THE VOICE OF METHODISM:
TEMPERANCE POLICY IN VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA 1902-1977

This thesis is presented to the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies
by Kenneth Douglas Barelli (ORCID Id: 0000 0003 3464 7403)
in total fulfilment of the requirements for a Master of Arts Degree.

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I have also had the valuable support of my family, especially my wife Carol. As an ex-Methodist herself, if there can be such a thing, she has always listened carefully, offered encouragement and thoughtful advice.
DECLARATIONS

ORAL HISTORY DECLARATION

The oral history component of this thesis, Ethics ID: 1646118.1, has received clearance from the Human Ethics Advisory Group of the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies at the University of Melbourne.

STUDENT DECLARATION:

(i) I declare that this thesis comprises only my original work towards the Master of Arts Degree;
(ii) Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all material used; and
(iii) This thesis is fewer than the maximum word limit length, exclusive of tables, illustrations, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

Kenneth Douglas Barelli
Student Id; 197022521
**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

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<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>Australian Broadcasting Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>AHA</td>
<td>Australian Hotels Association (formerly LVA, see below)</td>
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<td>ALP</td>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
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<td>ATC</td>
<td>Australian Temperance Council</td>
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<td>CAMERA</td>
<td>Commonwealth Advance Movement Encouraging Responsibility towards Alcohol</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCC</td>
<td>Department of Christian Citizenship (formerly SSD, see below)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LRB</td>
<td>Licences Reduction Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>LVA</td>
<td>Licensed Victuallers Association (later AHA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MLA/MLC</td>
<td>Member Legislative Assembly/Legislative Council, Victorian Parliament</td>
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<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSA</td>
<td>Pleasant Sunday Afternoon</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSD</td>
<td>Social Service Department (later DCC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>UCA</td>
<td>Uniting Church in Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCASA</td>
<td>Uniting Church in Australia, South Australian Synod</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCAV</td>
<td>Uniting Church in Australia, Victorian and Tasmanian Synod</td>
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<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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<tr>
<td>VALL</td>
<td>Victorian Anti-Liquor League</td>
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<td>VTA</td>
<td>Victorian Temperance Alliance</td>
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<tr>
<td>WCM</td>
<td>Wesley Central Mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>WCTU</td>
<td>Woman’s Christian Temperance Union</td>
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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to examine the influence of the Methodist Church in Victoria, Australia, on public policy in the twentieth century using the issue of Temperance as a case study.

Methodists had a tradition of social activism dating back to their eighteenth-century founder John Wesley. While the Church took up many causes, Temperance had become its signature concern. The secular Temperance movement in Victoria, Australia was unable to bring about significant reform so Methodist activists became the prime instigators of change and secured changes to licensing in 1906.

Methodists adopted a policy of ‘unswerving hostility’ to alcohol but, unable to adapt to social change in the following years, their influence slowly diminished. It was finally eclipsed in 1965 following a Royal Commission on Hotel Trading Hours. The Church, split between those clinging to traditional values and those seeking a better way to engage the community to their point of view, lost its reforming voice.
INTRODUCTION

Commitment to a fellowship is one thing and commitment to active social action is another thing: these two characteristics of Methodism ... enter into the core and even if you become agnostic that core remains. Methodist emphases and convictions enter into your whole way of thinking.

Rev. Dr. H. D’Arcy Wood.¹

This thesis explores the influence of the Methodist Church on social policy in the State of Victoria, Australia. While it is generally uncontested that Christianity was influential in shaping Western civilisation, it can sometimes be forgotten, with the increasing secularisation of Australian society, that churches have been a powerful force affecting values and morality, shaping attitudes and behaviour in this country as well.²

The creed of Methodism, as defined by Rev. Dr. A. Harold Wood, principal of the Methodist Ladies College in Melbourne from 1939 to 1966, made service the highest purpose in life: service first to God and second to the world.³ Rev. Dr. D’Arcy Wood, in the epigraph above, takes it further. There was something about Methodism that inculcated a reforming zeal in its adherents. It was always more than just a formal statement of belief. Methodists actively engaged with a wide range of social issues over the years in answer to this call to serve the world. In 1959, following his retirement as Director of the Church’s Social Service Department (SSD), Rev. H. Palmer Phillips reported on how the Methodist Church in Victoria had done so. Addressing the Methodist Historical Society of Victoria on ‘Fifty Years of Methodist Social Witness’, he said there were two problems towards which Methodists were ‘unswervingly hostile’ over this period: alcohol and gambling. These issues, he

emphasised, demanded the Church’s constant attention. This thesis examines the ‘unswerving hostility’ of Methodists to alcohol and thereby Methodism’s influence on government and wider social attitudes to liquor in the state of Victoria. Methodist Temperance campaigns are used as a litmus test for the Church’s broader influence on Victorian civil society, to investigate the proposition that Methodists, lay and clergy, were in the vanguard of campaigns to bring about social reform and that their advocacy shaped Victorian public policy in the period 1902 to 1977.

Of all the Christian denominations in Victoria, Methodism’s influence on civil society is perhaps most suited to a detailed study. It was arguably the most active denomination despite nominally being the smallest of the four largest denominations. Making up just fifteen percent of the religiously affiliated population in 1901 (compared to the Church of England’s thirty-seven percent and the Presbyterian’s twenty-two percent), the attendance at weekly church services was an impressive ninety-four percent of the membership (compared to just seventeen percent for the Church of England and forty-four percent for Presbyterians). This meant there were more worshippers in Methodist churches on Sundays than the Church of England and the Presbyterians combined. This weight of numbers, the discipline among members and its militant commitment to the social gospel, allowed Methodism to have a disproportionate influence on public policy.

The thesis takes as its chronological starting point the year 1902, in which the various branches of Methodism in Australia united to form the Methodist Church of Australasia. Following John Wesley’s death in 1791, the denomination he founded had splintered. While Wesley had always thought of his movement as part of the Church of England, the significant differences of his ministry in approach and thinking could not be contained in that Church. Just as Methodism had split from the Church of England, his followers in turn formed separate movements under the Wesleyan umbrella. These separate denominations followed their adherents to Australia: the Wesleyan Methodists (by far the largest), Primitive Methodists, Bible Christians, United Methodist Free Church and the Methodist New Connexion. Reunited in 1902, they could be known simply as Methodists, this is an apt point to commence investigation of their influence. The Methodist, Presbyterian and

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5 Appendix F.
Congregational Churches united in 1977, losing their individual identities, to form the Uniting Church in Australia and that forms the end-point to the study.

Social concern was a core element of the Methodist tradition. Social concern was a core element of the Methodist tradition. Methodists have been described as ‘prophetic activists’ on a range of social issues and although John Wesley thought repentance should be preached often and politics rarely, he was actively involved in the social issues of his day. Poverty, education, the liquor trade and, perhaps most famously, slavery gained his attention. Despite some recent biographers sidelining Wesley’s role, Methodists have been especially proud of Wesley’s influential part in the abolition of slavery in Britain and its colonies early in the nineteenth century, holding it up as a shining example of Methodism’s concern for national moral reform. Methodists also challenged the established order in other significant ways. They asserted their role in the development of the trade union movement and claimed, for example, an association with the Tolpuddle Martyrs, three of whom were Methodist local preachers while others were members of the Tolpuddle Methodist Chapel. Whilst this association is complicated and has its own history, there is clear evidence that Methodism was involved in the development of the trade union movement in England and that of the early Labour Party. Wearmouth, in his study of Methodist involvement in the union movement in England in the first half of the nineteenth century, notes that Methodism, unlike the established Church, attracted the working classes and was able to maintain contact with their everyday concerns through its system of governance. Although its hierarchical structure appeared autocratic, Methodism was, in fact, democratic and flexible. Members were organised into classes of about a dozen who met

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regularly to discuss spiritual development and its application to their daily lives. Class leaders became the foundation of the Leaders and Quarterly Meetings which sent delegates to what is known as the Conference, held annually. Conference was made up equally of clergy and laity, so the social concerns of the membership were never far from its considerations. It was these arrangements that perhaps gave Methodism a greater insight into the need for social reform than most other denominations and a greater urgency in speaking out for action whenever possible. Methodism was at its best when involved in the pressure of real life.

Fig. I.1. Enoch Wood, ‘Bust of John Wesley’ (1781), ceramic, 29cm, photograph by author.

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14 Appendix A.
16 Rieger, “Methodism”, 736.
In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, English Methodists launched a Forward Movement led by Rev. Hugh Price Hughes who came to be regarded as the founder of a new Methodism and the Methodist social conscience.\textsuperscript{17} This movement was in the forefront of social reform in England, focussing on the spiritual welfare and social condition of the London poor. \textit{The Methodist Times} became an important and influential medium for speaking out against perceived social evils including drunkenness and gambling.\textsuperscript{18} In 1874, the Wesleyan Society for Securing Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act (a law said to condone prostitution), was the first society in British Methodist history to ‘prompt overt political action against existing legislation’.\textsuperscript{19} The Forward Movement was brought to Australia by Rev. Dr. W.H. Fitchett (first President of Conference in Victoria and also first President-General), Rev. Dr. E.H. Sugden and others.\textsuperscript{20} The Victorian Methodist journal, \textit{The Spectator}, which began in 1865, also became a very effective weapon in the Church’s armory for the fight against social injustice with a quality and coverage that placed it above the periodicals of other denominations.

Another innovation of Hughes was a meeting known as the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon (PSA).\textsuperscript{21} This was introduced in the Melbourne Wesley Central Mission (WCM). The Mission, inaugurated by Conference in 1893 and using the model created by Hughes in London, was Methodism’s vehicle for practical measures to meet community needs. It became a force for social reform in Victoria and, it is argued, throughout Australia.\textsuperscript{22} Rev. A.R. Edgar, the first Superintendent, advertised a PSA at the WCM with handbills to consider

\textsuperscript{17} The use of the word ‘conscience’ was originally derogatory, like the term Methodist itself, but came to be regarded as a badge of honour. It came from a decision not to support the Irish Nationalist movement once it was discovered that its leader, Charles Parnell, had an extra-marital affair and this attitude was originally described as a Non-conformist conscience.\textsuperscript{17} The State had an obligation to promote social purity and look after the moral welfare of the people by bringing about social reform. Politicians, necessarily, had to be of the highest character. See Tait, “The Methodist Conscience,” 366.


\textsuperscript{19} Rodell, “Methodism and Social Justice,” 495.


\textsuperscript{21} The PSA was a meeting between the morning and evening church services. It featured an address of public interest, usually by a person of authority or celebrity status, musical interludes and often comments on current affairs given by the presiding minister.

‘The Sweating Evil’, which was the beginning of the campaign for Wages’ Boards and the regulation of wages in Victoria. (Edgar later became the Chairman of the first Wages Board). Benson also claims the PSA had an active role in the introduction of the old-age pension and women’s suffrage.23

Methodists in Victoria were divided as to whether reform of the individual or a more systematic political approach was the best means of achieving social reform. Dr. Sugden, President of the Victorian Conference in 1906, President-General in 1923 and Master of Queen’s College, the Methodist theological college affiliated with the University of Melbourne, became convinced of the latter course. He wrote in 1927 that the Methodist tradition of social activism, which he traced back to John Wesley, had been well maintained in Australia. Methodists were active in combatting the evils of gambling, the drink traffic, sexual immorality and desecration of the Sabbath. He approved of the constant and vigorous protests made by deputations to government and especially public advocacy through the WCM.24 For Sugden, the legislature had to be involved if reform were to be achieved and this approach influenced a generation of Methodist ministers under his tutelage.25

Phillips’ 1959 address highlighted liquor and gambling but there were other social ‘evils’ that he identified as key concerns of Methodists. He divided the half-century into three periods. In the first, 1902-1925, Phillips argued that social reform came through the work of individuals such as Revs. A.R. Edgar, T.S.B. Woodfull and H. Worrall and Mr. W.H. Judkins, among others, who fought for social righteousness by opposing the liquor trade and gambling interests.

The second period, 1925-1939, was notable for the establishment of a separate Department, under the leadership of Rev. George Judkins, to co-ordinate the fight against social evils. At this stage a distinction was made between social evils and social concerns and a separate Committee that included prominent and influential Methodist laymen F. Oswald Barnett and Professor H.A. Woodruff, was established to look at social concerns. There was no sense that social concerns were underplayed - Barnett became the driving force behind the formation of

the Victorian Housing Commission. Described as ‘one of the most dedicated and consistent advocates of social reform’ and ‘an activist of the community’s social conscience’, his Methodism had a practical stamp that influenced the lives of many people. Woodruff, a Professor of Bacteriology, ‘imbued with the Methodist doctrines of assurance’ was a forthright commentator on social issues including abolition of the White Australia policy and Temperance. The Depression heightened interest in unemployment and inequality. Conference declared that an economic system based on profit and self-interest was contrary to the teachings of Christianity and made proposals for reform, including unemployment insurance, to government. The Sunday closest to the first of May, was designated ‘Industrial Sunday’ to keep the issue before the Church membership. It was also during this period that Barnett began his crusade for public housing and slum clearance.

The third and final period identified by Phillips, 1939-1958, when he himself was Director, continued the fight against gambling and the liquor trade, including advocacy of blood testing of drivers. The Department and the Committee were amalgamated in 1932 giving the Department a wider brief. The need for a post-war Christian Social Order was a key topic of conversation and, for example, Conference was persuaded not to support efforts to prohibit the Communist Party. The Department was also a keen supporter of the League of Nations and United Nations, co-operating closely with the Refugee Council.

Phillips retired in 1958, to be replaced by Rev. J.W.R. Westerman. Departmental Reports to Conference in the period 1959-1977 showed additional concerns including Marriage Guidance, support for conscientious objectors to conscription, Aboriginal affairs and censorship. Liquor and the problems of alcohol abuse, however, continued to dominate its activities.

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26 Renate Howe, ed. *New Houses for Old, Fifty Years of Public Housing in Victoria 1938-1988* (Melbourne: Ministry of Housing, 1988), 22. Barnett was a leading Methodist layman and primarily responsible for the establishment of the Victorian Housing Commission following his campaign for slum abolition and the provision of public housing.


This thesis is the first longitudinal study of the Methodist Church in Victoria in prosecuting one of its core social concerns, that of Temperance. While its wider context is Methodism’s broader impact on social reform over time including changes in Church thinking in response to changing social values, a study on that scale is beyond the scope of a Master’s thesis. Temperance is an appropriate platform from which to interrogate Methodist influence more broadly, for Temperance was Methodism’s signature social issue from the days of John Wesley. This thesis will examine the ways in which Methodists developed policies about Temperance in twentieth-century Victoria and endeavoured to influence public policy to restrict the supply of alcohol.

It is surprising, given the public interest in matters of social reform in Victoria and especially Temperance, that no study of Methodism’s role has been undertaken. Although Graeme Davison has observed that ‘Methodism was a powerful force in Australian life’ and Hilary Carey notes that ‘Methodism has played an essential role in the life of the Australian people’, there is little research on twentieth century Methodism in Victoria to support these claims. Renate and Brian Howe have written that 'the role of religious organisations in … social policy formation is an important but largely overlooked aspect of the Australian historical experience’. There is a centenary history of the Melbourne WCM but it covers a wide range of topics, and treats social reform in insufficient detail. There is also an earlier study of the WCM that lightly touches the interest in social reform.

