejecting the argument that the performing arts are a merit good, it says only, "the provision of so-called merit goods ultimately relies on the denial of consumer sovereignty" (173). The core of its position can be found in Appendix D, the aptly-named, "Justification for Government Intervention in any Activity". This advances a worldview destined to become familiar to those in the Australian cultural sector in coming decades:

> The performing arts are part of an economic system in which it is necessary to reconcile society's limited resources with unlimited wants. The allocation of resources to serve particular wants can be achieved by various means, such as by consumers exercising their preferences through the market or by bureaucratic control over the distribution of resources. In Australia resource allocation is determined, in principle, by the free choice of individuals. As a general rule, in a perfectly competitive system the independent maximizing behaviour of consumers and producers will achieve the most efficient use of the community's resources. (171)

The paragraph reflects the IAC's ideological belief in the desirability of unregulated market forces. It shows the reason for its hostility to producer subsidies, and its view that artists and cultural organisations will, as a matter of course, adopt self-interested positions, seeking to preserve the government funding they receive as an insider privilege. By contrast, the IAC saw itself as offering objective judgements and championing the cause of the public good. The remainder of the article examines the context for this unstated but powerful presumption.

Who wrote it?

The official history of the IAC (PC 2003) covers its three name changes, starting from its establishment as the Tariff Board in 1921. It provides a list of all Commissioners and Associate Commissioners appointed from 1974 to 2002. It names the Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen—the male pronoun is appropriate because they are exclusively men—

and the Heads of Office. The First Assistant Commissioners are unnamed. These are administrative support staff, as supposedly are the Heads of Office, though the relationship between the latter—again, they are all men—and the Chairmen was an important axis of political mobilisation. The IAC was set up by Whitlam and operated for 16 years. Of its members appointed in the first six years i.e. the 1970s, there are two Chairmen, 14 Commissioners, 10 Associate Commissioners (one name recurring in both Commissioner and Associate Commissioner categories) and one Head of Office: 26 names in all.

Table 1 presents biographical information on the three Commissioners of direct interest here, and an Appendix provides the same for the remaining 23. At the end of each entry the main source for this material is given. The Table and the Appendix are much-reduced versions of the data originally collected. In claiming this article as prosopography, I am not exampling the full capacity of the method, only indicating its appropriateness *in utero* for this style of socio-historical research. In the case of Commissioners like Alf Rattigan, full autobiographies are available. With others, details can be found in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* and *Who's Who in Australia*. During the Whitlam and Fraser years, the appointment of Commissioners was often accompanied by press releases detailing the professional backgrounds of the individuals chosen (e.g. Whitlam 1974a). Appointments could be controversial. Two Commissioners were not renewed by the Fraser government in 1978, including the IAC's only female appointment in the period, the economist Hylda Rolfe.

Table 1: IAC Commissioners appointed in the 1970s: Rattigan, Boyer and Robinson

NAME	ROLE	DATE	PERSONAL DETAILS
G A Rattigan (original member)	Chairman	1974–76	Godfrey Alfred ('Ratts'). 1911–2000. Son of an electrician in the Kalgoorlie goldfields. 1925 joined the Royal Australian Navy as a cadet midshipman at Jervis Bay. 1931 made redundant when the Navy downsized during the Depression. Joined the Commonwealth Taxation Department. 1954–55 Assistant Comptroller Customs. 1956 transferred to the Department of Trade and it was there "his career took off", working in import licensing. 1960–63 Comptroller General of Customs and Permanent Head of the Department of Customs and Excise. 1963 Head of the Tariff Board. First Chairman of the IAC. Age when appointed to the IAC: 63 (main source *Obituaries Australia)*
R Boyer (original member)	Commissioner	1974–81	Richard (Dick). 1923–1989. Son of Sir Richard Boyer KBE. Education: Brisbane Boys' College. Queensland pastoralist. 1942–45 RAAF. 1949 University of Sydney (economics). 1956 Oxford University (PPE).

NAME	ROLE	DATE	PERSONAL DETAILS
			1959 returned to Australia. "Unemployed, he began writing a strategy for the marketing of wool in the future. At a seminar at the Australian National Uni, Canberra, in July that year—part of Sir Keith Hancock's [q.v.] series on wool—he argued for a central wool marketing authority independent of government control." 1959–71 Commonwealth Tariff Board member. 1972–74 Chair PNG Tariff Advisory Committee. 1981 special economics adviser in Department of Foreign Affairs. 1983 board member ABC. Age when appointed to the IAC: 51 (main source Consandine 2007).
P D J Robinson	Associate Commissioner	1974–78	Peter. Born 1927?–2005. Son of a distinguished journalist. 1945 part of Australia's component of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan. 1945–48 journalist for Australian Associated Press and Reuters (Sydney & New York), reporting on Japan's post-war reconstruction for Fairfax and the UK's *Financial Times*. 1964 returned to Australia and joined the *Financial Review*. 1971 appointed editor *Financial Review*. Resigned in 1974 to join the IAC, but returned to journalism in 1978. Special Writer on the *National Times* and the *Sun Herald*. 1988 appointed Editor-in-Chief *Australian Financial Review*. Retired 1991, died 2005. Age when appointed to the IAC: 47? (main source Robinson bibliography).

Multi-career line analysis involves investigating the lives of different individuals in a given cohort and identifying commonalities and trends in their biographical data. In the case of the above names and the 23 listed in the Appendix, the following observations can be made:

1. They are all male, with one exception.

2. The youngest appointment is Hylda Rolfe, at 36, the oldest Colin Grace, at 65. There are two modal ranges, one between 45 and 49, the other between 53 and 59. The median age is 53.

3. 12 Commissioners have undergraduate degrees from Melbourne or Sydney University, another 6 from the University of Western Australia, the University of Adelaide, or the University of Queensland. Six include these universities elsewhere in their credentials. Only three Commissioners do not have university credentials, one of these being Rattigan.

4. Four Commissioners are drawn from the business sector, four from the agricultural sector, and two from the law. 12 have public administration experience. Of the remainder, one was a journalist, one a trade unionist, and one a Labor party organiser and broadcaster.

5. Seven Commissioners either trained as economists or were practicing economists, while a further six have educational credentials in economics. Of the 13 non-economists, all but two stay for just one term (three years) while a number stay for less, including the two lawyers, who stay for one year only.

6. 10 Commissioners were active in the Tariff Board, and some personal alliances, as well as professional ones, are discernible. After Rattigan was appointed Head in 1963, the Board became anti-protectionist in its stance to government. Accordingly, it became more self-conscious as a social network and an ideological unit. The decision by Whitlam in 1973 to relaunch the Board as a statutory authority with a broader remit (Whitlam 1973) may be seen as the result, not the cause, of its growing influence.

7. A smaller group of four Commissioners were active around the Wool Board and related associations, and/or list their professional experience as graziers, while three Commissioners had trade or media links to Tokyo and thus personal experience of the 'economic miracle' of Japan's post-War recovery.

