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Introduction

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Governance has gained considerable professional, press and media prominence over the last decade. Its initiation and often justification has been that of scandal with certain old favourites such as Robert Maxwell's raiding of his employees' pension fund and the 'goings on' at Enron being trotted out.

However, only now emerging as a prominent area of inquiry is the governance of the nation and, by implication, the governance of government. The governance of society has come to the public's attention with, on the one hand, dramatic shifts of political philosophy such as the, so called, 'privatisation of the state' exposing critical national facilities, namely, education, health, social security, traditionally positioned in the public sphere, to market forces. Some have labelled the marketisation of the public sphere, 'scandal'. On the other hand, intrigue and deception has 'whipped up' the public's passion in the form of Anglo American interventionist military adventurism. Some justify military activity as a move towards global democratisation and making the world a safer place. For others, this is little more than capturing control of critical global resources utilising the military as a vehicle of commercial exploitation. Certainly, a growing body of literature refers to the ever 'cosier' relationship between the corporation and the state, with the shaping of the state's agenda being over-influenced by private enterprise.

Yet, whatever each person's view of societal developments over the last decade or so, a question arises, namely, is representative democracy capable of providing both a philosophy and platform of governance sufficiently robust for the strains and challenges of the twenty-first century? Governance considerations at the national level do parallel those at the enterprise level, namely transparency, honest reporting, equity, prevention of deception, except that the game plan is much greater with the

need to protect and serve minorities whilst simultaneously pursuing the interests of the state in conjunction with stakeholders, some of whom occupy the position of economic elites, controlling substantial resources and able to influence policy design in their favour.

Focusing on the governance capability of the Western democratic state, we, the editors, invited a number of authors to contribute to a text of original papers exploring the interrelationship between governance, enterprise-driven strategy and societal policy development and design. Seven contributions provide for the complement of this volume.

Professor John Dixon and his two colleagues, Alan Sanderson and Smita Tripathi of the Plymouth Business School open the debate with their four contending models of societal governance. In their exploration, what constitutes the public interest, and the extent to which it can be, in the words of Dixon and his team, 'protected and promoted', is penetratingly explored. The Plymouth team make clear that the four contrasting governance models are each supported by an ethical platform that is mutually incompatible with the other three. Although each model is championed by its proponents to the detriment of the other, the role and contribution of government is crucial. So much depends on government's willingness to listen and attempt to reconcile contrasting demands, particularly with those whose governance preference may not be the order of the day. As Dixon and his team point out, 'at stake is the governability of societies' and the pivotal role government plays between contenders, who, in the pursuit of their own agenda, sow mistrust and misgiving amongst the citizens of the state.

The theme of the governability of society is continued in the second contribution, authored by the two editors together with Professor Alex Kouzmin, Southern Cross University, Australia. In 'Balancing the Democratic Project: The Fourth Organ', the American state, its development as a democratic state and the challenge it faces in protecting and enhancing its democratic heritage, is the focus of the paper. Comparison is made between the philosophies of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison in the tussle to win the 'heart' of the American nation. It is contended that through the predominance of Madisonian, Roman republic form of representative democracy, information availability and citizen awareness have been curtailed. In order to revitalise communication diversity, the authors argue that the democratic essence of Jefferson be revisited. In so doing, safeguarding access to contrasting opinions and perspectives requires providing constitutional protection to channels of information. In this way, the principles and practices of democracy can be preserved and enhanced for future generations.

Concern for the citizen, their appreciation of developments that will effect them and thereby, their continued and meaningful participation in the affairs of their society, is examined by the Emporia State University Professor, Kalu Kalu. Recognising and sympathetic to the challenges public servants (termed bureaucrats) face in the changing political landscape of the United States, Professor Kalu nevertheless argues that improved usage of information technologies is required in order to hold public servants to account. The holding of public officialdom transparently responsible through more effective information adoption is comprehensively examined. The proposition that the public official post quarterly reports of their tasks and activities is considered as one way forward to assessing the contribution of the public official, thus enhancing transparency, inviting greater citizen participation in their local as well as national affairs and, most of all, divorcing public officialdom from political spin.

Need for greater transparency, but this time, in the politics of policy design is the focus of the fourth chapter examining the relationship between the American State and the corporation. We, the editors, together with Professor Alan Jarman of the University of Canberra, pursue a historical overview of the relationship between the state and private enterprise in the Anglo American economies, concluding that the enterprise/government relationship requires independent scrutiny. The case put forward is that the corporation holds too dominant a role in governmental policy design. The desired economic imperative is to shift from free markets to free competition, not only for the purposes of having a fairer society but also from the point of view of preserving democracy. Not that such thinking is new, as the authors quote Rockefeller, Lincoln and Jefferson, highlighting that our present democratic imbalance was foreseen and safeguards to preserve our democratic future already identified. The point made is that it is time to revisit existing knowledge in order to protect our democratic foundations.

Policy design challenges are also pursued by Professor Arthur Sementelli of the Florida Atlantic University, in his analysis of the management of scarce resources, particularly that of water. Highlighting the critical place of water in society, Professor Sementelli questions and examines the currently accepted practice of seeking rent for scarce public resources. The unwelcome political and social outcomes of public agency rent seeking are explored. Whether the practice of rent seeking of public goods *per se* requires reconsideration or whether rent seeking should be repositioned away from local and regional government are certain of the questions raised in Chapter 5. Professor Sementelli's contribution provides for insightful appreciation of public sector rent seeking enabling

the reader to be better armed to determine the nature and positioning of rent seeking practice.

The journey so far has encompassed two themes, the governance of society and the governance of the dynamics of policy design and application, with attention given to the interplay between agency/enterprise strategy and public/government policy development. A third theme closes this collection of papers, specifically that of the governance of government. Chapter 6 examines an under-researched configuration of government, namely dictatorship. Motivated by the recent press and media reports of Russia regressing to 'some sort' of dictatorship, the editors, Professor Kouzmin and Dmitry Afanasyev, Director of Severstal Corporate University, undertake an analysis of this phenomenon and conclude that Russian and American political developments are running in parallel. Rather than dictatorship, the emerging political form of Russia is that of oligarchy, a practice of government clearly visible in the United States. The question raised, which in different wording has already emerged in earlier chapters of this book, is that of its desirability and, in turn, its sustainability. Is the continued intermingling of economic and political elites desirable? If not, what governance processes need to be introduced at the level of the state so that resources, in the control of a few hands, do not dominate the political landscape?

In further pursuing the theme of the governance of government, the editors provide, for the final contribution of this collection, their analysis of the role and capabilities required of Ministers of State. The focus of Chapter 7 is the Westminster model of government. Analysis of the concept and determinants of ministerial will, portray an emerging picture of 're-activity' on the part of this critically important role in government. In order for Ministers to be more proactive in determining policy formation, it is concluded that a redesign of political and administrative boundaries is necessary. Until greater transparency of the interrelationship between Minister, political adviser, public servant and interested stakeholders, and accountability for political reward and patronage are instituted, the 'Washminster' behind the scenes favouritism towards economically powerful stakeholders will continue. Whatever else, the manner in which future Ministers of State act will be the barometer of the 'true' governance of the state.

These chapters range from a macro analysis of alternative state governance models to a micro examination of the governance of ministerial practice. The marketisation of the public sphere, the ever more interwoven government/corporate relationship and the need for transparency

and ever greater citizen participation in the affairs of community and state are the underlying themes of these chapters. Whatever the position of each person on the political spectrum, we, as editors, hope that this collection of chapters will encourage further debate and engagement on how we should pursue the public conduct of our personal, professional and responsible citizen lives.

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