Ian Breward wrote a biography of Rev. Dr. A.H. Wood, a notable Methodist and an important figure in the Temperance campaigns, but there is scant mention of these activities. Another work, by Noel Jackling, examines Wood’s change of mind on the matter of dancing on Methodist Church property and his preparedness to accept social change, which mirrors his changing attitudes to alcohol. There are several general histories of religion more broadly in Australia that deal

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33 Harriet Ziegler, Church with a Mission: The Story of Wesley Church and Wesley Central Mission, Melbourne (Melbourne: Wesley Central Mission, 1989).
35 Noel Jackling, Dancing to Damnation? (Elsternwick: Uniting Church Historical Society, 2010).
with the social activism of the churches but, to date, there has been no detailed study of one church’s attempt to deal with a core social issue over an extended period.\footnote{Breward, \textit{Australian Churches}; Breward, \textit{Australia: ‘The Most Godless Place’}; J.D. Bollen, \textit{Religion in Australian Society: A Historian’s View} (Enfield: Leigh College, 1973); Roger C. Thompson, \textit{Religion in Australia: A History} (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1984).}

Several historians have taken a more broad-brush approach, examining all the social issues confronted by the churches over a limited period. Judith Raftery, Michael Roe, John Barrett, J. D. Bollen and Richard Broome are examples of this approach, taking periods of between ten and twenty years to examine aspects of church history in detail.\footnote{Judith Raftery, “Til Every Foe is Vanquished: Churches and Social Issues in South Australia 1919-1939” (PhD, School of Social Sciences, Flinders University, 1988); Michael Roe, \textit{Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia, 1835-1851} (Parkville: Melbourne University Press, 1965); John Barrett, \textit{That Better Country: the Religious Aspect of Life in Eastern Australia 1835-1850} (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1966); J.D. Bollen, \textit{Protestantism and Social Reform in New South Wales 1890-1910} (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1972); Richard Broome, \textit{Treasures in Earthen Vessels: Protestant Christianity in New South Wales 1900-1914} (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1980).} None of these authors has focussed their attention on Victoria or Methodism. Renate Howe’s chapter, ‘Methodism in Victoria and Tasmania, 1855-1902’, and Alison Head’s thesis on ‘The Wesleyan Methodists in Port Phillip, 1836-1850’ are both surveys of the Wesleyan Methodists but have little to say on their social advocacy.\footnote{Renate Howe, “Methodism in Victoria and Tasmania, 1855-1902,” in \textit{Methodism in Australia: A History}, Glen O’Brien and Hilary M. Carey, eds (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2015); Alison Head, “The Wesleyan Methodists in Port Phillip, 1836-1850” (M.A., Department of History, La Trobe University, 1990).} Geoffrey Blainey’s paper on ‘The Heyday of Churches in Victoria’, presented to the Uniting Church Historical Society in 1985, concentrates on the Protestant churches with a strong emphasis on Methodism. It covers the period from the 1850s to the very early years of the twentieth century but has little to say on Temperance.\footnote{Geoffrey Blainey, \textit{The Heyday of the Churches in Victoria} (Melbourne, Uniting Church Historical Society, 1985).} An unpublished essay by Elaine Wilson looked at Methodism and moral reform in Victoria for the first decade of the twentieth century and her study is especially useful for the personal insights of Rev. George Judkins, the first Director of the SSD.\footnote{Elaine M. Wilson, “The Campaign for National Righteousness, the Methodist Church and Moral Reform in Victoria 1900-1910” (Fourth Year Essay, School of History, University of Melbourne, 1957).} In his 1978 article for the \textit{Journal of Religious History}, Michael McKernan studied Methodism and the social reform movement initiated by William H. Judkins in 1906. While there is more than one error in McKernan’s work, the principal limitation is that he gives the impression...
that the work of Methodist social reform concluded with Judkins death in 1912.\footnote{Michael McKernan, “An Incident of Social Reform, Melbourne, 1906.” Journal of Religious History 10:1, June 1978.} This, as will be shown, was not the case but is an example of the inherent weakness in limiting the period of study.

There is a substantial literature on licensing law and the history of alcohol and drinking in Australia. The Victorian licensing regime has been studied by D.T. Merrett and, more recently, by Elizabeth Taylor who has given me access to the manuscript of her upcoming book and a paper presented to the Urban History Planning History Conference. John Nieuwenhysen’s review of the Liquor Control Act includes an historical survey of licensing, as does a paper produced by the Victorian Parliamentary Library. These describe the changes in licensing but not how and why the changes came about.\footnote{D.T. Merrett, The Victorian Licensing Court 1906-1968: A Study of Role and Impact. Monash Paper in Economic History No 5 (Clayton: Monash University, 1978) (also Australian Economic History Review 19:2, 1979, 123-50); Elizabeth Jean Taylor, Maps Made by Temperance: The Legacy of ‘Local Option’ Controls on Alcohol in Victoria (Melbourne: Urban History Planning History Conference, 2018); John Nieuwenhysen, Review of the Liquor Control Act 1968 (Melbourne: Government Printer, 1986); Debra Reeves, Liquor, Temperance and Legislation: The Origins of Six O’clock Closing in Victoria During WWI (East Melbourne: Department of Parliamentary Services, 2016).} There are also broader histories of alcohol and drinking by Ian Tyrrell, Diane Kirkby, Margaret Sargent and Milton Lewis.\footnote{Ian Tyrrell with Jack S. Blocken Jnr and David M. Fahey, Alcohol and Temperance in Modern History (Santa Barbara: ABC Clio, 2003); Diane Erica Kirkby, “Drinking: ‘The Good Life’ Australia c.1880-1980,” in Alcohol: A Social and Cultural History, Mark P. Holt ed. (Oxford: Berg, 2006); Diane Kirkby, Tanja Luckins and Chris McConville, The Australian Pub (Sydney: University of NSW Press, 2010); Margaret J. Sargent, Alcoholism as a Social Problem (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1973); Milton Lewis, A Rum State, Alcohol and State Policy in Australia (Canberra: AGPS, 1992).} Kirkby examines the role of women in the industry, Tyrrell provides a history of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and there is a series of essays about women’s involvement in Temperance, particularly through the WCTU, edited by Sabine Willis.\footnote{Diane Kirkby, Barmaids: A History of Women’s Work in Pubs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Ian Tyrrell, Women’s World, Women’s Empire: The Woman’s Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective 1880-1930 (London: University of North Carolina Press, 1991); Sabine Willis ed. Women, Faith and Fetes: Essays in the History of Women and the Church in Australia (Melbourne: Dove Communications, 1977).} Dillon has written a history centred on the NSW Temperance Alliance.\footnote{G. Dillon, A Delusion of the Australian Culture: A Brief History of the Clash with Alcohol in New South Wales 1788-1983 (Sydney South: NSW Temperance Alliance, n.d. [1985?]).} Alleyn Best produced a history of the Liquor Trades Union in Victoria which, unfortunately, confuses some important dates, while Haldane’s history of the Victorian Police has very little to say about the Licensing Branch despite it being the subject of a Royal Commission about
illegal trading, allegations of corruption and the regular criticism of Methodist reformers. In addition there are number of journal articles dealing with aspects of the liquor industry by Walter Phillips, Graeme Davison and Tony Dingle. None deals with the Temperance movement in other than general terms. Finally, there is Keith Dunstan’s *Wowsers*, its popular style suggested by the subtitle: *Being an Account of the Prudery Exhibited by Certain Outstanding Men and Women on Such Matters as Smoking, Drinking, Prostitution and Gambling*. Dunstan has examined the subject with a journalist’s flair, but his book cannot be regarded as a complete or rigorous study. Renate Howe’s review called it ‘superficial… but notwithstanding, very readable’. She thought it would provide ‘a test of Methodists’ ability to laugh at themselves’. For all its shortcomings, it is the only work to date that attempts to analyse the work of the Temperance movement and is widely referenced and quoted in later studies.

It is a relatively straight-forward task to determine the official position of the Methodist Church and its leaders about Temperance, but the attitude of rank-and-file members is more difficult to discern. In a series of interviews I conducted with former Methodists about events of the 1950s and 1960s, a common reaction was that the lay membership was largely unaffected by the very public disputes between Methodists over public policy. A rare exception is Graeme Davison’s family history where he argues that a ready acceptance by the laity of Methodism’s ‘austere code’ came with the security of belonging. During the Phillips Royal Commission into the Consumption of Liquor in the 1960s, which will be discussed in chapter four, the possible disconnection between the leadership and members was explored. The spokesman for the Protestant churches and the Victorian Temperance Alliance, Rev. John Westerman, was confident that the leadership spoke for the whole of the membership but there is little evidence to support him. Breward speaks of the ‘increasing

hollowness’ of the Methodist leadership’s claim to speak for its constituents and the unlikelihood of its delivering votes at the ballot box.\footnote{Breward, Australia: The Most Godless Place, 51.}

Anne O’Brien argues that women had a special importance in Methodism but, as ministerial leadership was closed to women, it is difficult to discern whether their attitude differed from that of men.\footnote{Anne O’Brien, “Australian Methodist Women,” in Methodism in Australia, 211.} The Spectator noted a speech given by Eleanor Glencross J.P., President of the National Council of Women, at the Conference SSD Demonstration. ‘It was not often that women are represented’, said Mrs Glencross, and she spoke of how women’s contribution had been limited to ‘selling tickets for charity’. It was time, she said, that they undertook more active roles including involvement in local government.\footnote{The Spectator, 9 March 1927, 227.} There is no evidence that her recommendations were followed. The presence of Methodist women in primary source material is rare. Rev. Dr. A.H. Wood writes in his memoirs of the contribution and influence of his wife in his ministry, but this is unusual.\footnote{A.H. Wood, “Personal Memoirs Parts I and II,” in possession of the author.} From the earliest days, lay members made up half the Conference but there were few women delegates until 1910.\footnote{The Spectator, 11 March 1910, 386. There was some doubt about the ability of Miss Job, appointed to Conference, to attend. The law referred to laymen, but it was decided that the term included laywomen ‘who had rendered great service…to our work’.} In the absence of details in the minutes of Conference, any influence by women cannot be identified. Regrettably for this analysis, these important members of the Methodist polity are largely silent.

Equally silent is the opinion of the general population on licensing matters. As will be seen in the following chapters, governments of all persuasions regularly amended the licensing laws. It has been said that the licensing act is the most amended piece of legislation in Victoria and these constant changes complicates any analysis.\footnote{John Nieuwenhysen, Review, 66.} Sometimes it is possible to identify the reason for an amendment, for example, the recommendation of a Royal Commission, but often the changes are without any such clear connection. Methodists were quick to blame the influence of the ‘trade’, but governments may also have been responding to the changing demands of the electorate, however hard these are to discern.
This thesis is based on an analysis of core Methodist primary sources. *The Spectator* is a principal source of material together with daily Melbourne newspapers, *The Age, The Argus, The Sun and The Herald. Victorian Parliamentary Debates* have been studied together with reports and transcripts of various Royal Commissions. These are supported in analysis of the minutes of the Methodist Victorian Conference, the Australasian General Conference and, where available, minutes of meetings of the Executive Committee of the Social Service Department. The journal of the Victorian Temperance Alliance, *The Alliance Record*, has also been studied together with the Licensed Victuallers’ Association paper, *The Vigilante*. In addition, interviews with former Methodist ministers and others have been conducted and are valuable sources of context and contemporary reaction to events.

The thesis is generally chronological but chapter one is an exception. It examines how the Methodists came to be more directly involved in the Temperance movement in Victoria. The chapter looks at the historical context of the Methodist concern about the social problems resulting from alcohol abuse, and how they became the effective advocates for Temperance in Victoria. It includes an investigation of how it arranged its resources to best engage the community. It questions the effectiveness of the Victorian Temperance Alliance, which claimed to represent the Temperance movement, and examines the involvement of the other churches in Temperance activities. The second chapter deals with the period 1902-1955. It argues that Methodists were actively involved in legislative changes to restrict the distribution of alcohol. The government led, from 1904 to 1909, by Thomas Bent introduced crucial amendments to the licensing laws including the provision of an opportunity for all Victorians to vote on the availability of alcohol in their locality through what was known as the Local Option. It examines the introduction of six o’clock closing in 1916 and the outcomes of the Local Option polls in 1920, 1930 and 1938. It explains how the 1906 legislative reforms were slowly dismantled by successive governments until, by 1955 there was very little left. It looks at how the Methodists responded, vowing to revitalise their opposition to alcohol despite efforts by a few in the Church to adopt a more pragmatic approach. The third chapter, 1956-1964, looks at how the in-coming Bolte government planned to introduce more liberal licensing arrangements. An important part of the plan was a referendum on extended trading hours. It looks at how the Methodists mobilised public opinion to have the referendum defeated. The government persisted in its determination to bring about change and resorted to the stratagem of a Royal Commission. Chapter four, 1965-1977, examines the conduct of the Royal Commission and the controversial role of the
Methodist spokesman, Rev. J.W.R. Westerman, in respect of hotel trading hours. The government was able to advance its plans for licensing reform but left the Methodist Church is disarray. The chapter further explores how the Church seemed unable to find a new place for itself in the community, constantly looking back while trying, unsuccessfully, to go forward. Overall, the thesis examines the dramatic rise and slow decline of the Methodist Church’s role and influence in the formulation of public policies in respect of Temperance.
CHAPTER ONE: METHODISTS IN THE VANGUARD

You see the wine when it sparkles in the cup and are going to drink of it, I tell you there is poison in it and therefore beg you to throw it away. You answer, the wine is harmless in itself... it is not poison to me though it may be to others. Then I say, throw it away for thy brother’s sake, lest thou embolden him to drink also. Why should thy strength occasion thy weak brother to perish for whom Christ has died? Now let anyone judge which is the uncharitable person; he who pleads against the wine for his brother’s sake or he who pleads against the life of his brother for the sake of the wine?

John Wesley, Sermon CXXXVII, ‘On Public Diversions’

Sermons, such as the one quoted above suggest that John Wesley was a strong advocate of Total Abstinence from alcohol but the case is not so clear-cut. In his sermon ‘On Public Diversions’, Wesley was preaching mainly about the need of individuals to be concerned with the welfare of others - this was then the primary motivation for those concerned with excessive alcohol consumption and hence the cornerstone of the Temperance movement. The word temperance, from the Latin noun temperantia and verb temperare, meaning moderation and self-restraint respectively, has been applied especially to moderation in the use of alcoholic beverages. The idea of temperate behaviour stretches back into antiquity and in the Christian tradition there are numerous biblical passages recommending its practice, including that in Proverbs 23:31 alluded to in Wesley’s sermon.

The concept of Temperance has, however, changed over time. For Wesley, in the eighteenth century, Temperance was the refusal to take spirits in particular rather than any form of alcohol. One of his pamphlets, A Word to a Drunkard, describes spiritous liquors as poison and links drunkenness with adultery, murder and ‘all manner of villainies’. Wesley, however, recommended beer to his preachers to sustain them between preaching commitments as it was a source of calories and sometimes safer to drink than water.

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recently, Temperance has come to be almost synonymous with Total Abstinence. The commonly understood aim of the Temperance movement was to restrict or abolish the use of alcoholic drinks. Within the Methodist tradition, the argument centred on the moral imperative to care for others but, if this moral argument proved insufficiently persuasive, the movement was prepared to press for the use of legislation as a means of achieving its objective to spread sobriety throughout the land.

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Fig. 1.1. John Wesley, “Are you a man? God Made you a man, but You Made Yourself a Beast.” A Word to a Drunkard, [London?] [1780?], British Library, BLL01003976054.

This chapter examines how Methodists came to be the leaders in demanding licensing reform in Victoria. It looks at how the newly united Methodist Church, perhaps uniquely among Christian denominations, developed a strong institutional ‘unswerving hostility’ to alcohol and adjured its members to be Total Abstainers. As part of its campaigns against social evils, including alcohol, the Church came to realise how it could influence public opinion and force the government to act. While enjoying some support from other denominations and the

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4 In 1832, the Preston Temperance Society began signing Pledges of Total Abstinence. At about the same time it also became known as the Teetotal movement. (Harrison, 50, Brake, 3).
secular Victorian Temperance Alliance (VTA), it was the Methodists, almost alone, who prosecuted the Temperance cause.