The Productivity Commission's official history states, "the background of Commissioners has been varied, with most drawn from public service, academia and business" (PC 2003, 12). It is clear from even this limited analysis that early appointments were the opposite of diverse. The IAC's members had similar educational credentials and professional experiences. They were of similar ages, and all but one was a man. With two exceptions, Norman Hanckel, a vintner of German background, and George Hampel, a human rights lawyer and Polish Jew, they appear to be of Anglo-Celtic descent. A homogeneity of social experience thus underscores a uniformity of ideological belief.

The history notes the important role of support staff. During the 1970s, this increased to over 500 people. It comments, "A fruitful interchange of professional economists grew between the Commission and other government agencies in Australia and abroad; and between the Commission, academic and private consulting firms. The net flow has been from the Commission to other employers, and a remarkable number of the most senior public service positions have been filled by former staff" (PC 2003, 5). This indicates how the IAC's influence extended beyond the cohort of appointed Commissioners. As an organisation, it occupied a career intersection between public servants advancing up the bureaucratic hierarchy and industry figures moving sideways into government advisory positions, either temporarily or permanently. By taking the best university graduates, particularly the best economics graduates, and sending them into senior

advisory positions, the IAC acted as a proselytizer for an emerging economic rationalist consensus across government departments and agencies.

With material available in the public realm, it is possible to sketch more extended biographies for Alf Rattigan, Richard Boyer and Peter Robinson. A name of interest, but one hard to discover more information about, is Bill Carmichael, Head of Office from 1974 to 1984, then Chairman from 1985 to 1988. His relationship with first Rattigan and later Bill McKinnon, Rattigan's successor, provides further insight into the IAC's long political reach. Journalist Andrew Clark described him as,

> a crucial link-man with the [*Australian] Financial Review,* and a much more political fellow than Alf Rattigan . . . Carmichael knew his way around the system. He was a born bureaucratic politician. One of those blokes who didn't seek glory, he was happy to be behind the scenes. Carmichael explains the Tariff Board 'had to establish its role as an independent source of public advice. [This] involved overcoming entrenched resistance by the responsible minister, his department and industries depending on protection . . . [The Commissioners'] motivation resulted from an understanding of the simple logic linking economic means and social policy ends—that it is not possible to make worthwhile progress on social policy issues unless the economy is producing the wealth needed to service those goals.' (Clark 2013, np)

In Carmichael, the IAC had both someone who knew their way around Canberra and an important route to the media. When the Whitlam government decided to impose an across-the-board tariff cut of 25% across all protected industries in July 1973—just two months after its famous 100% increase to the federal arts budget—it was Carmichael who persuaded him to do it (Clark 2013, np; Rattigan 1986, 146–171).[5]

'Ratts', Dick & Peter

Ultimately, it is by close investigation of the lives of the IAC Commissioners that an analysis of *Assistance to the Performing Arts*—whose consequences artists and cultural organisations are still living with today—can be grounded. On the surface, this has a politically ironic aspect to it. For the Commission, it was the Coalition under Fraser who provided the main opposition to their thinking, Labor who offered an avenue for advancing it. First Whitlam, then Hawke and Keating, were the target of the message that there could be no "progress on social policy issues unless the economy is producing the wealth needed" (Clark 2013, n.p.). At the start, the Commission was probably sincere in its commitment to the former. But as its managerialist logic became all-pervasive, social policy goals were relegated to second-order decision-making, and the word 'reform' slid from its association with nation-building and civic improvement, to the pursuit of deregulation and free market economics. If today it feels as if the terms of left

progressivism have been repurposed by neoliberalism to describe opposite values, it is in part because the IAC, and its allies in the media, constructed a new policy rhetoric that made this revised semantic priming effective.

Alf Rattigan ('Ratts') remained Chairman of the IAC until his retirement in 1976. He later wrote a memoir of his time as an anti-protectionist (Rattigan 1986).[6] Rattigan is one of the few working-class IAC figures. Robinson described him as "a skinny, raw-boned countryman with an unmistakably Irish face" (Robinson 2000). His father had been an electrician on the Kalgoorlie goldfields, and his mother pushed him to sit the Naval exams. The only West Australian to be accepted into the Naval Academy, he became a cadet midshipman in 1925. Six years later he was made redundant when the Depression caused the Navy to downsize. He then moved to Customs and Excise, working his way up to be Head of the Tariff Board in 1963, a job he secured in part because the Minister of Trade, "Black Jack" McEwen, thought he would be easy to control. It was a serious lapse in judgement. Soon after acquiring his new position:

> [Rattigan] signed a report giving what amounted to gold-plated protection to a number of chemical companies. This was a disappointment to a fractious group of board members who were urging a move away from the prevailing high protection regime. The result was that Rattigan, who admitted he did not know much about tariffs when he moved into the job, drew up a list of analytical points which he used to test how tariffs were being applied. He went on to perceive the extent to which the tariff was being used for political purposes and how this was distorting the basic structure of the economy. With Rattigan at the head of the Tariff Board, the move towards tariff rationalisation quickened. (Farquharson n.d.)

Rattigan was both resilient and persistent. He saw tariff protection in class terms, as the agricultural and manufacturing elites drawing a lien on the surplus wealth of the nation for their own benefit. He masterminded the broadening of scope for the IAC so that level of protection became the focus of concern rather than the needs of particular industries. To do this, he drew on developments in microeconomics. Two economists were crucial to the IAC's worldview, Max Corden, who invented the econometric indicator 'the effective protection rate' which allowed for a range of variables to be computed when looking at the support an industry received from government (Corden 2005; see also Corden 2017, 121–23); and Alan Powell, the designer of general equilibrium analysis, microeconomics' answer to the national accounts modeling of Keynesian macroeconomics (Powell and Snape 1993). Rattigan was helped by the harmonisation of IAC data categories with those of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, thus bringing new numbers to bear on new thinking (Rattigan 1986, 27–29). Rattigan's emphasis on quantitative methods was premised on a *realpolitik* that for the IAC to succeed its ideas needed to win support in the public domain. Microeconomic modeling and quantitative data ensured the 'transparency'—another favoured IAC term—required to rhetorically demonstrate the validity of its policy logic and assumptions.[7]

Dick Boyer and Peter Robinson cut very different figures to Rattigan. Boyer was son of the grazier Sir Richard Boyer, Chairman of the ABC, after whom the annual lecture series is named. Robinson was a journalist from a distinguished family of journalists, who worked for a variety of media publications before joining the *Australian Financial Review* in 1964—the same newspaper Carmichael used to make the IAC's arguments public. Boyer majored in economics from the University of Sydney, where he attended classes given by the anti-protectionist Heinz Arndt. He then went to Oxford for further study. Returning to Australia in the mid-1950s, he attempted to establish a wool marketing authority independent of government. The *Australian Dictionary of Biography* notes, "This . . . was the beginning of Boyer's determined efforts to reform the economic system" (Consandine 2007, np). He was appointed to the Tariff Board in 1956, where he immediately started advocating for the benefits of free trade. As an agriculturalist, he was frequently at odds with the agricultural lobby, especially the graziers. Boyer was a sensitive man, a contrast to the pragmatic, Anglophile figure of his father. He was inclined to take checks to his views personally, a quality that can be detected in *Assistance to the Performing Arts*, which at times feels prickly and defensive.[8]