In Australia, as in England, the Temperance movement was essentially secular in its origins but had the enthusiastic and important support of many individual Methodists. The Methodist Churches were cautious at first in lending the movement their imprimatur. The Wesleyan Methodist Church in Britain supported the Temperance movement but stopped short of adopting Total Abstinence as Church policy. As noted above, the emphasis was on the protection of weaker brethren - the strong might be able to practise moderation successfully but what of the weak? The strong should, therefore, practise abstinence as an example to the weak. Gradually the idea evolved that abstinence should be pursued more aggressively by obtaining personal commitments, called pledges, to encourage compliance. In 1877 the UK Wesleyan Conference approved the formation of ‘Bands of Hope’ in connection with its Sunday Schools, where boys and girls were required to sign a pledge of Total Abstinence or to support the suppression of intemperance. This plan was designed to avoid losing children from Church membership once they left Sunday School and to prevent them from succumbing, at a later point, to social pressure to drink. But was this enough?

Fig. 1.2. Australian Methodist Pledge Card, (circa 1940, UCAV Archives).

The debate became polarised between the ‘suasionists’- those who thought moral persuasion would be sufficient to curb the consumption of alcohol - and the ‘suppressionists’- those who claimed the matter was so pressing that legislation should be used to achieve reform. By the 1870s the ‘suppressionists’ seemed to have the upper hand when the UK Wesleyan Methodist

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5 Brake, Drink, 7-8, 21-22.
Conference resolved to support legislative controls. Some branches of the Methodist Church were less diffident in their advocacy of Temperance. The Primitive Methodists and Bible Christians went further in their support for Total Abstinence than the largest group, the Wesleyan Methodists. It was only after Methodist union in Britain in 1932, when a Social Welfare Department was established, that alcohol was officially forbidden on Church property.

By contrast, the Methodist Church in Australia, independent of the British Conference since 1855, had no doubt about its position. It adopted a policy that came to be characterised as ‘unswerving hostility’ to the liquor trade and offered support to the principle of so-called Local Option in which areas could vote to restrict the sale of alcohol within their area. (See Appendix B). While its attitude to alcohol for much of the twentieth century was certain for its members, how did it come to be engaged in public debate on the issue? Methodists were long-standing supporters of the Temperance movement but not, until the 1900s, among its leaders. To sustain the argument that it was the Methodists who significantly shaped public policy in respect of Temperance, it is important to understand how they assumed leadership of the campaign against drink.

The VTA was formed in 1881 with most Temperance societies as members. It claimed to be the public voice of the Temperance movement and might have been the prime mover in securing reform. However, in practice, the VTA seems to have been formed to bolster the ambitions of politicians riding the popularity of the Temperance movement rather than acting as an engine of reform. It was never able to sustain any real political pressure. For example, the VTA’s version of Local Option, included in the 1885 Licensing Act, saw only twelve percent of licences surrendered and one percent voted out whereas the Methodist inspired 1906 Licences Reduction Board saw a third of licences cancelled and two districts go ‘dry’ at the 1920 Local Option Poll.

The VTA was structurally weak. Its support was through institutional membership rather than the individual members of the Temperance societies. This caused persistent financial

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6 Ibid., 18. Conference endorsed the introduction of ‘Local Option’, see Appendix D.
7 Ibid., 63, 86.
8 Ibid., 113.
difficulties and limited its ability to impress its ideas on the community or wield effective political influence. The inability to demonstrate a committed grass-roots following, limited opportunities to argue for major reform. By contrast, a Methodist block was able to demonstrate a capacity and willingness to take the government head-on in its drive for social reform. (A brief history of the VTA is given in Appendix D).

Fig. 1.3. Rev. Henry Worrall. (Photograph, The Spectator, 10 September 1909).

The Methodists were given a lesson in pressure tactics in 1906 when public concern and Methodist ire were fuelled by the sensational exploits of gambling entrepreneur John Wren, an Irish Catholic, coupled with apparent police impotence to curb them.\(^{11}\) The core of the Methodist argument was that Wren could only operate his gambling tote so openly with the connivance of the police and even, perhaps, their political masters. It was a double-barrelled

concern. Not only was gambling flourishing but there was likely corruption in high places. Rev. Henry Worrall, then minister in Golden Square, Bendigo, and dubbed by the press as ‘wowser-Worrall’ or ‘Worry-all’ the meddling minister, brought matters to a head. During his time in Hobart, Tasmania, 1901-1904, he had established a flair for the dramatic in leading the campaign against Tattersall’s gambling business there. His sermons often had catchy titles that attracted press attention. This time, on 22 July 1906, his sermon was titled ‘Who slaughtered the body and murdered the soul of Donald McLeod?’ and he denounced Chief Secretary Sir Samuel Gillott as responsible for the murder, on Grand National Day, 14 July 1906, of McLeod, an unregistered bookmaker, at Flemington racecourse due to his failure to act to control gambling. Worrall said: ‘there are men sitting in our Houses of Parliament on whose hands blood will rest…it is a nonsense …to pretend to be powerless to stop the scourge (of gambling)’. Premier Bent, stung into action, determined to bring Worrall before the House to censure him, but it was a Pyrrhic victory. Although censured, Worrall was unrepentant and emerged from the experience with an enhanced reputation. Bent’s performance in Parliament was undignified at best while Worrall, ‘fortified by the hymns, prayers, chants and cheers of more than 10,000 supporters outside the Exhibition Buildings’, bore himself with dignity and became a local hero. Bent could no longer avoid the issue of gambling reform and later, in 1906, Parliament was forced to pass measures to control gambling. John Wren’s tote closed early the next year.

For Methodists, here was clear evidence of the effect of their campaigning on the government. For Bent and his ministry, the strength of Methodist determination and the tactics it was prepared to employ to mobilise public opinion in its fight against social evils was now clear. The VTA’s failure, coupled with the success of the anti-gambling campaign, encouraged the Methodists to become more aggressive in their Temperance campaigning. Had they not done so, it seems likely that reform would have been much longer in coming.

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12 The Spectator, 11 April 1902, 517.
14 The Spectator, 3 August 1906, 1262.
15 Ibid., 1262; Wright, A People’s Counsel, 126; Keith Dunstan, Wowsers: Being an Account of the Prudery Exhibited by Certain Outstanding Men and Women on Such Matters as Smoking, Drinking, Prostitution and Gambling (North Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1968), 266.
As will be seen, a Methodist war on liquor was initially waged by individuals such as W.H. Judkins in the 1900s and a prominent Methodist layman, Edmund Greenwood MLA, in the 1920s. Greenwood formed the view that the VTA was incapable of organising the 1920 Local Option Poll for Temperance and, in June 1920, established the Victorian Anti-Liquor League (VALL) to manage the no-licence campaign.

The poor showing at the 21 October 1920 poll caused Greenwood to tell Conference that the current method of running the Temperance cause was unsustainable. Despite high expectations, only two of 218 districts voted to be ‘dry’, both in his electorate of Boroondara.16 He said that until now the work had largely been done by individuals and not by any collective organisation. The only solution he could see was to harness the strength of the whole Methodist Church to the cause.

This was the first step in the argument to establish a separate Department of Conference with the specific aim of leading the fight against drink and other social evils. Greenwood was clear. Liquor interests were never going to accept restriction of their trade and would fight for

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incremental amendments.\textsuperscript{17} At Conference in March 1921, Rev. Professor A.E. Albiston made the Methodist Church’s policy position clear. It was the Church’s business to save souls, but it was also the Church’s business to attend to the welfare of the people, even if this might arouse suspicion of the Church’s prominent part in social reform. The policy towards alcohol was not inspired by class hatred or a desire to interfere with pleasure - it was because the fruits of alcohol were evil. Medicine and science were against alcohol and so too was the Church. In the interests of humanity, it must go. Greenwood made a more telling point: with the involvement of the organised Church, he believed that the trade would be gone in five years.\textsuperscript{18} Greenwood was here anticipating a fundamental change to the Church’s engagement in matters of social policy.

At the following Conference in March 1922, the following motion was carried:

That this Conference, recognising-

(a) that the appalling growth and extensive organisation of the great social evils that are hindering the progress of Christ’s Church, and the development of our national life, demand the most effective organisation of which the Church is capable

(b) that the Church is called to exercise a preventive as well as a redemptive ministry

(c) that numbers of our young people who pass through our Sunday Schools are caught in the meshes of organised vice and are lost to the Church

(d) that the work is of such magnitude and of so vast importance that, under existing conditions effective organisation is impossible

therefore resolves that the establishment of a Social Service Department for the purposes of organising the forces of our Church against the liquor traffic, gambling and other social evils, is an urgent necessity but, in view that all available men are required for circuit work and for existing departments, the setting apart of a minister be deferred until Conference may deem it practical.\textsuperscript{19}

Consideration of an appointment was deferred to 1923, when the matter was again earnestly debated. It was a contentious issue. Some thought each minister had the responsibility to be involved as the most likely chance of success was through enlistment of every congregation

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{The Spectator}, 9 March 1921, 185; 2 August 1922, 665.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 9 March 1921, 185.
\textsuperscript{19} \textit{The Spectator}, 29 March 1922, 242; \textit{Minutes of Conference}, 1922, 73.
to the fight. For Methodists, the Circuits had always been the focus of Church life.\textsuperscript{20} Others thought the only way to consolidate Methodist leadership of the Temperance cause and build on the earlier successes of the Methodist Temperance campaigner W.H. Judkins, Greenwood and others, was to set a man aside specifically for the purpose. Judging from \textit{The Spectator’s} reports, no-one seems to have suggested the Church should provide greater support to the VTA, which suggests that its efficacy, perhaps even continuing viability, was already in question. The matter was postponed to the 1924 Conference.\textsuperscript{21}

In 1924 the question seemed to turn on the availability of a suitable man for the job. Rev. Alfred Madsen, President of Conference in 1916 when six o’clock closing was introduced, thought that the VALL could somehow be made more effective which would have the added benefit of the campaign being non-denominational. But a senior minister, Rev. R. Ditterich, having no concern for Methodist identification with the cause, argued ‘if you want something special done, you need a special man’. Nonetheless, the motion to set aside a minister was narrowly lost, by 91 votes to 88.\textsuperscript{22}

In March 1925 the editor of \textit{The Spectator} had cause to rejoice. Conference decided to fund the Department ‘to organise and enthuse the Church and be a more efficient instrument as the Hand of God against the evils that afflict our national life, place stumbling blocks in the path of children and check the progress of the Kingdom’.\textsuperscript{23} The decision to proceed was not unanimous, however. Some in Conference thought it a luxury that the Church could not afford. Some thought the work, in any event, was part of a regular minister’s responsibilities, but \textit{The Spectator’s} editor had no such reservations. Methodism, he said, had recovered its old-time passion and, just as John Wesley had denounced slavery and declared liquor a poison of the people, the new Department would engage all Christian people to set a moral standard for the community.\textsuperscript{24}

In 1925, the Methodists accordingly took a step that distinguished them from the other Protestant denominations. They made a commitment to a dedicated full-time minister to deal with social questions. Hitherto, Methodists, like the other denominations, had a ‘social questions’ committee comprising members who served in addition to their usual duties. They

\textsuperscript{20} Appendix A.  
\textsuperscript{21} \textit{The Spectator}, 4 April 1923, 272.  
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 12 March 1924, 202.  
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 25 March 1925, 279.  
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 18 March 1925, 251.
dealt with matters of social concern largely by making recommendations to Conference. Now there was to be a minister acting as full-time Director of the SSD. Rev. George A. Judkins, brother of W.H. Judkins, was called to be the first Director, starting in 1926. It was important in the age of the specialist, *The Spectator* thought, that the work was being placed in the hands of an expert.\(^\text{25}\) This was an act of great faith on the part of Judkins and Conference. A minister in a Circuit appointment had some guarantee of income from the contributions of its congregations, whereas the Department had to be self-funding. Congregations were asked to contribute to the work of the Department at the rate of sixpence per member but the regular appeals for payment of this levy suggest that many were tardy or non-compliant.\(^\text{26}\) In addition to this levy, private funding was to be sought, but it is impossible to know the success of this endeavour. The occasional reference to funding in the minutes of the Department indicates an ongoing deficit and the use of a bank overdraft. They also noted that ‘the enemy’ had almost unlimited funds for staff and resources and it was essential that the Methodist people answer the call to avoid discrediting Conference.\(^\text{27}\)

In addition to a dedicated minister, the Methodists had two more advantages over other denominations. The first was its organisation. As noted earlier, it was more democratic than many other churches with equal clerical and lay representation in Conference and, once a policy was adopted, it was for the whole Church. This allowed Methodists to prescribe detailed rules and recommendations where other churches could not. ‘Unswerving hostility’ to alcohol was expected of all Church members.\(^\text{28}\)

Second was its use of the media. We have noted the importance of *The Spectator* as a journal for Methodists and the wider public.\(^\text{29}\) Another was the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon service (PSA) conducted by the Wesley Central Mission (WCM). Intended as a feeder for the Sunday evening service, it became an institution of its own.\(^\text{30}\) From its inception in April 1893, it focussed on social justice and became a valuable forum to lobby for reform on many issues. It was instrumental in forming public opinion and, while it was Methodist-centric, many Churchmen, and a few women, of other denominations were invited to its pulpit so it was, to

\(^\text{25}\) *The Spectator*, 18 March 1925, 251, 1 April 1925, 302.
\(^\text{26}\) Social Service Department Minute Book 1926-31, UCAV Synod Archives 3068/4, 14 October 1930.
\(^\text{27}\) *The Spectator*, 18 March 1925, 251.
\(^\text{28}\) Interview Rev. Dr. H. D’A. Wood, 20 January 2016; Appendix B.
\(^\text{29}\) *The Spectator* was weekly until 1971 when it became fortnightly. Other churches were generally monthly.
\(^\text{30}\) For more detail on the PSA see Howe and Swain.
some degree, ecumenical. In 1965, noted Catholic layman, Arthur Calwell, also appeared having received special permission from his Bishop to do so.\textsuperscript{31}

As will be shown, the PSA became a powerful weapon in the hands of Methodists intent on reform. It was important in bringing about amendments to licensing legislation, including the Licences Reduction Board in 1906, the introduction of six o’clock closing in 1916 and success with the Local Option polls in 1920. Following the advent of radio, the PSA became a national institution with an Australia-wide audience. In 1925, the manager of radio station 3LO approached the WCM to broadcast the PSA, saying, ‘you ought to be in broadcasting, it is going to be a big thing’. Rev. S. Hoban, then WCM Superintendent, replied ‘you should be in the PSA, it has always been a big thing’. The first broadcast was 3 January 1926 by Rev. J. Ernest James. Many churches were wary of radio at the time, many refusing broadcasts of their services, but Wesley Church was keen to adopt the new technology and it was immediately popular.\textsuperscript{32} Eventually broadcast throughout Australia, the PSA brought the Methodists to national influence and prominence particularly during the long superintendency of Rev. C. Irving Benson, 1933-1968.

Fig. 1.5. Former Prime Minister W. M. Hughes addresses the PSA [1941?], (Photograph, UCAV Archives). Rev. C. Irving Benson to the right.

\textsuperscript{31} The Spectator, 29 September 1965, 13.
\textsuperscript{32} The Herald, Friday 2 October 1942, 2; The Spectator, 6 January, 15; 13 January 1926, 19.
An incident in 1942 highlights the influence of the PSA. While it was clear that party political matters were inappropriate for broadcast, there was no mention of restrictions in respect of social issues. During the protests surrounding the Clyne Royal Commission into the Administration of Licensing Laws, Benson had arranged for Professor H.A. Woodruff of the University of Melbourne to speak, on 20 September 1942, with the subject ‘The Liquor Tyranny’. This address had been preceded, on 23 August 1942, by Dr. J.F. Mackeddie with the subject ‘Drink and Efficiency’. Mackeddie, a physician, argued that alcohol was unnecessary for physical well-being as it had no nutritional value and was, in fact, a narcotic poison. Alcohol, he said, was responsible for loss of self-restraint. Woodruff was a PSA regular and an active Methodist. He said there was an obvious increase in the abuse of alcohol and flagrant drunkenness in public places. Why should society tolerate liquor’s privileged position? It was seductive in its offer of relief from stress but did we not want our wives and sweethearts pure and clean, free from the bondage of drink’s tyranny? How, in these times of austerity, had liquor escaped so lightly? We should follow the example of King George V in abstaining during the Great War and donate the savings to the Red Cross. No doubt it was a stirring address. The difficulty was that the address was heard only by those in attendance at the PSA. 3LO cancelled the regular radio broadcast at the last minute. The Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) wanted the right to censor material before broadcast and demanded scripts of proposed addresses. In this case, it objected to the scheduling of two speakers close together who were unequivocal in their condemnation of ‘not merely the abuse but the use of alcohol’.

The ban led to widespread protests. On 22 September 1942, questions were raised in Federal Parliament and Prime Minister Curtin said in Question Time, that Benson had been under warning to present a balanced programme following the address by Dr. Mackeddie as apparently exception had been taken to the talk. When T.W. Bearup, the ABC’s Acting Manager, revealed, early in October, that the complaint was from the Licensed Victuallers’ Association, conspiracy theorists were convinced that the liquor trade and the ABC were in league. A packed protest meeting was held in the Melbourne Town Hall demanding that the decision to ban the PSA be reversed. The ‘ABC was a little dictatorship set in a democracy

33 *The Spectator*, 26 August 1942, 543.
36 *The Age*, Friday 2 October 1942, 2.
37 Ibid., Saturday 3 October 1942, 2.
and abused its powers’ the meeting declared and a petition was sent to the Prime Minister. Curtin, on receiving it, thought the decision should be reversed and the PSA restored to national broadcast, but noted disingenuously, that he had no power to direct the ABC which remained adamant on the ban. The Government, in fact, had the power to instruct the ABC about what or what not to broadcast and, unknown to listeners, had used this power since 1940 to help the war effort. Nonetheless, Curtin seemed disposed to respect the ABC’s independence on this occasion, though quite why is not clear. The ABC did have a history of conflict with Benson, so the outcome was not a complete surprise. Benson’s complete monopoly as the sole afternoon religious programme on air was probably also a factor in the decision.

Benson by now had developed such a public profile through his broadcasts on the PSA that the decision to ban the PSA was national news. A petition of 100,000 signatures demanding its restoration was presented to Parliament in Canberra in January 1943, but to no effect. The PSA was not to be silenced. Such was its popularity that the broadcast was taken over by Keith Murdoch’s 3DB and continued for almost thirty years. In 1969, two years after Benson’s retirement, the afternoon broadcast was moved to the evening but failed to attract a wide audience. Renamed ‘Sunday Forum’, it ceased altogether in late 1982. Keith Murdoch, son of a Presbyterian minister, came to see himself as the nation’s moral guardian and the PSA was a good fit for this role. He spoke at the PSA about the need for a national renewal of faith.

It is not entirely clear on what terms 3DB took over the broadcast. Palmer Phillips remembers that the use of radio ‘necessarily limited the use of the PSA for propaganda purposes but was

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40 Inglis, This is the ABC, 30.
41 Howe, The Challenge of the City, 115.
44 The Spectator, 18 March 1942, 169.
compensated by the vastly increased number of hearers’. Notwithstanding, he thought ‘Benson had consistently presented Methodist views regarding social evils’.  

Whatever the overall assessment of the man, it is undeniable that Benson built the PSA to national and international prominence through his ability to attract high-quality speakers and make the programme ‘popular’, but it is doubtful that it achieved the same reform outcomes it had in the first decades of the century.  

The Age, in 2013, almost fifty years after his retirement, had Benson at number six in a list of men and women who made Melbourne what it is today: ‘Benson warned of the evils of drinking, gambling and moral decay and Melbourne listened’. On retirement, he was called ‘one of the most distinguished Churchman of this generation, courageously speaking on great moral and spiritual issues’. He was also described as a ‘courageous social reformer’ as part of the tribute to him in Wesley Church, but this claim is hard to sustain.

It is, for example, difficult to identify a consistent focus on any issue of social reform in his choice of speakers at the PSA. Dr. Barry Jones, who spoke several times, says he was approached to speak without any inquiry or specification of the subject of his address. He thought it was most likely his celebrity status that prompted Benson’s request. Jones also refers to a time when his address was controversial and recalled Benson’s effective technique to avoid awkward questions.

Benson was not a favourite among his colleagues: autocratic and supercilious are adjectives much used. Perhaps the clearest indication of what some thought of Benson came in The Argus in 1956. The paper started a weekend feature with one Parson Pepper, said to be a

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50 Dr. Barry Jones, former Victorian and Federal MP and polymath, was best known at this time as a successful television quiz-show contestant. See Barry Jones, A Thinking Reed (Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 2006).
51 Interview Dr. Barry Jones, 29 June 2017.
52 O’Brien, Irving Benson, 217.

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Melbourne clergyman but really a caricature of Benson and his lofty pronouncements on social issues. Pepper was all in favour of ten o’clock closing and off-the-course betting. There were far too many laws about these things, he thought. A.H. Wood thought his article bordered on the blasphemous and expressed a wish that any future articles would not be so offensive. The Argus editor replied that Pepper was a man of great gentleness and had the right to express his own opinions, while recommending that readers buy the weekend’s edition to see what he had to say next. The column disappeared after a few weeks when the point had been made.

Murdoch’s Herald also had a Saturday column written by Benson running from January 1923 to December 1979. Described by Peter Ryan as ‘Melbourne’s most prominent professional Methodist’, Benson’s early articles were more reform oriented, but they relatively quickly became repetitive. While in 1923 he advocated the ordination of women, it was not a sustained campaign and was given little mention thereafter. The role of women as mothers became a more common theme. According to Ryan, the articles ‘dripped syrup and bathos in equally emetic proportions’. Benson also conducted a radio question-and-answer session, but it is difficult to form any judgement of his effectiveness in promulgating the Methodist message as the Benson papers in the Victorian State Library have been carefully edited to present the most favourable impression of their subject.

Benson’s prominence may even have held back the cause of social reform. Some might have not wanted to contradict his point of view because of his celebrity status. For example, as early as April 1930, following a complaint from a Quarterly Meeting to the SSD about a proposal made by Benson to use theatres on Sundays, the reaction was to avoid confrontation. A more likely course of action would have been to draw Benson’s attention to Methodist policy and seek assurances of his future comments, but the SSD’s reply was made without recourse to Benson in any way. As Benson’s comments did not bind the Church, the SSD replied, it would be better to avoid drawing additional public attention to the issue.

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54 *The Spectator*, 28 March 1956, 3.
56 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 December 1986, 11; Benson Papers, SLV, #11493, Boxes 37-43; List of Topics, Box 46.
57 *The Herald*, 17 March 1923; Benson Papers, Box 37 and 46.
58 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 December 1986, 11.
59 Interview Anne Richter, 8 June 2016.
60 SSD Minute Book, 7 April 1930.
did not feel constrained to follow Church policy either. In response to a suggestion that
concerts be arranged to entertain servicemen during the war, the immediate past president and
Chaplain-General Rev. T.C. Rentoul replied in a letter to The Argus that, provided the
concerts did not conflict with the usual hours of public worship and the content was in
keeping with Christian standards, the Methodist Church could see no objection.61 Benson
wrote to the Department saying it was incomprehensible that the Church would encourage
concerts on the Sabbath and that he had already advised the Lord Mayor accordingly. The
SSD quickly resolved to ask the Melbourne City Council not to relax its by-law.62 In 1964,
when it came to the issue of Temperance, we shall see that Benson was all too able to make
his opinions known after Rev. John Westerman changed the Methodist position on alcohol in
the Royal Commission.

Fig. 1.6. Rev. Dr. A. Harold Wood at the Voice of Methodism Stand, Yarra Bank,
Melbourne. (Photograph, The Spectator, 28 June 1961.)
Rev. Rex Mathias to his left and Rev. Frank Hartley to his right.

If the PSA had become bland and moved away from confronting social concerns, the Yarra
Bank at least partly filled the gap and maintained the Methodist tradition of advocating social
reform.63 From the earliest days of the colony, street oratory had provided an opportunity for

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61 The Argus, 25 April 1941, 6.
62 SSD Minute Book, 30 April 1941.
63 The Spectator, 25 March 1964, 2.
all to have their say. Situated on the north bank of the Yarra river, John Curtin described it as ‘Melbourne’s University of the Working Class’. Rev. Frank Hartley persuaded Conference in March 1949 to institute a stand for Methodism there. Hartley had yet to be invited to address the PSA which would have been a good forum to present his views on the peace movement. Methodism, said Hartley, was renowned for its field preaching and the opportunity to reach over 7000 people each Sunday afternoon ought not be overlooked. Conference endorsed the proposal unanimously and for the next 15 years, Hartley, Rev. Rex Matthias and Rev. Dr. A.H. Wood maintained a weekly witness as the ‘Voice of Methodism’ to address current social issues. Like the PSA, there was no competition from other Protestant denominations. Rev. Dr. Donald Soper, a well-known English Methodist of radical sympathies and celebrated veteran of London’s Hyde Park Corner, visited as a guest speaker in 1961 and declared that the Yarra Bank was the hardest open-air platform in the world. Methodists would not be silenced.

If the Methodists were clearly in the forefront of the Temperance campaign, were others involved? As has been shown, the VTA had little success, so what of the other churches? As shown in Appendix G, the results of Censuses between 1901 and 1981 on religious affiliation established that the four largest Christian denominations were Church of England, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and Methodist, these regularly accounting for approximately 80 per cent of respondents. Methodists continued to make up a sizeable portion of the active Christian population over this period. This explains their continued effectiveness in Temperance activities but what of the other denominations? The remaining denominations generally had less than two per cent each. While the Baptists, Congregationalists, Churches of Christ and Lutherans were the largest of these, they were numerically quite small and without the organisational and financial resources needed to be active in Temperance reform.

64 Jeff Sparrow and Jill Sparrow, Radical Melbourne: A Secret History (Carlton North: The Vulgar Press, 2002), 83-84.
66 The Spectator, 2 March 1949, 115.
68 As noted earlier, there was a significant difference between nominal affiliation and attendance, but the study of attendance has not been extended past 1901 so it is impossible to know if the ratio varied over time. However, there is no reason to suspect that it did. It is interesting that, in the 1933 Census, when the question in respect of religious affiliation was made optional, more than 10 per cent of the population chose not to answer.
and public advocacy. Nor is there evidence that they were actively involved, as institutions, in the public advocacy of Temperance.

In considering the work of churches as institutions however, the activities of various individuals should not be discounted. Many churchgoers continued as members of Temperance organisations and while the VTA President seems generally to have been a Methodist, the long-serving Secretary, Rev. Robertson McCue, was a Baptist minister and his successors, W.W. Saunders and E.S. Sanders, were pastors in the Churches of Christ.69 Their sincerity and dedication is unquestioned, but the weakness of their denomination limited their capacity to influence policy making through their own efforts.

Of the four largest denominations, the Presbyterians were perhaps closest to the Methodists. A history of the Presbyterian Church in Victoria by Allan and Mairi Harman, a slim volume, makes no mention of a role in Temperance or other social issues.70 Malcolm Wood’s examination of Presbyterianism in the colonial period notes the Scottish connection with whisky and its status as a daily beverage that may have coloured Presbyterian attitudes. Despite this, he says that intemperance was an important issue for Presbyterians, together with Sabbath-breaking, impurity and profanity. The regular reminders to ministers to preach Temperance was, he thought, evidence that many did not do enough to promote the cause.71 The Presbyterian journal, The Messenger, makes few references to the matter. In 1906, it commended Methodists for their progressive outlook, their enterprise and energy. The correspondent hoped that the Presbyterian Assembly might follow suit. W.H. Judkins’ role in the Licensing Law amendments was acknowledged with a hope that readers would give thanks for small mercies since the hoped-for reforms had not materialised in full.72 Elaine Wilson’s study suggests that the Presbyterians were more concerned with Sabbath Observance than other social evils. Some Presbyterians even thought the PSA was a form of entertainment not suitable for a Sunday, which may explain the reluctance to become involved in any similar campaign. Wilson quotes Rev. G.A. Judkins saying that the

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72 The Messenger of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria and Tasmania, 9 November 1906, 1; 7 December 1906, 758; 28 December 1906, 818.
Presbyterians were very much in the background in Temperance matters. In 1920, there was an occasional mention of the Local Option Poll and the role of E.W. Greenwood, culminating in an editorial recommending a vote for no-license. A report of the disappointing poll result blamed the press, the Roman Catholic Church, a large portion of Anglicans and the ALP for the outcome. There was no thought that the Presbyterians themselves could have contributed more to the effort.

The Anglicans, then the Church of England, recognised a need to be involved in social questions and in 1907 approved the formation of a permanent Committee to represent the Church, from time-to-time, in emphasising Christian teaching about one’s duty to its neighbour. There was concern that the Committee might usurp the authority of Synod to speak for the Church, but this did not prevent it going ahead. This decision seems to have been prompted by the 1906 Methodist crusade against drinking and gambling, which, the Victorian Church’s historian James Grant says, was responsible for legislative reforms to curb drinking and gambling. Grant notes, however, that Anglicans ‘showed little interest for this or any moral crusade, preferring to express their concerns in other ways’. These other ways are not explained. The Church’s journal confirms this view as it contains no comment whatsoever in 1906 about the Temperance movement. 1920 saw more activity as the Williamstown priest, Rev. Frank Lynch, seems to have been active in the Local Option Poll campaign, including an appearance at the PSA. He called on Anglicans to pray for the children who would be the main beneficiaries of no-licence. Prohibition he thought was the only remedy for the evils of intemperance. Brian Dickey has confirmed this lack of engagement. While he thought Anglicans were concerned about the inroads of secularisation, the campaigns against the demon drink and the like were a Nonconformist concern. Anglicans, like Protestants generally, had to learn that society was not easily diverted.

73 Elaine M. Wilson, “The Campaign for National Righteousness, the Methodist Church and Moral Reform in Victoria 1900-1910” (Fourth Year Essay, School of History, University of Melbourne, 1957), 33, 58-60.
74 The Messenger, 1 October 1920, 638; 22 October 1920, 675; 29 October 1920, 691.
76 The Church of England Messenger, 1906.
77 The Church of England Messenger, 1 October 1920, 473; 15 October 1920, 489; The Spectator, 22 September 1920, 733.
Fletcher claims that while evangelicals in the Church supported Total Abstinence, the moderate to higher Churches were only interested in curbing excesses.  