Robinson was in his late 40s when appointed as an IAC Associate Commissioner. Like Boyer, he had served in World War II on the edges, rather than in the middle of armed conflict. Boyer had been a radio operator in Western Australia, while Robinson was part of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in post-war Japan. He later worked as an embedded reporter for the Australian Associated Press and Reuters, covering the formation of the United Nations and the election of Australia's External Affairs Minister, H. V. Evatt, as the first President of its General Assembly. His biography is of particular interest because of the editors he worked for at the *Australian Financial Review* as that paper hardened its economic agenda. Clark describes the milieu in the late 1960s:

> The country was suffering the first pangs of premature hardening of its economic arteries. These resulted from protection, state-based regulation—and the carve-up—of markets in beer, pubs, supermarkets and newspapers. There was a hidebound banking system, centralised wage fixation and isolation from the rest of the Asia-Pacific region through race-based immigration laws known as the White Australia policy . . . Confronting this nascent sclerosis was the *Financial Review's* economic reform campaign. Key figures involved—Vic Carroll, Max Walsh, Max Newton and Alan Wood—gave our first national daily newspaper its extraordinary clout . . . A package of reforms—floating the dollar, admitting foreign banks, reducing tariffs, encouraging efficiencies and competition among state-run utilities, privatising state companies such as Qantas, the Commonwealth Bank, and Commonwealth Serum Laboratories, introducing enterprise bargaining, and compulsory superannuation—meant, to use a phrase du jour, that [Australia] 'grew up'. (Clark 2013, np)

Robinson's articles on Japan blend historical and cultural narrative with economic analysis (e.g. Robinson 1952; 1953a; 1953b; 1954a; 1954b). He shared Boyer's interest in moving away from British influences and culture, and held the same dogmatic belief in the benefits of free markets (see Robinson 1977; 1978). Possibly he saw—in a way that Boyer did not, and Rattigan was oblivious to—that anti-protectionism was only one part of a suite of changes that would transform Australia into a neoliberal state. For the *Australian Financial Review*, this was an undoubted and undoubtable good. In the words of one senior economic adviser, imaginatively adapting George Orwell, "Our challenge [was] to construct a farmyard which [gave] all pigs the opportunity to advance and none [were] more equal than others simply because of position" (quoted in Clark 2013, np). Like Rattigan, neither Boyer nor Robinson appear socially conservative (Robinson had a Japanese partner). The progressive edge to their opinions was real—opposition to the White Australia policy; engagement with the Asian region; anti-cartelism. However, these commitments were imbricated in a worldview where "the development of efficient activities were facilitated more effectively by reducing constraints on the operation of competitive market forces, including impediments stemming from assistance supporting less efficient activities" (PC 2003, 32).

This argument is the bass chord of economic rationalism as played by the IAC throughout the 1970s. It entailed a managerialist logic where the value of every good and service is the same as every other good and service, differentiated only by their cost and price in competitive market exchange. Probably no Commissioner held such a view *in extremis*. But it was the background credo, and explains why the answer to every question the IAC encountered was 'greater efficiency' to be brought about by 'more competition'. As the 1970s gave way to the 1980s, its neoliberalism became more pronounced. When the Whitlam government passed the IAC Act of 1973, Section 22 read:

> In the performance of its functions, the Commission shall have regard to the desire of the Australian Government, in pursuing the general objectives of national economic and social policy and urban and regional development, to improve and promote the well-being of the people of Australia, with full employment, stability in the general level of prices, viability in external economic relations, conservation of the natural environment and rising and generally enjoyed standards of living and, in particular . . . to
>
> (a) improve the efficiency with which the community's productive resources are used. (PC 2003, 129)

In the Amended Act in 1984, by contrast, the Section was replaced with:

> In the performance of its functions, the Commission shall have regard to the desire of the Commonwealth Government
>
> (a) to encourage the development and growth of efficient Australian industries that are internationally competitive, export-oriented and capable of operating over a long period of time with minimum levels of assistance. (PC 2003, 132)[9]

Nothing better shows the IAC's increasingly ideological conception of its role in the nation it believed it disinterestedly served.

How did the lives of Boyer and Robinson affect *Assistance to the Performing Arts*? It was often the case during this time that temporary Commissioners were appointed for the duration of a particular inquiry, ones with direct experience of the industry under investigation. None were chosen for *Assistance to the Performing Arts,* nor was there an attempt made to align the backgrounds of the selected Commissioners—neither Boyer nor Robinson had personal knowledge of the performing arts. It was a busy time for the IAC. Between 1974 and 1976 it generated 117 separate reports. Of these, only one, *Short Term Assistance to Commercial Theatre* (No. 92), for which Boyer was also the presiding Commissioner, focused on a cultural industry. Given this, one might have expected the IAC to be cautious in approaching a sector that in practical terms it knew little about.

But restraint in 1976 was not part of the Commission's public persona and it is important to see *Assistance to the Performing Arts* in terms of this. Rattigan had been successful in persuading Whitlam to set up the IAC as a statutory authority. He was also successful in attaching it to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, thereby keeping it out of the orbit of influential Canberra departments related to trade and industry. The process of 'de-McEwinizing' the Australian economy, as Rattigan and Labor saw it, had begun. So had enlarging the scope of the IAC's own research agenda to "facilitate adjustment to structural change" (PC 2003, 3). Resistance to the lowering of protection barriers was fierce, especially from the unions. Bob Hawke, ACTU President, was vocal:

> Hawke joined [the] protest stressing the effects on unemployment. "The government cannot continue to permit the destruction of jobs, whether in the shipbuilding, footwear industries or in the arts, without creating new areas of employment. With the IAC there is no thinking of how you are going to use effectively the resources thrown on the scrap heap." (*Tribune* 1976, 2)

By 1976, the Australian economy was in trouble. A combination of collapsing corporate profits and high oil prices led to rising inflation and unemployment ("stagflation"), and fractious labour-management relations (Colebatch 2005, np). Many blamed the IAC and the 25% tariff cut in 1973 for the outcome. The government tacked back towards a policy of industry protection (Whitlam 1974b), a trend that continued throughout the rest of the

decade. In response, the IAC doubled down, defending its unpopular position and framing events as part of an "adjustment problem" to "the world we live in" (PC 2003, 39). Part of its strategy was publicly expressed distrust towards industries and industry spokespeople. Time and again, Rattigan and his Commissioners experienced opposition from entrenched interest groups (as they saw them). The IAC rejected their arguments as self-serving, attempts to justify an indefensible draw on public funds. The antidote was quantitative measurement, and inferential thinking arising from econometric methods. As the IAC came under scrutiny because of the slowing economy, it elaborated these methods, and placed increasing reliance on them (Corden 1996).[10]

The dismissiveness of Boyer and Robinson to the testimonies they heard during the *Assistance to the Performing Arts* inquiry, their impatience with "subjective judgement" (IAC 1996, 3) and refusal to consider merit good arguments for the arts, thus had deeper causes than the incoherence of artists and cultural organisations. They arose less from the circumstances of the cultural sector than the circumstances of the IAC. With the political and media spotlight on the Commission, it was important to show that all industries would be dealt with in the same way. That Boyer and Robinson did not seek to second an industry expert is evidence of the pressurised moment in which they felt themselves embroiled, one in which consistent treatment had to be meted out if the IAC was to retain credibility and resist the lure back to protection. No matter that the Commissioners were uninformed, the Report a jumble, and its recommendations politically nugatory. What mattered was ideological integrity and 'face'.

From a study of the *Assistance to the Performing Arts* Report and the biographies of the Commissioners insight is gained into the IAC's economic rationalism and how and why its influence grew. This narrative is important for many areas of public policy in Australia, but is especially so for understanding the fate of arts and culture. Framed as an 'industry'—the IAC's default category of re-description—the sector was thereafter subject to decontextualised evaluation methods. It is tempting to see the problems of cultural policy today as arising from the intractable features of culture. In fact, they arise from a disintegrating idea of public value, to which the IAC was an iconoclastic intellectual contributor. It is a story that begins in the 1970s even as in other ways Australia is shedding its conservative outlook and becoming a modern, late-twentieth century state (Schultz 2022). It is as much part of the Whitlam legacy as increased funding for the arts. The two policy agendas—a nation-building, culture-conscious one and a free market, neoliberal one—enter Australia's social imaginary at the same time. It is impossible to grasp the cultural sector's ailing and failing relationship with government over the last fifty years unless this uncomfortable truth is acknowledged.

The 'cultural policy moment'

How is it possible to miss the political intent of *Assistance to the Performing Arts*? To overlook its loaded assumptions and language, or its constricting impact on future

cultural policies, especially *Patronage, Power and the Muse* (1986) and *Creative Nation* (1994), both of which refer to it directly? How is it possible not to see the Report as a harbinger of an emerging neoliberal order? In saying this, it is important to note it was opposed by many in Parliament, the sector and the unions when it appeared on 30 November 1976—Hawke called it "another example of the increasing unreality of the IAC" (quoted in Johanson 2000, 144). It was this alliance of forces that ensured the Fraser government rejected its recommendations. During the 1970s there were few academic voices audible in the cultural policy debate. Only in the 1980s is it possible to see some emerging connections. As time went on, however, the calls for researchers to become more involved in cultural policymaking became louder. The resulting confluence is described by Stuart Glover:

> If the early 1990s was the 'cultural policy moment', it was also the cultural policy studies moment. In 1992, Stuart Cunningham's *Framing Culture* provided a book-length provocation within Australian cultural studies over the place of policy-based approaches within the emergent discipline. The debate stemmed from the not wholly convergent voices of, among others, Ian Hunter, Tony Bennett, Stuart Cunningham, Toby Miller, Tim Rowse, Colin Mercer, Tom O'Regan and Gay Hawkins in pursuing a cultural studies which foregrounded policy . . . Following Ian Hunter and others, Cunningham re-conceived of culture as a governmentalist and governmentalizing discourse: a technique of civic management ("Useful Culture"). In his terms, 'rhetorics of resistance, progressiveness and anti-commercialism' could be replaced by 'access, equity, empowerment and the divination of opportunities to exercise appropriate cultural leadership'. The agency of policy action was preferred to the relative passivity of cultural critique. (Glover 2016, 1)

This is a formidable list of researchers. The articles in *Meanjin's* 1992 "Culture, Policy and Beyond" issue (vol. 51, no. 3) show the arguments between them were complex and multifaceted. Some questioned Cunningham's call to arms, especially John Frow (1992) and Tom O'Regan (1992). Michael Pusey's book, *Economic Rationalism in Canberra* (1992), offered an alternative position for those who did not want to abandon the "passivity of cultural critique" too quickly. Others, however, were keen to contribute to a "more subtle and context-sensitive grasp of the strategic nature of the policy discourse" (Cunningham 1992b, 535), (see for example, Levy 1992; Meredyth 1992; and, more equivocally, Morris 1992).[11] The failure to appreciate the intensifying managerialist logic of Australian cultural policymaking ensured a signal misreading of *Assistance to the Performing Arts* that continues today (e.g. Hands 2021[12]).

A caveat: what I offer is a series of remarks not a complete argument. Glover (2011; 2016) indicates what is needed to properly parse the cultural policy moment and its "initial enormous significance . . . to the overall constitution of cultural policy studies internationally" (Glover 2011, 2). It would involve an examination of the output of cultural

policy researchers; institutional histories of the Institute for Cultural Policy Studies (established 1987), and the Australian Key Centre for Culture and Media Policy (established 1997); a critique of links with the Birmingham Centre for Cultural Studies (for this in outline see Goodall 1995); and of the work of Ian Hunter (offered in nascence by Clemens 2003). Hunter's rejection of post-Kantian humanism (Hunter 1992) and the "unprincipled" construction he placed on Foucault's conception of power as "inseparable from the historical invention of specific governmental instruments and rationales" (Hunter 1995, 167) were influential.

Such a study cannot be undertaken here. Nevertheless, it is vital to correct the perdurable view that *Assistance to the Performing Arts* has been "misrepresented and misunderstood" (Macdonnell 1992, 143; Gibson 2001, 78). K. A. Tucker, an early responder, claims the Commissioners were "forced to employ unwelcome interrogative techniques . . . [to] make their recommendations relevant to Australian institutional and social-economic conditions" (Tucker 1977, 1). Karen Hands writes they "attempted to begin untangling the sector from the Keynesian ideology that had supported it to that point" (Hands 2021, 441). Jennifer Craik comments they "advocat[ed] policies that reflected community values and the ordinary culture of citizens" (Craik 2007, 12). David Throsby argues that the "chorus of protest" which greeted the Report "was derived at least as much from a sense of public outrage that the IAC should have meddled in [the cultural] area, as from disquiet about the recommendations" (242). If not untruthful, such comments are certainly incomplete. They need challenging in their default perspective. For the main features of the Report, self-evident on a complete reading, are its ideological fixations and confused verbosity.