The Congregational Church was also less involved. Unfortunately, the series of *The Southern Congregationalist* and its predecessor, *The Independent*, is incomplete but, apart from a request for ministers and pastors to preach on the question of trading hours in 1956 and a report of a 1965 address of Rev. Alan Walker about the future of the Temperance movement, its interest was limited. The Salvation Army, itself an offshoot of Methodism with a high profile in activities including the rehabilitation of alcoholics, took a hard line against alcohol use by members. There was a clear expectation that Soldiers would abstain from alcohol but there seems little public advocacy of Temperance reform. Their journal, *The War Cry*, often sold in hotels, was more a source of revenue than an instrument for propaganda.

The Roman Catholic Church was opposed to suppression, but even if it had been inclined to join in the crusade against liquor, anti-Catholicism was such an ingrained feature of Methodism that its assistance was unlikely to have been welcomed. Moreover, the growing concern about the influence of Catholicism in the Australian Labor Party (ALP), which was believed to explain its opposition to Temperance reform, made co-operation unlikely. Palmer Phillips noted, however, that while there was little practical difference in the stand of the Roman Catholics and the Methodists, there was little chance of public agreement.

Overall, then, the other Churches were content to play a much more passive role than the Methodists. Some individual members were much involved in the Temperance movement, but the other denominations were reluctant to take anything like an attitude of ‘unswerving hostility’ as their policy. The moral support of the other Churches was probably valuable and helpful in dealings with government, but they were unprepared to take any leadership role.

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Had Methodists not chosen to adopt the cause and confront the trade, its supporters and government directly, all the fine talk, unsupported by action, would have had little effect.
CHAPTER TWO: A JUDKINISED VICTORIA?

To-day I made a calculation, and I found in one street of this city, without departing from one line, running for about twenty chains, that there were over twenty hotels, and I could, even at my age, jerk a cobble-stone from house to house along that street. I do not think that anyone will say that it is necessary, even in this city, to have public-houses so thickly together as that.

Premier Thomas Bent, second reading speech introducing amendments to the Licensing Act

While Premier Thomas Bent denied that Methodist reform campaigner William H. Judkins, or anybody else, had ‘the slightest effect upon him’ it seems likely that few believed him even if he believed it himself. It was the Methodist campaign for licensing reform, spearheaded by Judkins, that was instrumental in bringing about significant changes in the licensing regime in 1906, the ramifications of which were felt long afterwards and continue to the present day.

There was general agreement among all concerned parties that licensing in Victoria was overdue for reform and it had been included in the Bent government’s platform for the 1904 election. Bent’s first attempt at licensing reform in 1905 was unsuccessful and he noted that Governments found licensing legislation difficult and changes were to be avoided wherever possible. In Parliament, he recalled advice from former Premier Duncan Gillies that legislation in respect of tariffs and licensing ought never be attempted. Gillies, an electorally successful Premier and ‘professional politician par excellence’, had certainly not seen a need to tackle the issue and we shall see that reluctance to introduce change was a recurring theme throughout the century. However, in 1906, Bent was congratulating himself on introducing measures that remedied the lack of reform over the past twenty years. It is unlikely that he

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1 Victorian Parliamentary Debates, 1 August 1906, 635.
2 VPD, 25 July 1906, 492.
4 Ibid., 4.
5 VPD, 1 August 1906, 636.
would have done so without the aggressive public campaign by Methodists determined to clean up the social problems caused by past inactivity.

This chapter looks at the influence of Methodism and its efforts to frame public policy responses to the social problems arising from excessive alcohol consumption in the period 1906 to 1955. Individual Methodists such as Judkins were at the front of efforts to bring about change but, by 1925, it was thought necessary to engage the institutional Church in the work. In 1926 Conference established a separate Department with a dedicated minister to lead the charge against social evils. The 1906 legislation, most importantly, introduced regular Local Option Polls in response to Methodist demands. The people, they imagined, would deal with alcohol directly and vote to bring in prohibition. This was the high point of Methodist influence. When the first poll was held in 1920, they tasted limited success but thereafter the legislation was slowly and surely amended to dilute its original intent. In 1946, Premier Cain, abolished Local Option Polls altogether and Methodists could only cling to a by-product of their long campaign, six o’clock closing, to hold back the excessive consumption of alcohol. Having wielded considerable influence to implement change, there was seemingly little evidence left of the power Methodists once had.

Methodists were generally united in their endeavours to introduce licensing measures that would lead to prohibition, but it was the work of a few individuals that sparked the public’s interest and was the most influential and effective. Without Judkins and the efforts of another Methodist layman, E.W. Greenwood, Methodist influence would have been much less effective. In addition, there were several ministers in the vanguard of Temperance work, T.S.B. Woodfull, A.R. Edgar and H. Worrall. After 1926, lay involvement diminished and it was largely the work of ministers G.A. Judkins, H.P. Phillips and A.H. Wood that sustained and prosecuted the Church’s policy of ‘unswerving hostility’ to alcohol. Without their personal commitment, much less would have been achieved.

The Methodists had been active campaigners for social reform, especially following Methodist union in 1902 when the church rekindled its reforming zeal. The more evangelical Primitive Methodists and Bible Christians were able to persuade the Wesleyan majority in Conference to take up social reform more actively particularly regarding gambling and

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Temperance. The efforts of Rev. Henry Worrall forcing the government to act in the matter of gambling have been noted and licensing reform was no less a target of the reformers. For example, thirty of the fifty PSA addresses for 1906 had topics with a Temperance theme and they often featured the prominent Methodist layman William Judkins. There was no concern about lay leadership. As noted earlier, Methodists were always pleased to have lay-people active in the work.

Fig. 2.1. Mr. William H. Judkins. (Photograph, The Spectator, 20 July 1908.)

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8 Samantha Frappell ‘’Methodism and the Crises of Nationhood, 1903-1955,’’ in Methodism in Australia, 135.
9 The Spectator, 1906.
Not a lot is known of Judkin’s early life, but it seems he started ministerial training in New Zealand, which until 1907 was part of the Methodist Church of Australasia. He suffered the first of several health break-downs while there, which cruelled his chance for the ordained ministry, but recovered sufficiently to undertake evangelical mission work before his permanent return to Melbourne. In the early twentieth century, the New Zealand Temperance movement was enjoying success. The success of Local Option ballots there pointed the path to eventual prohibition. Victoria too could benefit from Local Option and Judkins was fired with enthusiasm for the idea. No doubt his involvement in these campaigns helped hone his oratorical skills. He became a lay preacher and was popular for his fiery attacks on the whole gamut of the social evils of the day.

Judkins developed a high public profile through his campaign against John Wren and his gambling establishment. Frank Hardy, in his fictionalised account of this time in Victoria’s history, called Judkins (naming him Joggins) the ‘living personification of the term wowser … who could run white hot over the evils of drinking and gambling’. Fellow Methodist, Rev H. Palmer Phillips, called Judkins ‘the eloquent mouthpiece of Methodist conscience… silver tongued in denouncing the city’s depravity and together with Revs Henry Worrall, T.S.B. Woodfull and A.R. Edgar, this quartet led the fight against the 3 R’s, Rascality, Rum and Rome’. Dunstan said Judkins was ‘the most effective wowser Australia has known’. Judkins revelled in describing the iniquities of Melbourne’s gambling establishments and some of his speeches contained details so disturbing it was thought necessary to have separate sessions for men and women rather than risk the consequences of presenting the information before a mixed gathering. Judkins was undoubtedly the leader of the early campaigns

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10 Methodist union in New Zealand was achieved in 1913 when it became an independent Conference. Prior to that date, New Zealand Methodists were part of the Australasian General Conferences.
11 The Spectator, 17 July 1903, 1081.
12 Ibid., 6 September 1912, 1430-31.
17 Keith Dunstan, Wowsers: Being an Account of the Prudery Exhibited by Certain Outstanding Men and Women on such Matters as Smoking, Drinking, Prostitution and Gambling (North Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1968), 267.
18 The Spectator, 3 August 1906, 1267.
against gambling and drinking, and it was at some personal risk. Public meetings were predicated on the need to stir up public sentiment and were often interrupted by rowdy elements, so it was thought necessary to have bodyguards for his protection. Judkins was not alone in facing this hostility. Woodfull’s daughter recalls the physical intimidation encountered by her father and the family, with the need to obtain police protection at speaking engagements. The gambling and drinking establishment clearly thought the Methodists were a force to be reckoned with and was prepared to resort to physical intimidation when necessary.

![Cartoon of Judkins threatening Chief Secretary Samuel Gillott](image)

Fig. 2.2. W. H. Judkins threatens Chief Secretary Samuel Gillott. (Cartoon by Claude Marquet, *Melbourne Punch*, 31 May 1906.)

Bent and his government were only too aware of the strength of the Methodist campaign and the tactics it was prepared to employ in its fight against alcohol. Judkins left no stone

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19 Ibid., 20 July 1906, 1183.
unturbed in his campaign to bring about change and was not reluctant to pursue individuals. Similarly, John Norton, proprietor of Truth, as part of his anti-establishment and muck-raking journalism, was equally pleased to attack individuals and spark community interest about those in high places. Norton claimed to have coined the term ‘wowser’ first, around 1900, for someone publicly censorious of others, a person excessively puritanical or a killjoy.21 Dunstan thought the term was ‘the richest, most gloriously expressive of all Australian words’ and it has been used as a derogatory term extensively ever since. Methodists wore the label with pride and said it was an acronym for We Only Want Social Evils Removed. Norton was no fan of Judkins, labelling him in his customary alliterative style as a ‘holy, howling humbug’ or a ‘Bible-banging, pulpit-pounding, penny-pinching, “trey-bit” trapping, pharisaical parasite’, but on this occasion, they were on the same side.22 Norton revealed Chief Secretary Gillott’s connection to Melbourne’s infamous Madame Brussels brothel and Judkins used the PSA to force Gillott’s resignation by revealing his pecuniary interests in several hotels. It was untenable, said Judkins, that he could be responsible for the administration of the Licensing Act, much less bring about meaningful improvements.23 Later, during the debate on licensing, Bent was reminded of his misadventure in bringing Worrall before the House and the role it played in forcing the government to introduce reform.24

24 VPD, 1 August 1906, 636.
A deputation of about 300 men and women had waited on Premier Bent in March 1906 representing 30 Temperance and religious organisations. They outlined the measures to be included in the reform of the liquor trade - complete local option over all kinds of licences and permits, no monetary compensation for the loss of licences but a period to wind up trading and, most importantly, a poll at every general election with three options in respect of
licences: continuance, reduction or no licence.\textsuperscript{25} The demand for Local Option was strongly supported by the Methodist Conference, where Judkins had argued that it was better than prohibition imposed by Parliament as the people could decide for themselves.\textsuperscript{26}

While the Methodists had forced Bent’s hand, the compromise solution was decidedly un-Methodist. Bent was fortunate that he could turn to George Swinburne, another prominent Methodist layman who, among other achievements, was a successful Minister for Water. He had brought water supply under state control through the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. This was the best outcome in response to the drought of 1901-2 and became the template for the Murray River Commission agreement in 1917. His grasp of detail and ability to win over the many parties involved was notable and essential to tackle the complex question of liquor reform.\textsuperscript{27} His drive and appetite for social reform was behind the legislation to reform licensing for, while all parties agreed on the objective of reducing the number of hotels, there was no consensus about how it should be done. Many Methodists would have demanded outright prohibition or, at the very least, immediate Local Option. Methodists were mostly unprepared to compromise on the question of alcohol, but Swinburne realised the need for a politically palatable outcome if any progress were to be made. It seems likely that he formed a consultative committee to find a solution. We know that Woodfull was the most likely of the Methodist campaigners to be open to compromise and that he was involved in meetings in Parliament House at the time the legislation was framed.\textsuperscript{28} Swinburne would have invited others to contribute. Woodfull himself later referred to the need for secret manoeuvres in the face of continuing pressures, so it seems that negotiations were conducted with the interested parties to find an acceptable outcome.\textsuperscript{29} During parliamentary debate in 1920 about licensing legislation, those opposing the change made it clear that there had been some agreement that resulted in the 1906 solution that ought not be undone.\textsuperscript{30}

The Methodists had much to be happy about in the legislation. The immediate problem of too many hotels was to be solved by the establishment of a License Reduction Board (LRB), which for ten years would cull unsatisfactory licensees and rebalance the number of hotels in proportion to population. After the LRB had had the opportunity to set things in order, Local

\textsuperscript{25} The Age, 28 March 1906, 8.  
\textsuperscript{26} The Alliance Record, April 1904, 48.  
\textsuperscript{28} Osborn, Woodfull, 21.  
\textsuperscript{29} The Spectator, 11 January 1907, 62.  
\textsuperscript{30} VPD, 15 September 1920, 1423.
Option polls would be held at three-year intervals on the question of continuation, reduction or no licence in each electoral district. The major disappointment was the delay in the Local Option Polls for ten years and the requirement for a three-fifths majority at the poll instead of a simple majority. (The idea behind the three-fifths was to avoid the possibility of a slender margin that changed at each poll). Taken together, the legislation achieved what the reformers most wanted: the guarantee of Local Option which in the foreseeable future would, in their minds, inevitably lead to prohibition and allow a godly society.

The main sticking point was the matter of compensation. Existing licences made no provision for compensation in the event of cancellation and hard-line Temperance advocates could see no reason why taxpayers should provide any. Methodists of more moderate view thought giving notice of cancellation (three years was one suggestion), was a measure of compensation that had no impact on the public purse. Cabinet considered Swinburne’s proposals, which provided notice of cancellation and agreed the package of reforms that would be put to the House that evening. However, during the dinner adjournment, Bent was persuaded to adopt a compromise scheme. To the astonishment of his Cabinet colleagues, he
propounded a proposal including amendments proposed by the Opposition.\textsuperscript{31} Swinburne was no professional politician and may not have realised his measures were unlikely to gain cross-party support, while Bent, on reflection, possibly understood that the package as originally conceived would not be acceptable to all the interested parties, including - according to Weston Bate - a developing civil liberties movement. Debate was likely to be divisive and intense, so it was better to find some sort of compromise that would at least assuage public pressure. This was vintage Bent: ‘principles never got in the way of his pragmatism’.\textsuperscript{32} He added the final ingredient that made the legislative package acceptable. Compensation was to be funded by a levy on the industry itself and not from the public purse. Funds raised through this process would be a factor in the work of the LRB although, in due course, the surplus in the compensation fund was appropriated to general revenue.\textsuperscript{33}

The LRB went about its work rationalising the industry. Licensing districts were allocated a quota of licences according to population and excess licences were surrendered voluntarily or compulsorily cancelled. The Board weeded out the less viable establishments and closed 1054 hotels, about one-third of the total, in the period 1906-20 and compensation of more than £500,000 was paid. This started the process of consolidation that eventually delivered almost monopoly powers to the Carlton and United Brewery and oligopolistic powers to a handful of hoteliers that were only undone by the 1970s Trade Practices Legislation. Even in the 1980s, Victoria had 1161 persons per licence while NSW had 645, the far more restrictive Victorian regime a legacy of the Methodist crusades against alcohol.\textsuperscript{34} The LRB itself was an innovative idea and came to be studied by many jurisdictions due to its effectiveness in improving licensing standards.\textsuperscript{35}

Some in the Church queried the flamboyant tactics used by Judkins and his colleagues. Before Conference in March 1907, according to The Spectator, ‘there were rumours on every hand of attacks on the WCM’s policies and doings in respect of social reform’.\textsuperscript{36} Sugden, the outgoing President, commented about the disquiet in the Church about the WCM’s ‘almost

\textsuperscript{31} VPD, 6 December 1906, 3574.
\textsuperscript{32} Weston Bate, “Tommy Bent, ‘A Man.’,” In Victorian Premiers, 132.
\textsuperscript{34} John Nieuwenhysen, _Review of the Liquor Control Act 1968_ (Melbourne: Government Printer, 1986), 73 and Table 2.1; Elizabeth Jean Taylor, “The Local Option: Planning and the Ghosts of Liquor Licensing Past” (Unpublished manuscript, 2018, in possession of the author), 34.
\textsuperscript{35} VPD, 15 September 1920, 1430.
\textsuperscript{36} _The Spectator_, 8 March 1907, 395.
exclusive’ use of the PSA in the cause of liquor and gambling reform. He warned against the formation of conclusions based on press reports alone. He went on to conclude that the campaigns had been an important part in bringing about reform by sustaining public interest in the questions and maintaining pressure on the government. The anti-drink campaigns were emotionally charged but probably not out of character for the time. Muscular evangelism was still alive and Methodist services regularly included an emotional call for sinners to come forward and repent. Methodists, above all, valued the power of oratory to uplift members and win new converts and a Methodist meeting without emotion would have been out of character. Some authors have interpreted Sugden’s comments as evidence of a clash between the conservative and evangelical camps in the Church: while there may be an element of this involved, a more likely explanation was the reluctance of some Methodists to become involved in party politics.