Rowse discusses the Report (1985), as does Gay Hawkins (1997), Deborah Stevenson (2000), Lisanne Gibson (2001) and Katya Johanson (2000; 2008). Jennifer Radbourne (1992) deals with it at length in an unpublished thesis. Of these authors, only Radbourne takes a critical view. Rowse says blandly:

> when the Commissioners of the IAC reported in November 1976, they treated the administrators of the performing arts as a vested interest whose rhetoric was self-serving and in need of the severest scrutiny. The IAC wanted the consumer to have more say about what was provided by the leaders of this industry. It saw no reason to attribute to the companies a clairvoyance about the needs of the public . . . and so it dismissed many of the arguments about the external benefits of the arts as special pleading. (Rowse 1985, 59)

Gibson is warmer, "The commission's findings were based on the examination of public benefit arising from government funding to the performing arts. The emphasis on public benefit was unusual, arts funding at this time being most commonly framed in terms of the support of excellence… [It] treated the arts as one industry among many, and in so doing used normal forms of industry analysis to analyse the performing arts for the first

time… It has been crucial to the way the arts has come to form itself as an industry" (Gibson 2001, 78–79). Johanson is the most positive:

> The IAC's recommendations on arts funding reflect the major influence of its broader [industry] policy philosophy. Its insistence that the form of public financial assistance to the arts should be flexible, responsive to consumer needs… and to social and technological change all reflected its approach to industry assistance generally . . . The IAC brought to its arts investigations, which now seems progressive . . . a belief that different forms of public policy should be integrated and consistent: industry policy, economic objectives, and social and cultural policies should all reinforce one another. Its broad mandate was to assess the service of industries to their relevant communities. Richard Boyer, who was involved in the inquiries into performing arts, music recording and the publishing industry, argued that if governments were to support the arts, the thrust of assistance should be re-oriented from direct 'industry' assistance to policies in 'pursuit of community-wide benefits'. (Johanson 2000, 144–45)[13]

Such judgements in essence reproduce the IAC's own rhetorical claims, the justifications it advanced for its own analyses and judgements. They do not examine the political context of the IAC, or the social one of the Commissioners, and they do not consider the numerous passages in *Assistance to the Performing Arts* that repeat *ad nauseam* economic rationalist *doxa* without linking them in a meaningful way to the performing arts activities the Commissioners were supposed to be investigating. Why did the Report elicit such an under-critical response from these experienced researchers? Clues are given by Cunningham and Stevenson:

> There is a mutual reinforcement between the current theoretical fashion for championing the self-determining, active and resistive consumer of popular culture and, on the other hand, the wider ideological and industrial trends that rationalise deregulation in broadcasting and communications on the basis of consumer choice. (Cunningham 1992a, 132)

> Ironically, challenges to the arts hierarchy have come both from those arguing the unsustainability and elitism of the high art/popular culture split, and from advocates of neoliberal economics who believe that the market should be the principle arbiter of value. It may well be this unconventional alliance of Left and Right ideologies that, ultimately, undermines the exalted place of 'art' on the agenda of government. (Stevenson 2000, 185)

If these can be read as muted recognitions of the paradoxical appeal of the IAC's arguments, Hawkins is openly supportive of its calculative mentality and measurement

methods. In an article for the short-lived journal *Culture and Policy* (later incorporated into *Media International Australia*)—a publication outlet for cultural policy researchers—she argues:

> [F]rom multiplier effects to export figures to value adding to labour . . . Statistics and other research knowledges about cultural industries have challenged outdated and exclusivist policy meanings for art. They represent art and culture in different terms, and, in this difference, new policy practices have emerged. It is simply much harder to make grand claims about the spiritual or national significance of art . . . when figures about the size and class background of its audiences circulate. (Hawkins 1997, 68)

From quotations like these, it is possible to infer that what appealed to researchers on the left about the Report was its antagonism to 'elite' art, and its dismissal of traditional rationales for supporting them as public goods. The Commissioners' managerialist logic was acceptable as a justifiable means to a desired end. Both neoliberals and cultural policy researchers believed that the qualitative arguments advanced by artists and cultural organisations for the benefits they generated were self-interested, class-interested and special pleading, and that a "beautiful set of numbers" was able, according to Hawkins, "to contest militantly non-empirical claims about art's value" (Hawkins 1997, 68), a statement that directly echoes ones that may be found in *Assistance to the Performing Arts*.

I would argue that this shows an egregious lack of awareness among some Australian cultural policy researchers of the neoliberal hegemony in which public policymaking was increasingly being conducted at the time (or possibly agreement with it, e.g. Flew 2014). In 1992, Paul Kelly published *The End of Certainty,* which Brian Toohey called "a chronicle of the excitement and passion behind the libertarian effort to remake Australia as an open and efficient trading nation after 80 years of allegedly inward-looking policies" (Toohey 1992, np). He pondered, "The unanswered question is whether the adjustment costs of deregulation are really a one-off phenomenon or a consequence of an inherent instability in the operation of free markets . . . The potential gains for productivity are undoubtedly impressive but by no means guaranteed". It is a question that applies to the free market thinking of the IAC. It should have been asked of *Assistance to the Performing Arts* by cultural policy researchers, but was not.

It also suggests—though this is a longer bow to draw—that the IAC in the 1970s, and its successors, the Industry Commission in the 1980s, and the Productivity Commission in the 2000s, were conscious that acceptance of their beliefs needed to come from the Labor party and its supporters among Australia's intellectual elite. With the Coalition it faced either opposition it could not overcome because of entrenched interests (still the case with the mining sector, see Brett 2020), else its views were already shared, and no persuasion was required. Rather, it was (and is) Kelly's "sentimental traditionalists"

(quoted Toohey 1992, np) on the left who need to be convinced of the inexorability of neoliberal aims and methods.[14] The IAC's rhetoric, like the Productivity Commission's today, was designed to appeal to a progressive ear while conceding little to a progressive agenda: to gesture to expansive social goals while remaining firmly focused on reductive economic ones. Clark notes the importance of winning Bob Hawke over to the IAC's managerialist logic in the 1980s. Hawke was an outspoken critic of the abolition of tariff protection when President of the ACTU. After he became Prime Minister, he changed his views radically:

> The Labor platform prior to the March 1983 election was, at best, "weak". But what was anything but weak was the program of economic reform put through for the next 20 years or so by the Hawke-Keating governments . . . Floating the Australian dollar, allowing in foreign banks, untying the apron strings of regulations hobbling commercial banks, cutting tariffs, simplifying awards, bringing in plans for the steel, car and textile industries, and dipping its toes into enterprise bargaining were key elements of the Hawke-Keating reform program . . . They wanted to be a long-term government. For this, they needed an economy that could grow in a sustainable fashion. And, in turn, for this they needed good economic policy . . . It was this group that then sold it to the ALP as a whole, legislated it through federal Parliament, and played a major role in selling it to the Australian electorate. (Clark 2013, np)

Conclusion

Post-GFC, post-Brexit, post-Trump and post-Covid, the results of marketisation, union-busting and deregulation do not look so sustainable, and if they have generated increased national wealth, it has not been equally shared (Healey 2019). Peter Robinson's confident assertion in *The Crisis of Australian Capitalism* (1978) that abolishing tariff protection would spur renewal of Australian manufacturing has turned out to be illusory ("It was a false hope," Millmow 2021, np). On the IAC's propagation of an indiscriminate managerialist logic, Yeatman writes, "within the new market-oriented schema of intelligibility, there is no way in which the professions can be understood as stewards and trustees of particular human goods. Since the ethical-purposive orientation of their work now comes under suspicion as so much . . . self-serving cover . . . it is . . . withdrawn from permissible speech, even as . . . public and private agencies tacitly rely on [an unacknowledged] professional ethic of service" (Yeatman and Costea 2018, 209).

Escaping the ideological strictures of "the neoliberal sublime" (Rolsky 2022, np) means conducting historical analysis into the reasons it became politically dominant in Australia in the first place. For those in the arts and culture sector now, dealing with *Revive,* the country's latest national cultural policy (Australian Government 2023), the

challenge is to dissolve Stevenson's "unconventional alliance" between left and right, and discover more politically aware ways for researchers to engage the policy process. Yeatman writes, "If today we find ourselves needing to provide a conception of . . . how the professions have to be structured so as to merit public trust, then it is surely because of the paradox of the creative opportunity that comes with having to . . . think about how we respond to [managerialism's] destructive worldview" (Yeatman and Costea 2018, 217).[15] In this respect, recognising the real intentions of *Assistance to the Performing Arts* is a good place to start.

Appendix: IAC Commissioners appointed in the 1970s (continued)

NAME	ROLE	DATE	PERSONAL DETAILS
W. A. McKinnon	Chairman	1976–83	William, Allan (Bill). 1931–88. Son of A C McKinnon. University of Melbourne, Sydney and Macquarie. "He held the degrees of Bachelor Science (Geology and Chemistry), Bachelor of Arts (Economics) and Bachelor of Legal Studies". 1948 started in the Bureau of Mineral Resources. 1964–69 Deputy Sec. then First Assist Sec., Dept. of Trade and Industry. Chair, Dept. of Business and Consumer Affairs. At Trade and Industry. "He gathered valuable experience and made significant contributions travelling overseas as a member of the Australian delegation to the GAT Kennedy Round negotiations in 1966, and on later assignments as head of a trade delegation to Taiwan." 1972–76 General Manager of Australian Industry Development Corporation. 1976 Deputy Secretary of Overseas Trade. Age when appointed to the IAC: 45. (main source Draper 1980; also "Diplomat, A Man of Great Intellect." *Canberra Times*, 12 Dec. 1988)
D. J. Pekin (original member)	Commissioner	1974–78	1911?–? "Mr. Pekin has had lengthy experience of Australian trade and Tariff policies. He joined the Dept. of Trade and Customs in 1936, and transferred to the Dept. of Trade and Industry when it was established. He has occupied Senior Tariff and Trade Policy positions in the Dept. of Trade and Industry. With his background and ability, he should make a valuable contribution to the work of the Tariff Board. Mr. Pekin is at present overseas as a member of the Australian delegation to the XXIIIrd Session of the Contracting Parties of G.A.T.T. in Geneva." 1966 succeeded W Callaghan as Senior Deputy Chairman of the Tariff Board. 1978 rejected by the Fraser government for renewal of IAC appointment. Age when appointed to the IAC: 60s? (few details but see McEwen, John. "For Press." Press release, 3 Apr. 1966)
G. F. Johnson	Commissioner	1974–85	1925?–? University of Sydney, Bachelor of Economics.

(original member)			1969–72 Executive Director, Australian Electrical Manufacturers' Association. 1972–74 Member of the Tariff Board. Commonwealth Public Service, listed as a "senior official of the Dept. of Trade" in 1963 Press Release on Trade Mission to Israel "as part of the Government's drive to expand exports to new and developing areas" (Press Release 182). 1964 Director Services, Manufacturing Industry Division, Dept. of Trade and Industry. Appointed to the IAC because a business candidate and a union candidate were both rejected i.e. he was the compromise choice. Age when appointed: 49. (main sources *Circuit: A National Marketing Magazine for the Australasian Electrical/Electronic Industry*, 23 (1): 45; Department of Business and Consumer Affairs 1978).
D. L. McBride (original member)	Commissioner	1974–90	Born 1927?–?. Electrical tradesman. 1957–72 official and advocate with the Electrical Trades Union. 1972–74, member Tariff Board. Feb. 1974 received promotion within Postmaster-General's Dept. Age when appointed to the IAC: 47. (Few details but see "Two More for the Tariff Board." *Canberra Times*. 7 Aug. 1972).
C. W. Conron (original member)	Commissioner	1974–79	Colin, William. 1923–?. Canterbury High School. University of Melbourne. 1939 Dept. of Interior. 1943–45 Royal Navy Australian Volunteer Reserve. 1946 Dept. of Labour and National Service. 1949 Private Secretary to PM and Treasurer. 1950–70 Various positions in the Commonwealth Treasury. 1952–55 International Monetary Fund, Washington. 1961–64 Dept. of Treasury, London. ?–1972 Assistant Sec., Transport and Industry Division, Commonwealth Treasury. 1972–? Commonwealth Tariff Board member. 1985, Automotive Industry Authority. Former Chairman of the Prices Justification Tribunal and Commissioner of the Petroleum Products Pricing Authority. Age when appointed to the IAC: 51. (main source Draper 1980)
N. V. Watson (original member)	Commissioner	1974–76	Neville, Verdun. 1916–?. Son of W Watson. Armidale High School. University of Queensland. 1940–45 2-26th Battalion IR and RAAF Coastal Command. 1945–62 Dept. of Customers and Excise, Brisbane, Canberra and Sydney. 1962–3 Assistant Collector of Customs, Dept. of Customs and Excise, Victoria. 1963–4 Assistant Comptroller-General (Tariff). 1964–73 Deputy Chairman Tariff Board. 1974–76 Temporary Assistance Authority. Member Canberra Gemmological Society. 1978 Fellow, Gemmological Association of Australia. Commonwealth Public Service (Treasury).

			Age when appointed to the IAC: 58. (main source Draper 1980)
A. G. Lloyd	Commissioner	1974–77	Alan, Grahame. 1926–?. Son of A V Lloyd. Homebush High School and University of Sydney. 1949–59 Economics Resources Office NSW Dept. of Agriculture. 1959–67 Senior Lecturer in Agricultural Economics, Melbourne University of Melbourne. 1967–69 Reader in Agricultural Economics, University of Melbourne. 1963–66 Secretary Australian Wool Industry Conference. 1966–67 Visiting Professor University of Wisconsin. 1969–? Prof Agricultural Economics, University of Melbourne. 1969–70 President Australian Agricultural Economics Society. 1985, member, Australian Manufacturing Council. 1985? Professor Economics University of Melbourne. Age when appointed to the IAC: 48. (main source Draper 1980)
R. G. Mauldon	Commissioner & Associate Commissioner	1979 – 1974–79	Roger, Gregory. 1933–?. Wesley College Perth, University WA. MSc & PhD Iowa University (agriculture). 1998 OAM for service to public administration through I(A)C to the community. Described as having "academic appointments related to agriculture and agricultural economics". Age when appointed to the IAC: 41. (Few details but see Whitlam 1974a).
H. A. Rolfe	Commissioner	1974–79	Hylda, Anne. 1938–. Daughter of S Post. St Joseph's College Goulburn, University of Sydney. Consultant economist by profession. 1958–64 Economics Resources Office AMP Society. 1966–74 economist Australian wood and Meat Producers' Federation. 1971 President NSW Branch of Australian Agricultural Economics Society. 1974–76, member Australian Wool Corporation. 1974–76 Board Member International Wool Secretariat. 1978 rejected by the Fraser govt. for renewal of IAC appointment. Age when appointed to the IAC: 36. (main source Draper 1980).
P. B. Westerway	Commissioner	1974–75	Peter, Brian. 1931–2020. North Sydney Boys High and University of Sydney. 1957–59 Teaching Fellow, Dept. of Government, University of Sydney. 1959–60 British Commonwealth Scholar, London School of Economics. 1960–64 Lecturer, Dept. of Government, University of Sydney. 1964–67 Director of Public Affairs ATN7 Sydney. 1967–68 Producer, Hansen-Rubensohn, McCann-Erickson Pty. Ltd. Sydney. 1968–69 Managing Director Westerway Productions Pty. Ltd.