When the ALP was founded, more than a quarter of its members were Methodists. The church was actively involved in campaigns for better working conditions and wages issues that were central to the ALP platform. In Victoria, the Labor Party had come under the influence of Wren and members with links to the Roman Catholic Church, who opposed gambling and liquor reform. Some Methodists were concerned that the vigorous advocacy of reform might be seen as aligning it with the conservative parties against labour. The Argus carried a report of Conference proceedings and noted that ‘the Methodist Church as a whole does not approve of the political sorties made by social reformers in the past twelve months’, a comment that provoked an immediate reaction next day at Conference. Conference resolved unanimously that nobody had said or intended any such conclusion. It was fortunate that Conference was still in session, so it could be made clear that the Church was solidly behind Judkins and the other social reformers. Rev. George Judkins observed revealingly that ‘the reformers led and the church followed, though some thought them fanatics, the

37 Ibid., 8 March 1907, 395.
41 The Spectator, 15 March 1907, 437.
42 The Argus, 7 March, 5.
43 The Spectator, 15 March 1907, 443.
majority were behind them’. 44 Woodfull explained that the crusade had been sparked by Wren’s attempts to gain respectability for his operations through large donations to charity, and while some deprecated the methods used, ‘it was folly to think kid gloves and lavender would defeat these forces of unrighteousness’. He hinted at the tactics used by these forces - intimidation, threats, scurrilous attacks, vulgar rowdyism, lawless public meetings and manoeuvres too secret to reveal to the public - all of which had been defeated by the Methodist campaign. 45

At the Conference Temperance and Social Reform Demonstration on 7 March 1907, Wesley Church in Melbourne was fully occupied. It was made clear that ‘the Methodist Church of Victoria and Tasmania stood as one man, with no division on the great questions of social reform… rejoicing in Rev. T.S.B. Woodfull and W.H. Judkins’. The church was not satisfied with small concessions and would not be satisfied until there was no liquor traffic and no gambling. Greater things were expected of the new Chief Secretary Sir Alexander Peacock, ‘a licensing Act with a two-edged sword, not a blunt butter knife’. 46 Almost twenty years later, in 1923, when elected President-General, Sugden recalled the debt the church owed to Judkins, ‘the lion-hearted champion of social reform’ in his plea for the non-political campaign to continue. 47 There was certainly no loss of Methodist appetite for social reform.

After 1907, when the work of the LRB was under way, there were fewer easy targets and the liquor issue was only occasionally raised at the PSA. Judkins, who had never enjoyed good health, was exhausted by his work and was largely absent until 1910. While not taking his eye off the problems of alcohol, he had bigger ideas. He returned with a plan to establish a ‘Social Reform Bureau’ that would tackle reform systematically. He was certain that there was no shortage of problems in need of reform and the bureau would be an efficient way to coordinate opposition into a ‘compact battering-ram’. He went further, claiming that public charities were inefficient, and that much could be gained by funnelling all aid through a central body. This became his main interest until his death in 1912 when the proposal died with him. 48

44 Elaine M. Wilson, ‘"The Campaign for National Righteousness, the Methodist Church and Moral Reform in Victoria 1900-1910’’ (Fourth Year Essay, University of Melbourne, 1957), 31.
45 The Spectator, 11 January 1907, 62.
46 Ibid., 22 March 1907, 467.
47 Ibid., 30 May 1923, 434.
48 Ibid., 14 January 1910, 47; 28 January 1910, 141.
War intervened, and the Local Option poll scheduled for 1916 was postponed until 1920. Methodists were disappointed but could hardly complain when the future of civilisation was at stake. Sobriety became more a matter of patriotic duty than social reform. Lord Kitchener, the British Secretary of State for War, made clear the need for sobriety among the troops. The then Chancellor of the Exchequer, David Lloyd George, tackled the concern about a lack of...
munitions and suggested that workers’ efficiency was somehow affected by excessive alcohol intake by declaring that the Empire was ‘fighting the Germans, Austrians and Drink and, so far as I can see, the greatest of these deadly foes is Drink’. In another speech he said, ‘Drink was doing more damage in the war than all the German submarines put together’. Lloyd George, of a Non-Conformist background and a lifelong temperance advocate, put forward proposals to nationalise the liquor industry but these proved unacceptable. In April 1915, as Prime Minister, he recruited King George V to the campaign. The King announced that he and his household would abstain from alcohol for the duration of the war. The King’s Pledge, as it became known, publicised the damage liquor was doing to the war effort and set an example to people of what sacrifice should be made in the cause of victory. It was largely ineffective since the House of Commons refused to enforce abstinence and the ruling classes continued to drink champagne. This did not deter the Temperance parties in Victoria. Imbued with patriotic fervour, they called for self-denial and early closing as an important contribution to the war effort. The Spectator editorialised that it was only appropriate that the people of Victoria should be given an opportunity at a poll to decide the matter of early closing at the earliest opportunity. Polls in South Australia, Tasmania and New South Wales brought in six o’clock closing, but the Victorian government was slow to follow. The PSA was enlisted with at least thirteen Sundays committed to the advocacy of early closing. A huge deputation of Methodist ministers waited on the Premier to be sure he understood that they were of one mind on the subject. A Bill was introduced to facilitate a referendum on early closing but was eventually abandoned as it would have clashed with the Federal referendum on conscription. By September, the government gave in to the pressure and introduced six o’clock closing as a temporary measure for the duration of the war. Six was the hour of closing for most retail businesses. Some authors have suggested this marked the highpoint of Temperance influence but we shall see that this overlooks the more remarkable success at the Local Option Poll of 1920 and the retention of six o’clock closing in 1956.

49 Ibid., 9 April 1915, 513.
51 Alliance Record, December 1914, 179.
52 The Spectator, 7 January 1916, 18.
53 Ibid., 1916.
54 Ibid., 24 March, 369; 7 April, 453.
55 Ibid., 15 September 1916, 1190.
when Methodists thought their policy was endorsed by the whole electorate.\textsuperscript{56} It seems unlikely that any campaign to introduce six o’clock closing would have been successful in peace time and the real impetus was the patriotic fervour of the war effort. Unquestionably, the Methodists saw an opportunity to strike a blow for Temperance, but they were also largely swept along with the call to answer the threat posed by the European war. As we will see, this largely peripheral question of trading hours would later become central in the Methodist fight against alcohol abuse.

Six o’clock closing was made permanent in November 1919. Premier Peacock had included it in his election manifesto in 1918 and the Temperance parties worked tirelessly to keep him to his word.\textsuperscript{57} \textit{The Age} thought the matter was uncontentious. The community’s experience following early closing’s introduction in 1916 was thought so positive, with decreased drunkenness, particularly in the evening hours, that a return to the old regime would not be tolerated.\textsuperscript{58} In 1956, when a change from six o’clock was contemplated, the memory of public disorder resulting from drunkenness, particularly that of returned soldiers and those in military camps, was a powerful argument to retain six o’clock.\textsuperscript{59}

The introduction of early closing came at a cost. The Local Option Poll, which was to occur at the first election after 1916, was postponed until the second election after January 1917 although the LRB was to continue its work. This seemed recompense to the trade for early closing but, after waiting ten long years, the Methodists felt betrayed. They had been planning carefully and building the expectations of Methodists in readiness for the fight. Prohibition was gaining ground in the USA and the time was thought ripe for its introduction in Victoria. The only consolation was the decision by the government to ban the employment of barmaids, other than the wives and daughters of publicans, from the beginning of 1917. The employment of barmaids who through their supposed sexual allure enticed young men into hotels had been a major issue in the nineteenth century, but by 1917 had become largely a token cause.\textsuperscript{60} Nevertheless, the Methodists claimed a moral victory of sorts. A campaign

\textsuperscript{57} \textit{The Advance}, 27 May 1919.
\textsuperscript{58} \textit{The Age}, 21 November 1919, 6.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 6 February 1956, 2.
\textsuperscript{60} Diane Kirkby, \textit{Barmaids: A History of Women’s Work in Pubs} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 130.
started by W.H. Judkins had finally borne fruit, but it was only a consolation prize for those cheated of their chance to be rid of drink through Local Option.61

Edmund Greenwood became the new Methodist public face of Temperance as preparations started for the Local Option polls in 1920. W.H. Judkins had died in 1912 but in November 1917 The Spectator rejoiced in the election of E.W. Greenwood as the independent member for Boroondara in the Legislative Assembly. This was a great opportunity for reform as Greenwood was a prominent Methodist local preacher and Temperance campaigner.62 His father, Rev. Henry Greenwood, had been orphaned and had come under the influence of Methodism in boyhood. Greenwood senior resolved to be a missionary and was sent to Western Australia, where he married the daughter of a fellow missionary. He then spent seven years in the Friendly Islands (Tonga) before taking up circuit work in Tasmania and Victoria, becoming President of Conference in 1899.63 It is unsurprising, given his upbringing, that Greenwood was in the forefront of preparations for the Local Option Poll now due in 1920. As explained earlier, he formed the VALL to organise the campaign and raise funds.64

No effort or expense was to be spared and in addition to public meetings and the PSA, lunch-hour meetings were held in factories. A fête was held in the Melbourne Town Hall to raise funds and demonstrate the strength of the Temperance forces.65 Big guns were brought in. The official campaign was launched by Rev. Frank Lade, of the South Australian Conference, at the PSA on 20 June 1920. Lade, a ‘great Methodist social crusader’ and ‘unexcelled’ as a Prohibition speaker repeated his speech at a public meeting in the Congregationalists’ Independent Church the following Monday before taking it to the suburbs. Other denominations supported the campaign, but Methodists were decidedly in the vanguard.66 Several PSA speakers were in support before proceedings began in earnest with Greenwood

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61 The Spectator, 20 December 1916, 1651.
62 Ibid., 9 January 1918, 41.
64 The Spectator, 9 June 1920, 429.
65 The Clarion Call, 5 July 1920, 4.
at the PSA on 22 August 1920. The use of the PSA continued without interruption for the following nine weeks until polling day.  

![Leader of the 1920 Local Option Campaign, Mr. Edmund W. Greenwood MP. (Photograph, The Spectator, 10 September 1909).](image)

The Methodists were particularly disconcerted by the need to obtain a three-fifths majority which they thought was un-British and undemocratic. A simple majority was good enough to elect a parliamentarian so why did the liquor trade deserve special treatment, they asked? Greenwood had unsuccessfully moved an amendment to the Licensing Act to introduce simple majority, but the Church remained confident none the less.  

No doubt it was buoyed by reports from the USA about the success of Prohibition, the President of the NSW Temperance Alliance reported it was beyond all expectation. Another report suggested that the political influence of the trade in the USA was completely broken. Perhaps this expectation of a successful outcome was the cause of the indifference and complacency noted

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67 Ibid., various dates, 1920.
68 Ibid., 15 September 1920, 710.
69 Ibid., 21 April 1920, 288.
70 Ibid., 16 June 1920, 449; The Clarion Call, 18 October 1920, 3. Had the poll used simple majority, a quarter of electoral districts would have been declared ‘dry’.
among some sections of the Church. The cry went out regularly about the need to engage all available resources if the goal were to be won. Alternately, it may have been the first glimmer that some Methodists were no longer fully invested in the cause of Temperance.

The Licensed Victuallers Association (LVA) spared no effort. Its primary tactic was to label the Temperance campaigners as wowsers and kill-joys intent on prohibition who would extend their attention to tobacco and every other form of personal pleasures and sport. Individual liberty was in question. The LVA also reminded the electorate that the industry directly employed 75,000, in addition to their dependants who numbered in the hundreds of thousands. The trade, it reminded the public, ‘voluntarily’ contributed millions to State coffers. The Spectator fumed that the LVA advertising was deceptive and without attribution, and that its Secretary, JJ Liston, made it up to look like authentic journalism.

Despite these ‘unfair’ tactics, the Methodists remained confident that few would be deceived. Electorates were divided into electoral districts. We cannot know if the electorate was swayed by the LVA’s publicity or simply voted to stay with the status quo but, apart from two districts, Boroondara and Nunawading, the other 216 districts voted either for reduction or continuance. Merrett confirms the most likely explanation: the LRB had done its work well and combined with the success of six o’clock closing, the urgency had been removed from the Temperance argument. The LVA also endorsed the activities of the LRB. The worst hotels had been closed, six o’clock closing had reduced the incidence of public drunkenness and Victorians apparently thought that that was enough. The electorate seemed totally unpersuaded by the glowing reports of the benefits of Prohibition coming from the USA. Parliament endorsed the work of the LRB and gave it greater powers to demand improvements in hotel standards and bring about reform.