			1969–73 General Secretary ALP NSW. 1975–76 Assistant Secretary Film Dept. of the Media. Age when appointed to the IAC: 43. (main source Draper 1980; Whitlam 1974a).
F. A. Pascoe	Commissioner	1975–78	"Mr Pascoe has had extensive experience as a senior executive in manufacturing companies and organisations. He is Chairman of Directors, Australian Development Ltd., and a director of a number of other companies. He was President of the South Australian Chamber of Manufactures in 1972–73, and is the first President of the Amalgamated Chamber of Manufactures and Chamber of Commerce, South Australia. [He] is currently Deputy President of the Associated Chambers of Manufactures of Australia". Age when appointed: 50s? (Few details but see Whitlam 1974a).
N. P. Hanckel	Commissioner	1979–80	Norman. 1929–?. Son of Lutheran minister. Scholarship to University of Adelaide (Roseworthy Agricultural College). Winery manager and agriculturalist. 1948, at 19 y.o. became a supervisor for major wineries in Australia. Established Pewsey Vale Riesling. Late 1960s, moved to the Hunter Valley as CEO of a new winery. Travelled to California and South Africa searching for new ideas. Moved around NSW, including Coonawarra. 1968–78 Director and Senior Executive Hungerford Hill Group, later Corporate Development Director. Thereafter, worked for the State Government in NSW in industrial development. Age when appointed to the IAC: 48. (main source Hanckel 2002).
J. R. Seear	Commissioner	1979–82	1920?–? 1954–70 Precision engineer, IC Australia Ltd. 1970–78 Managing Director, IMI Australia Ltd, electrical engineers. Age when appointed to the IAC: 59. Reappointed Associate Commissioner 1985. (Few details but see Dept. of Business and Consumer Affairs 1978).
J. L. Sheaffer	Commissioner	1979–85	1924–? Engineer. 1959–78 Manufacturing Director, Hanimex Corporation. Mentioned "IAC appointments" 15 Dec. 1983. 1984 re-appointed for a 2-year term. Age when first appointed to the IAC: 55. (Few details but see Dept. of Business and Consumer Affairs 1978).
S. J. Cossar	Associate Commissioner	1974–80	Stewart, James. 1916–?. Son of J Cossar. Brisbane Grammar School. No university qualification. 1935–39 Jackeroo Australian Estate Co. Ltd, Properties Western Qld. 1941–45 served AIF. 1939–50 Administrative Officer CSIRO. 1950– farmer and grazier NSW. 1958–60 founded United Farmers and Woolgrowers Assoc. NSW. 1961–73 Member Commonwealth Tariff Board. Age when appointed to the IAC: 58.

			(main source Draper 1980)
G. P. Hampel	Associate Commissioner	1974–74	Prof. the Hon. George (QC in 1976). 1933–. Polish Jew (escaped to Australia). Melbourne High School, University of Melbourne. 1958 admitted as barrister to Bar in Victoria. 1970s numerous academic and legal positions. 1975 admitted as barrister to Bar in NSW, TAS and High Court of Australia, and called to English Bar, Middle Temple. 1976–, member Victorian Bar Council. 1979–, member Board of Governors Prahan College of Advanced Education. 1979–83 Law Council of Australia. 1972 Tariff Board. Age when appointed to the IAC: 41. (main source Draper 1980).
L. R. Dudley	Associate Commissioner	1974–74	Lindsay, Robert. 1921–?. Son of Harrie Dudley. Melbourne Boys High School, University of Melbourne, ANU. 1941–48, forester, Victorian Forests Commission. 1949–50 ANM Ltd. 1951–57 Executive Secretariat Pty Ltd. Victoria. 1957–67 Executive Director Master Builders Federation Australia Inc. 1967 admitted as barrister to Bar NSW. 1969–, member of Tariff Board. Age when appointed to the IAC: 53. (main source Draper 1980)
C. H. Grace	Associate Commissioner	1974–74	Colin, Henry. 1909–?. Son of H. C. Grace. King's School Parramatta, University of Sydney. Master Newington College Sydney and Sydney CEGS ?. 1935–50 Training Office, Australian Gas Light Co. 1940–46 AIF. 1943–46 commanded 2-15 Infantry Battalion and 1948–50 University of Sydney Regiment. 1951–53 Staff Group Eastern Command. 1954–58 Southern Command. 1960 retired, rank Colonel. 1947–67 executive appointments and director with subsidiary companies of Commonwealth Industrial Gases. 1967–73, member Tariff Board. Age when appointed to the IAC: 65. (main source Draper 1980).
K. Collings	Associate Commissioner	1974–77	Keith. 1919–?. Brisbane Boys' Grammar School; Universities of Melbourne & Queensland (BComm). 1952–53 Assistant Commissioner of Trade Practices; Sec. Nat. Security Resources. 1953–54 Sec. Royal Commission on TV. 1964–66 Director International Trade Relations Division, Dept. of Trade and Industry. 1960–64 Aust. Govt. Trade Commissioner, Tokyo. 1973–74 First Assistant Commissioner Trade Practices. Age when appointed to the IAC: 55. (main source Legge 1968).

C. G. Dyson	Associate Commissioner	1974–83	Chapman, George. 1926–?. Aquinas College, University of WA. 1968–70 Assistant Secretary, Protection Policy Branch, Commonwealth Dept. of Trade and Industry. 1970–72 Assistant Secretary, Tourism Branch, Commonwealth Dept. of Trade and Industry. 1972–74 Counsellor (Commercial) Australian Embassy Tokyo. 1970–?, member, Australian Tourist Commission. Age when appointed to the IAC: 48. (main source Draper 1980).
D. L. O'Connor	Associate Commissioner	1976–80	Desmond, James, OBE. 1917–?. Associate of the Australian Society of Accountants (Senior). University of Melbourne (BComm & Diploma of Pub Admin). n.d., Controller-General (Management) Commonwealth Dept. of Productivity. 1934–40 PMG Dept. 1940–56 Auditor General's Office. 1941–46 Australian Army. 1961 Assistant Secretary (Finance) Dept. of Supply. 1969 First Assistant Secretary. Age when appointed to the IAC: 59. (main source Draper 1980).
F. G. Atkins	Associate Commissioner	1978–80	Trade attaché attached to the Australian Trade Commissioner Service, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Appointed under the Trade Commissioners Act until the formation of Austrade in 1986. 1962 Commercial Counsellor and Trade Commissioner, United Arab Republic. 1964 Commercial Counsellor and Government Trade Commissioner, Cairo. 1973 Counsellor (Commercial), London. Age when appointed to the IAC: 60? (Few details but for background see Schedvin 2008, 167).
B. Carmichael	Head of Office	1974–84	Bill. "The author was involved, with Alf Rattigan and John Crawford, in establishing the Industries Assistance Commission and was its chairman from 1985 to 1988. He was a member of the international study group—chaired by the former Director-General of the GATT, Olivier Long—which drew attention during the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations (1986–1994) to the need for domestic transparency in trade policy. He co-authored a review of trade policy conduct of industrial nations, which was published by the National Centre for Development Studies in 1996. He and Professor Ross Garnaut prepared a domestic transparency proposal for Prime Minister Howard in February 2004 to provide the basis for an Australian initiative in the Doha Round." (Carmichael 2005, 1).