Greenwood carried the day for the Methodists as the two ‘dry’ districts were part of his electorate. It probably was not the outcome he had expected, but he drew some consolation from the claim that this was the first time anywhere in the world that Local Option had

71 Ibid., 14 July 1920, 529.
72 As the population of Victoria in 1920 was only about 1.5m, a claim that more than 20% was dependent on the liquor trade seems an exaggeration.
73 The Vigilante, 6 August 1920, 4; 13 August 1920, 4; The Spectator, 15 September 1920, 710.
74 The Spectator, 10 October 1920, 803.
75 Ibid., 20 October 1920, 863.
77 The Vigilante, 21 October 1920, 4; Merrett, Licensing Court, 8.
succeeded in an initial appeal to the people. Had the vote been decided by simple majority, a quarter of Victoria would be dry.\(^{78}\) While historians have concentrated on the overall outcome, it is useful to look at Greenwood’s success. Blainey, in his history of Camberwell, puts it down to the make-up of the electorate, an explanation that gives Greenwood little or no personal credit.\(^{79}\) Lemon, however, reaches a different conclusion in his history of Box Hill.\(^{80}\) He notes that Greenwood unseated a long-standing and popular member and had been able to deliver positive outcomes for the electorate once in Parliament. He suggests that Greenwood had a personal following that was important in getting the vote in ‘dry’ areas across the line. In addition to the demographics of Boroondara, his personal popularity was no doubt an important factor. He had made his Temperance position well-known and was prominent in the campaign, speaking at the PSA and public meetings throughout his electorate. He was also a key organiser and effective fundraiser for the VALL. Such was his prominence that he was subjected to a ‘Greenwood must go’ campaign, said to be inspired by the Roman Catholic Church.\(^{81}\) It seems that other candidates were less forthright in their position on Local Option but not Greenwood: for him it was all or nothing.\(^{82}\) Perhaps electors were attracted to a principled and uncompromising politician, as he was returned unopposed at the next election.\(^{83}\) Whatever the reason, Greenwood announced that he was not despondent, nor was the Temperance movement melancholy. This first poll had been useful practice for the next poll due in 1923.\(^{84}\) As Worrall put it, ‘one battle does not make a war’.\(^{85}\)

While the poll results suggested that Temperance sentiment was already in decline, Parliament seemed unprepared to take any risk of a Methodist revival. The Methodists continued to campaign strongly for prohibition. The American, W.E. ‘Pussyfoot’ Johnson, a world figure in liquor reform, addressed the PSA and drew record crowds in Melbourne spruiking the virtues of Prohibition. He explained that everyone was better off without drink except the insidious trade. Prohibition was not imposed on the people, he claimed, rather it was adopted by communities that saw the advantages of going ‘dry’. He reminded the Methodists of the important part they played in the introduction of Prohibition in the USA

\(^{78}\) The Spectator, 27 October 1920, 826.  
\(^{81}\) The Spectator, 27 October 1920, 833.  
\(^{82}\) Ibid., 27 October 1920, 829.  
\(^{83}\) Ibid., 24 August 1921, 673.  
\(^{84}\) Ibid., 27 October 1920, 829; Appendix H.  
\(^{85}\) Ibid., 27 October 1920, 833.
and this message may have given some in the trade cause for concern.86 The trade knew that, had the vote been taken at electorate level, no electorate would have been ‘dry’, so the Licensing Act was amended in 1922. Instead of polls being conducted in Electoral Districts, they would be for the whole state and at intervals of eight years.87 The Spectator unsurprisingly deplored these changes and the manner of their introduction. The Nationalist Premier, Harry Lawson, introduced the changes in familiar terms: ‘the introduction of Licensing legislation is always fraught with considerable difficulty … and the advice of the oldest Parliamentarians has always been that the introduction of licensing legislation should be avoided at all costs’.88 The Spectator noted that these changes were passed just a few days after their introduction to the Parliament, while its other business had been held up for months. This speed allowed little opportunity for those opposed to mobilise and was clear evidence, it thought, that Parliament was dominated by liquor interests.89 Despite these great setbacks, Methodists were not to be discouraged.90 A new approach was necessary.

The new SSD took up the fight in 1926. As noted earlier, the creation of this department was a clear and unique statement of Methodism’s commitment to Temperance. It was able to claim some minor success even in its first year. Licence applications by the Railways Commissioners and the State Electricity Commission to sell alcohol in Mount Buffalo and Yallourn respectively were withdrawn after the Church maintained it was inappropriate for the government to sell liquor. Most attention, however, was given to preparing propaganda and mobilising support for the upcoming Local Option Poll due in 1930.91 At the end of 1929, Judkins reported a concentrated effort to be ready for the poll. A manifesto of moral issues was prepared and circulated to the Presbyterians, Congregationalists and the Church of England with the suggestion that they add their names to a list of concerns that included the reintroduction of triennial local option polls and closure of hotel bars on Christmas Day and Good Friday. The latter two churches declined, presumably as the list was too radical, but even without their support, the manifesto was published in The Age, The Argus, The Sun and The Spectator.92 While many ‘monster’ public meetings were conducted, and millions of

86 Ibid., 6 September 1922, 709.
87 Merrett, The Victorian Licensing Court, 9.
88 VPD, 28 November 1922, 3118.
89 The Spectator, 6 December 1922, 981.
90 Ibid., 21 March 1923, 228.
91 Minutes of Conference 1926, 81.
92 Social Services Department Minute Book 1926-31, UCAV Synod Archives 3068/4, 15 November 1929; 5 December 1929.
leaflets distributed, the Temperance movement seemed to lack any compelling public voice. George Judkins lacked the charisma of his brother and Greenwood had left Parliament in 1929. Additionally, there was no Temperance speaker at the PSA in 1930 and this previously valuable avenue of influence seemed closed. No specific information has yet been found to explain this omission, but it may have been a clash of priorities between G.A. Judkins and the WCM Superintendent, Rev. Samuel Hoban. Hoban was a conservative who is said to have ‘muffled the Mission’s voice’ on matters of social reform.93

The 1930 poll was lost, and no new ‘dry’ areas were established despite a lot of earnest effort and prayer. The vote against abolition increased by four percent but the Methodists found consolation in the knowledge that, had the poll been decided by simple majority, three metropolitan and five country electorates would have been declared ‘dry’ and a further nine country electorates were within one percent of the same result. Victorians, they said, could be proud that they had the highest proportion as well as the highest aggregate ‘dry’ votes in Australia.94 Another positive outcome was the formation of the Workers’ Anti-Liquor Group for which the Methodists held high hopes as it seemed influential in the Trades Hall.95

The LVA had not been complacent. It clearly realised it had a contest and was not taking any risks. The Association was scathing of the Methodist tactics particularly Henry Worrell who was still a thorn in their side.96 The LVA created the deceptively named Australian Temperance Association to handle some of its publicity. Probably the brainchild of the LVA’s able Secretary, J.J. Liston, it was forced to withdraw at least one of its publications, Follow the Prince, for fear of offending the Royal Family. (Copies of this booklet or the LVA’s other publications are yet to be found). According to The Spectator, the LVA’s misleading arguments were at least partly responsible for the poll outcome.97

93 Howe, The Challenge of the City, 104.
94 The Spectator, 30 April 1930, 400; Appendix H.
95 Ibid., 2 April 1930, 299.
96 The Vigilante, 7 February 1930, 3.
97 The Spectator, 2 April 1930, 299.
The Methodists had a minor victory while waiting for the next poll. In 1934, Methodist William Tyner MLC managed to have his private member’s bill passed to close hotels on Good Fridays. His original proposal would have seen hotels closed on Christmas Days too but that proved a step too far. 98

The Methodists approached the prospect of another Local Option poll in 1938 with optimism, despite the collapse of Prohibition in America in 1933. 99 The first issue of The Spectator for the year questioned whether 1938 would go down in history as the time when the people would end the ‘legalised trade in human souls’. 100 Drinking, it thought, had become more common, especially among young people who were unaware of the dangers, so the task of education ahead was significant especially considering the financial resources of the trade. However, it was not beyond the Christian church to win. The sentiment was repeated

98 Ibid., 4 April 1934, 270.
100 The Spectator, 5 January 1938, 10.
regularly throughout the year. Concern was expressed that the Church should be positive in its approach and encourage its people to think about the issues. Some four million leaflets were distributed bearing popular titles: *Blood Money* by the Right Honourable Isaac Foot and *End This Colossal Waste: a Neglected Palliative for Unemployment* by the Right Honourable Viscount Snowden with a foreword by the Right Honourable David Lloyd George MP’. Lloyd George spoke of his experience of the Great War when ‘drink was rotting our national effort in a deadly fashion…it sends our manhood to the hopeless shuffle of the unemployment queue and herds mothers and children, sickly with undernourishment, into the miasma of the slum’. The former Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer, Phillip Snowden noted that taxation on drink was regressive and fell most heavily on the working classes and that the Exchequer could make up the loss of drink taxes by other more progressive means. He quoted the eminent economist Sir Josiah Stamp in advocating the transfer of money spent on drink to more and better food and improved living amenities.

![Stickers designed to be attached to outgoing mail](image)

Fig. 2.8. 1938 Local Option Poll Election Material, (UCAV Archives).

[The stickers were designed to be attached to out-going mail]

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101 Ibid., 14 September 1938, 742.
Considering that the population of Victoria was approaching 1.9 million people in 1938, four million leaflets was an indication of the church’s serious intent to saturate the State with its viewpoint.\textsuperscript{104} The SSD waged war at all levels. It sent a letter to Rev. R Williams in the Kooyong Road Church expressing concern at its invitation to Harold Cohen MLA to open and judge a flower show. Cohen’s candidature had been vigorously opposed by the Church because he was a propagandist for the liquor interests and chairman of the largest brewery. This, thought the SSD Committee, placed the Church in a difficult and embarrassing position and the event should be cancelled. The Department was probably even more convinced of divine endorsement when the show was abandoned due to a storm.\textsuperscript{105}

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The LVA countered with its own publication, misleadingly titled \textit{A Temperance Handbook}. This sizeable booklet quoted John Wesley as denouncing the drinking of spirits only and not beer. His approach to Temperance, it claimed, was one of moderation and not total abstinence. The book included useful information about alcohol’s nutritional value, the fact that moderate drinkers lived longer than total abstainers and, with an eye to the future, that 99.377 percent of motor accidents were not connected with drinking. Rounding off the argument was information about the importance of the industry as a ‘prolific source of income from taxes and excise and an important source of capital investment and employment’.\textsuperscript{106} The \textit{Spectator} thought the publication was a further indication of the trade’s anxiety and, unsurprisingly, the misrepresentation that Methodism’s founder supported the LVA attracted special condemnation.\textsuperscript{107}

The poll was taken in October 1938 when the ‘no licence’ vote was defeated again with only a third of votes for abolition. There was deep disappointment at the result, even if \textit{The Spectator} took comfort in the conviction that in ‘a choice between Christ and Barabbas, Barabbas gained the day but there is another day coming’.\textsuperscript{108} In fact, this was the last poll in Victoria because, as will be explained, Local Option polls were abolished in 1946.

Temperance work within the Methodist church changed after this setback. Rev George Judkins retired in 1939 to be replaced by Rev. H. Palmer Phillips. Judkins, in retiring, noted that ‘the battle is not lost as we have gained a new enthusiasm’ and called on the church to

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{Victorian Year Book} 1938-9, 79.\textsuperscript{104}
\item SSD Minute Book, 5 April 1938 and 3 May 1938.\textsuperscript{105}
\item P.K. Sutton, authorised by J.J. Liston, Liquor Trades Defence Union, \textit{A Temperance Handbook} (Melbourne: Collarts Studios, 1938), 19.\textsuperscript{106}
\item \textit{The Spectator}, 11 May 1938, 370; 1 June 1938, 438.\textsuperscript{107}
\item Ibid., 12 October 1938, 822; Appendix H.\textsuperscript{108}
\end{enumerate}
renew its resolve to have true Local Option returned and have the liquor trade abolished.\(^{109}\) Phillips responded that the Methodist attitude was clear and, as we have seen, pledged support for the VTA and worked for its rehabilitation.

Perhaps remembering the introduction of restricted trading hours brought about by the First World War, the Second World War infused the Temperance lobby with new vigour. There was a perceived need to protect servicemen in training from the temptations of drink, coupled with a concern to maximise economic output to support the war effort by reducing the wasteful production of beer. Curtin’s government promised the Methodists that domestic beer production would be reduced through the Commonwealth Government exercising its defence powers. The Minister of War Production, J.J. Dedman, also known as the Minister for Austerity, fixed beer production for 1942 at two-thirds of 1941 levels. Senator Richard Keane, Minister for Trade and Customs and responsible for implementing the instruction, allowed production to exceed 1941 levels, arguing that increased production was essential for morale. Methodists were incensed and vociferous in protest. Military camp canteens which had become ‘wet’ were another source of anguish and much effort was made to provide ‘milk bars’ in competition.\(^{110}\) At the State level, following representations by the Church, relatively minor changes were made to the licensing regime: sales of bottled beer were restricted, and the bona fide traveller’s dispensation was reduced by increasing the distance to be travelled from 20 to 50 miles.

In 1942, among all this activity, Leslie Hollins MLA for Hawthorn and prominent Methodist layman, made allegations in respect of the policing of the Licensing Act. Haldane’s history of the Victoria Police has little to say about the Licensing Branch. He notes the allegations of corruption in the 1920s, when it was said that licensing supervision in Victoria was the laxest in the world and sly-grog flourished because police were susceptible to bribery. Blamey’s appointment as Chief Commissioner in 1925 was a low point as he openly ignored licensing laws and could be found drinking after-hours in fashionable establishments. His presence was thought a guarantee against police interference.\(^{111}\) There is little evidence that things had

\(^{109}\) Ibid., 5 April 1939, 265.
changed after Blamey returned to the Army. Hollins said that there was an unwritten law that police were not to enter a hotel before 6.30 pm, while the law stated that bars must be closed at 6.00. Furthermore, the roster of hotels to be visited by police was publicly available, certain hotels were off-limits to the licensing police and some prosecutions were withdrawn or allowed to lapse before coming to court. Sometimes, he said, this occurred in the office of the Chief Secretary. Hollins demanded an inquiry and, given the sensational nature of his allegations, attracted significant public support.\textsuperscript{112} The Country Party Premier, Albert Dunstan, asked the Chief Justice to make a judge available to conduct an inquiry. The Chief Justice declined, claiming it was inappropriate for judges to be involved in matters of generalised allegations being the subject of political controversy. Hollins was invited to make his allegations specific but declined to do so until the Premier appointed a Royal Commission.\textsuperscript{113} Public pressure was such that the government had no choice but to do so. For example, a meeting was conducted in the Melbourne Town Hall where ‘even standing room was at a premium’. The speakers labelled the government’s war-time restrictions, reduced trading hours and the prohibition of the employment of barmaids, inadequate and declared after-hours trading was rampant. Palmer Phillips declared that the trade was the greatest fifth-column activity in the world and brought to nought any attempt by the government to bring about reform.\textsuperscript{114}

Thomas Stuart Clyne was appointed Commissioner. Educated at Wesley College and a member of Queen’s College in the University of Melbourne, he was a judge of the County Court before appointment to the Federal Court of Bankruptcy. Perhaps due to his Methodist education, he had a reputation of concern for those who suffered genuine misfortune and was determined to avoid abuse of proceedings, especially for small tax debts.\textsuperscript{115} He arranged for Hollins to have access to police files but, even then, Hollins did not give evidence to the Commission on the basis that it would be ‘hearsay in every respect’. Clyne found Hollins’ allegations to be untrue although he did find that some serious charges had been withdrawn for no good reason. While this represented a failure of duty, it did not, in his opinion indicate any corruption on the part of the police or the Chief Secretary.\textsuperscript{116} Evidence given to the

\textsuperscript{112} VPD, 5 August 1942, 545-554.

\textsuperscript{113} VPD, 26 August 1942, 776-783.

\textsuperscript{114} The Age, 15 August 1942, 3.


Commission, for example about police hearing three knocks as a signal before entering licensed premises, was dismissed. This allowed critics to allege that the report had achieved its purpose: to whitewash the Premier.\(^{117}\) The Spectator had predicted this outcome as it thought the terms of reference were so limited that the charges of maladministration would not be properly investigated. The SSD did what it could to support Mr Hollins and help with costs.\(^ {118}\)

Agitation for liquor industry reform continued into 1943. The unsatisfactory outcome of the Clyne Royal Commission and the controversy resulting from the ABC’s decision to ban the PSA maintained pressure on the Dunstan government to institute a wide-ranging inquiry into the liquor industry. Proceedings of the Methodist Conference were reported in the press, particularly Palmer Phillips’ call to action to make licensing reform an issue for the imminent State election. He promised a fight with all the resources the Methodists could muster and a fight ‘without apology’. The Conference had a long list of demands including the non-employment of barmaids under 45 years of age and a reduction in the alcoholic content of wines and beer. Its faith in Local Option was reaffirmed as the only effective way for the community to deal with the menace of alcohol. It expressed indignation at the attempts to discredit Mr Hollins and called for a comprehensive inquiry to investigate fully the abuses of the liquor trade.\(^ {119}\)

Premier Dunstan replied that his government had not been given due credit for the reforms it had already instituted and the calls for further reform were ‘camouflage’ for the campaign for total prohibition. Phillips replied that the evidence for the ineffectiveness of the government’s changes was easily observed in the disgraceful scenes in the city streets.\(^ {120}\) The Premier noted that the advocates of liquor reform had had ample opportunity to make their case before the recent Royal Commission but had failed to do so.\(^ {121}\) In reply, he was told that plenty of people had wanted to testify before the Royal Commission but had been prevented from doing so because of the limited terms of reference.\(^ {122}\) Professor Woodruff convened a citizens meeting in the Melbourne Town Hall to demand action. It was noted that the liquor trade was such a ‘lawless and loveless occupation’ that a special squad of police was needed.