Notes

1. I do not address the concept of neoliberalism, but draw my understanding from Phillip Mirowski (2009) and Davies (2014), who both offer cogent definitions. In the Australian context, I owe a debt to Michael Pusey (1992), and take up his analysis of economic rationalism in my own *Australian Theatre After the New Wave* (2017).

2. Bowker and Star's *Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences* (1999), provides a detailed account of the kinds of classificatory thinking I am referring to here.

3. The reading of the biographical into the social is reminiscent of the approach taken by Jacob Burckhardt in *The Civilization of Renaissance Italy* (1860), a foundational text for modern cultural history.

4. Other contradictions in the Report include: claiming the benefits of the performing arts are "almost impossible to quantify" and arguing government support should be based on "firm (and where feasible quantitative) evidence" (1/10); implying that electronic media and the performing arts are both substitute and complementary goods and services (22/61); and advocating more diffuse authority in funding processes and stronger central control (37/69).

5. See also Rowse (2002, 293–96). The tariff cut was a disaster, not least because the means of arriving at it was so undemocratic. Where Andrew Clark relishes the backstairs influence of the *Australian Financial Review*, John Stone, one of Whitlam's ministers, recalls "[a] lack of anything describable as due process; the prominent role of ministerial private office staff; the almost paranoid suspicion of public servants harboured by some (though not all) ministers; a few public servants on the make, telling Whitlam what he wanted to hear; and the total breakdown of any semblance of orderly and rational decision making". Max Corden absolves the tariff cut of responsibility for the crash that followed: "Quite wrongly, it was blamed for the increase in unemployment that came with the recession of 1974–75, though it must have had some localised effects" (Corden 1996, 144). The *Age,* reviewing Cabinet records fifty years later comments: "After the tariff cuts, import volumes jumped by a third, and the current account deficit was here to stay. Manufacturing lost 138,000 jobs in two years, and high unemployment became entrenched. The tariff cuts were only one factor in all this, but they symbolised the defects in Whitlam's "crash through or crash" style of decision-making" (*Age* 2004).

6. For a further view on Rattigan's anti-protectionist thinking, and an example of the IAC's network connection with libertarian politics see "Bert Kelly on Alf Rattigan's Industry Assistance: The Inside Story" https://economics.org.au/2012/03/bert-kelly-alf-rattigan-industry-assistance-inside-story/

7. Other free trade economists of note include father and son Fred and Nick Gruen. University of Chicago-trained, Fred was a collaborator of Max Corden's in the 1960s, and wrote the Foreword to Rattigan's memoirs. University of Melbourne and ANU-educated, Nick was the architect of the 1984 Button car plan that 'rationalised' the car industry. He was appointed to the Productivity Commission in the 1990s. For his views on the IAC and the "triumph of economic reform" see Gruen 2002.

8. Boyer's opinions on culture and its public benefits in the Report are at odds with his later ones. In 1983, he was appointed to the ABC Board and was the principal author of the paper, "The Role of the National Broadcaster in Contemporary Australia". This argues that the ABC's purpose is "to articulate the reality of a changing, complex, pluralistic society and to strengthen Australia's democratic values of open-mindedness and tolerance by explaining and protecting diversity, even as it foster[s] unity" (quoted in Consandine np).

9. For the full amendment see: https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/legislation/billsdgs/2674269/upload_binary/2674269.pdf;fileType=application/pdf#search=%22Review%20of%20the%20Industries%20Assistance%20Commission%22

10. The relationship between the IAC and the *Australian Financial Review* would repay further study. P.P. ("Paddy") McGuiness, writes that in the 1980s, "the paper was then at the apex of its influence in the political and economic life of the nation, as well as being the still unchallenged leader in the coverage of business" (McGuiness 2001).

11. In *Framing Culture,* Cunningham (1992a) seems aware of the neoliberal tendencies of the cultural policy moment and seeks to head these off by arguing for a national focus in evaluating cultural activities. This awareness is less evident in his later creative industries publications, which engage a more economistic and technocratic globalism.

12. See particularly the section "Unravelling the Public Good" (440–42). In an otherwise excellent paper, Hands recycles the claim that "Through its rationalist approach to the support of cultural, public goods, the IAC Report is noteworthy for having segregated the intrinsic value of the arts from the organisations' need to function as a financially sound entity" (441).

13. This passage gives the impression that because Boyer was involved in three reports on the cultural sector (it was probably four), he had expertise in arts and culture. There is no evidence to support that view, and good reason to suppose he adopted the same economic rationalist approach in each inquiry. The Commissioner who seems a better fit with *Assistance to the Performing Arts* is Peter Westerway, a television producer and later Chair of the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal 1991–2.

14. My article thus lends support to the "discontinuity thesis" in historical accounts of the Australian Labor Party that see a fundamental realignment of the Party's goals and values during this period. For further discussion see Bramble & Kuhn 2009, and Humphrys 2019.

15. For an account of the Productivity Commission as a-leopard-that-has-not-changed-its-spots see Green & Toner 2014.

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JULIAN MEYRICK *is Professor of Creative Arts at Griffith University and Literary Adviser for the Queensland Theatre. He was General Editor of Currency House's New Platform Paper series and a board member of Northern River Performing Arts 2019–23. He was Associate Director and Literary Advisor at Melbourne Theatre Company 2002-07 and Artistic Director of kickhouse theatre 1989–98. He has directed over forty award-winning theatre productions, written the histories of five Australian theatre companies, and published numerous articles on Australian arts and cultural policy, including 90+ pieces for The Conversation. He was a founder member and Deputy Chair of PlayWriting Australia 2004–09, and a member of the federal government's Creative Australia Advisory Group 2008–10. He was Chief Investigator for Laboratory Adelaide, an ARC project studying the problem of culture's value from 2013–21, and Chief Investigator of the AusStage performing arts database 2012–19. His book Australian Theatre after the New Wave: Policy, Subsidy and the Alternative Artist, was published by Brill in 2017. What Matters? Talking Value in Australian Culture, co-authored with Robert Phiddian and Tully Barnett, was published by Monash Publishing in 2018. Australia in 50 Plays was published by Currency Press in 2022, and his next book, "Theatre & Australia", will appear in 2024 in Bloomsbury Publishing's Theatre And series.*