\(^ {117}\) The Spectator, 25 November 1942, 741.
\(^ {118}\) Ibid., 16 September 1942, 589.
\(^ {119}\) The Age, 18 February 1943, 3.
\(^ {120}\) Ibid., 5 March 1943, 3.
\(^ {121}\) Ibid., 6 March 1943, 2.
\(^ {122}\) Ibid., 9 March 1943, 3.
to watch it. St Paul’s Cathedral was being desecrated by the pre-digested products of nearby hotels and, perhaps worst of all, widespread liquor abuses were hindering the war effort. The meeting demanded a full inquiry into the inadequacy of the licensing laws. By June, Dunstan had included an inquiry into Victorian Licensing laws in his policies for the forthcoming election, with the support of United Australia Party leader, Thomas Hollway. It was reported that even some members of the ALP supported the move. Phillips claimed some credit for this skirmish in the fight against the liquor traffic.

In August 1943 a new Royal Commission was appointed with Judge James Henry Moore of the County Court as chairman, and with James Leo Harty and Henry John Arthur Campton of the Licensing Court as co-commissioners. Its terms of reference were brief and non-specific. It was to inquire into and report on what amendments or alterations or additions to the Licensing Laws were necessary or desirable to remove anomalies in such laws or to render such laws as more effective in operation. The Commissioners’ report noted that mistakes in the transcript were extensive, so no great reliance should be placed in it. The Temperance parties were represented by the VTA in accordance with Palmer Phillips’ policy that the VTA should represent the Temperance movement. Rev. Robertson McCue, Secretary of the VTA, appeared as a witness but, reports of his evidence and submission are remarkably thin. The only reference in The Spectator is to McCue’s assertion that liquor was a greater enemy than Japan. The lack of any substantial record of his testimony suggests that it was largely subjective and not overburdened with new facts or thoughts.

The report, released in 1944, was greeted with some enthusiasm. According to The Spectator, the Commission had carefully considered the problems of the trade’s rampant lawlessness and saw the need for stern measures: its report contained some valuable suggestions. These included the onus on licensees to control drunkenness, the need for licensees to appoint a deputy in their absence (thus avoiding the excuse that they were not present when an offence was committed), offences to be cumulative and licences forfeited after three infractions, a definition of intoxication to make prosecution easier, penalties for buyers as well as sellers of ‘sly-grog’ and, most importantly, the recommendation to retain six as the closing hour for

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123 Ibid., 26 May 1943, 3.
124 The Spectator, 16 June 1943, 377.
125 Ibid., 23 June 1943, 385.
127 The Spectator, 22 September 1943, 601.
hotel trading. Less welcome were the recommendations to allow 15 minutes of grace to finish drinks bought before six, a reduction in the bona fide traveller’s journey from 50 to 30 miles and a proposal to allow hotels to sell soft drinks after six which would surely be a cover for the sale of liquor.\textsuperscript{128} Most remarkable was the lack of comment about the first recommendation. A legacy of the 1906 legislation was the limitation of licences in a licensing district to the number in existence on 1 January 1917. This meant that population changes created imbalances that could not be corrected. Power existed to reduce the number but not to increase it. For example, Prahran had 16 grocers’ licences but Northcote had none, so recommendations were made to overcome this inequity.\textsuperscript{129} As measures to remedy these imbalances would have led to an increase in the overall number of licences, it is surprising that no comment was forthcoming.\textsuperscript{130}

The report was welcomed by Premier Dunstan, who commented that it was a searching investigation with comprehensive recommendations. The government would study it carefully with a view to implementing its helpful suggestions.\textsuperscript{131} However, given the history of past governments to tackle matters relating to licensing, and the Dunstan government’s special reputation for inactivity on all fronts, political, economic and social, it is unsurprising that no recommendations were implemented despite continuing agitation from Palmer Phillips at the PSA.\textsuperscript{132} Attempts were made to form an all-party committee to consider the proposals and find a way to bridge the divergent political differences on the issue, but these also came to nothing.\textsuperscript{133}

In 1945, Conference addressed the concern about the growth in liquor consumption. The President, Rev. A. Wesley Amos, was concerned that men and women in the Forces were given beer as part of their weekly rations, which placed temptation in their path. Methodism, he said, had a noble tradition to uphold and would, with Palmer Phillips’s leadership, continue the work of Edgar, Judkins, Woodfull and Worrall. Phillips, however, suggested that while it was true that only complete abolition of the trade would eliminate the evils of liquor, perhaps it was time for reform measures that would reduce consumption to be considered.\textsuperscript{134}

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., 18 October 1944, 657.
\textsuperscript{129} Report of the Royal Commission to Remove Anomalies, 8.
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 58.
\textsuperscript{131} The Age, 12 October 1944, 2.
\textsuperscript{132} Brian Costar, “Albert Dunstan: The Jumping Jack Premier,” in Victorian Premiers, 224. For example, The Age, 12 February 1945, 2; 1 May 1945, 5.
\textsuperscript{133} The Age, 9 April 1946, 7.
\textsuperscript{134} The Spectator, 7 March 1945, 146; 21 March 1945, 179.
Perhaps public ownership of the trade would remove the profit motive and the drive for increased consumption making it less likely that licensing laws would be broken and thereby facilitate further reforms. In response, it was argued that nationalisation was a concession of defeat and would do little to curb the power of the trade. Worse, it was argued, should Methodists support nationalisation, they would be alone and apart from the other churches and Temperance organisations.\textsuperscript{135} It seems that Phillips and a minority of his colleagues could see that maintaining Methodism’s traditional position of prohibition was unrealistic and that it was better to be a party to some practical solutions instead of irrelevant bystanders. It is unsurprising that he would become a strong supporter of Rev. John Westerman when he grappled with the same issue some 20 years later. Phillips’s proposal was eventually rejected by Conference and he continued to strongly advocate Methodist policy, despite any personal misgivings, for the duration of his Directorship.

In 1946, Phillips lamented the cleverness and subtlety by which the trade, aided and abetted by the Armed Forces, had cultivated a taste for beer among young people. Those in the Temperance movement, he thought, were middle-aged plus, and an influx of new blood was needed to reinvent its approach to the problem.\textsuperscript{136} A.H. Wood saw it differently. He invoked Charles Wesley:

\begin{verbatim}
Hark, how the watchman’s cry!
Attend a trumpet’s sound!
Stand to your arms, the foe is nigh,
The powers of hell surround:
Jesu’s tremendous name
Puts all our foes to flight:
Jesus, the meek, the angry Lamb,
A lion is in fight.\textsuperscript{137}
\end{verbatim}

He claimed the Methodists of old would not have been content to withstand the assaults of evil, they would have counter-attacked and conquered. Methodists of today had lost this spirit and it needed to be regained. Hymn 481 could be the holy war cry to attack the liquor menace. Drunkenness was rife, the economy was being dragged down by wasting scarce resources in the production of alcohol but most importantly, national righteousness was

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 21 March 1945, 187.
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 2 January, 20; 27 February 1946, 9, 121, 137.
\textsuperscript{137} \textit{Methodist Hymn Book} (London: Methodist Conference Office, 1933), Number 481.
imperilled by the rise of drink. Why would Methodists be ashamed of being wowsers? After all, it was only ‘wiser’ mispronounced by a drunk.\textsuperscript{138} Conference, in response, appointed a second minister to the SSD to bolster the effort.\textsuperscript{139}

![Fig. 2.9. Premier John Cain snr. (Photograph: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Cain_(senior)).](image)

While the Methodists were talking about a new assault, the government was making changes. The Local Option Poll scheduled for 1946 had been postponed for two years due to the war and now the Premier introduced a proposal to abolish them completely. He said that, in his opinion, Local Option was not a solution to the liquor problems, but more telling was the inability of the Temperance people to convince him that there was any likelihood of a successful ‘no-licence’ vote. In the past two polls the vote for abolition had decreased and there was no sign of recovery. The poll would cost the State £30,000 and, he claimed, the anti-liquor parties would spend £50,000. He thought the Trade would spend even more. The Poll would be a ‘farce’ and a waste of money when the conclusion was foregone. There were better ways to fix the liquor problem and the government would find them. It was still studying the report of the Moore Royal Commission that had yet to make its way to the floor of Parliament. The proposal was sugar-coated with the inclusion of a ban on liquor in dance-halls which had been a problem during the war.\textsuperscript{140} \textit{The Spectator} issued a call to action stations but was unable to mount much of a counter-argument. It had to agree that success at

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\textsuperscript{138} \textit{The Spectator}, 3; 16 March 1946, 149,169.  \\
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 20 March 1946, 185.  \\
\textsuperscript{140} \textit{VPD}, 12 December 1946, 4155-58.
\end{flushright}
a poll was unlikely and therefore a waste of money. All that could be said was that it was a
denial of democratic rights. How many were interested, so close to Christmas, is hard to
gauge but there was no lion-like fight from the Methodists.

So, in a matter of a few weeks, the most fundamental of Temperance demands was taken
away. The electorate was never again to have an opportunity to vote on prohibition and
Methodists had been unable to counter-attack. The Spectator wondered if Methodists were
still a force for social righteousness? The only way, it seemed, to hold back the flood of
liquor was to be sure six o’clock closing was retained. Six o’clock became an article of faith.

Methodists were concerned when, in 1947, a poll on trading hours was held in NSW but
relieved that a proposed change to nine or ten o’clock was overwhelmingly rejected. The
NSW Premier’s commitment to have trading hours determined by the people seems to have
been contagious as it became the policy of all the major political parties in Victoria.141 In
1951, NSW appointed Justice A.V. Maxwell to conduct a Royal Commission into liquor
licensing. He concluded that the trade conducted its affairs in its own interests with little
regard for the drinking public. Publicans preferred early closing as it maximised their profits
and encouraged after-hours trading at extortionate prices. Diane Kirkby quotes another judge
who said that ‘the breweries were a law unto themselves while NSW publicans were
arrogant, rapacious and contemptuous of their customers’. Maxwell reported that drinking
conditions were deplorable and ought not be tolerated in a civilised society. Kirkby thinks
that the report was a pivotal moment in Australian drinking culture. She believes that
Maxwell saw that the restriction on drinking hours had engendered a masculine obsession
that would be ameliorated if hours were extended and women were also allowed to drink
alongside their partners.142

Notwithstanding Maxwell’s clear recommendations, the NSW Government maintained its
commitment to a referendum. It was conducted in November 1954 and the first reports were
encouraging for the Methodists with an initial majority of 9339 favouring retention of six
o’clock. The government, however, hinted that with such a close result it might introduce ten
o’clock for a trial period of three years. By week’s end, after absentee votes, there was a slim
margin in favour of ten and Premier Cahill announced that the change would be permanent

141 The Age, 17 February 1947, 1.
142 Diane Kirkby, “Maxwell’s Silver Hammer…” Licensing Laws, Liquor Trading and the Maxwell
with no possibility of another referendum.\textsuperscript{143} Rev. Gordon Powell of St Stephen’s Presbyterian Church in Sydney blamed complacency on the part of the churches for the outcome. He said they were caught napping and the churches in Victoria needed to be ready for any similar challenge.\textsuperscript{144} \textit{The Age} thought that the result should encourage Victorians to also ask for decent and sociable drinking conditions with getting rid of the ‘swill’ as a top priority.\textsuperscript{145} While it was said that some ALP backbenchers were agitating for change in trading hours, there was no movement on the part of the Labor Premier, John Cain, who was firm on his commitment to a referendum although he was preparing to make significant changes to the licensing laws.\textsuperscript{146}

Cain had secretly negotiated to bring the Tattersall’s lottery business from Tasmania to Victoria to the dismay of Methodists. Originally surrounded with conditions to mollify opponents such as tickets only being available from a central office, the restriction was quietly changed to allow sales throughout the suburbs as the gambling monopoly became increasingly popular.\textsuperscript{147} Ironically John Wren lived long enough to see the introduction of legalised gambling in Victoria, dying a month later, while Methodists continued to invoke his memory and the evils associated with his activities in their condemnation of its introduction.\textsuperscript{148} Cain was to inflict more anguish.

In November 1953, his government resurrected the 1944 Royal Commission recommendations and introduced amendments to the Licensing Act into Parliament. Perhaps sensing that community sentiment was, as in NSW, changing, Chief Secretary Galvin said that, ‘while amending the liquor laws will be political dynamite, we feel that among reasonably minded people in the community there is a demand for a more sensible approach to the licensing law’.\textsuperscript{149} The key proposal was the elimination of quotas for each electoral district, effectively making the State one area with licences granted by the Licensing Court based on need. This eliminated the ‘dry’ areas created in 1920. Additional provisions included increased penalties for sales to intoxicated persons, the availability of liquor with

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{143} \textit{The Age}, 15 November 1954, 1; 19 November 1954, 1; 23 November 1954, 1.
\textsuperscript{144} \textit{The Spectator}, 28 September 1955, 3.
\textsuperscript{145} \textit{The Age}, 15 November 1954, 2.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 22 November 1954, 3.
\textsuperscript{147} \textit{The Spectator}, 29 September 1954, 16.
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., 17 June 1953, 371.
\textsuperscript{149} VPD, 24 November 1953,2260.
\end{flushright}
meals until ten pm and, while it stopped short of changing trading hours, a 15-minute period of grace was provided for drinks to be consumed after closing at six.

Even though liquor reform had been part of Cain’s election platform, the extent of the changes seems to have been unexpected. Palmer Phillips railed that the ALP was out of sympathy with Methodist social ideals and that indignant Methodists had been jolted from complacent inactivity. As Cain’s amendments coincided with the ‘Mission to the Nation’ evangelical campaign, the government could expect determined opposition. However, Phillips noted with concern that Methodist hostility to the liquor menace was much less than that of previous generations. He thought a greater proportion of Methodists no longer practised total abstinence and it was essential that they realised the difficulties ahead in protecting society from the evils of liquor abuse. It is hard to know which aspect of the changes upset the Methodists most. The 15 minutes of grace was objectionable as they thought it was a breach of the undertaking not to change trading hours without a referendum. They seemed convinced that this would be exploited to provide cover for after-hours drinking. However, the abolition of the ‘dry’ areas would appear to be the deepest wound. From the beginning, Local Option had been the key demand and the ability of the community to decide for itself. There was an underlying optimism that this would eventually lead to the complete prohibition, but even if prohibition could not be achieved, there would be some localities that served as exemplars to the rest about the benefits of abstinence. The abolition of these safe havens without consultation was disastrous. Box Hill Council even tried, unsuccessfully, to introduce a by-law to protect its ‘dry’ status and circumvent the government’s policy. The LVA expressed alarm: if this was successful, Victoria could become ‘dry’ by stealth.

The Methodists were troubled by the rise in influence of the Roman Catholic Church and the atheistic, communist tendencies of some sections of the Labor party. Palmer Phillips thought the Catholic influence pervasive and Irving Benson opined that Premier Cain was hostage to sections in the party. The usual Methodist position was to support candidates who declared themselves in favour of its policies regardless of political allegiance. However, for the 1955 election, after the split in the ALP, while several candidates were commended, there was a

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151 The Spectator, 23 June 1954, 16.
152 The Clarion Call, May-June 1951, 5.
153 The Spectator, 4 May 1955, 16; 1 June, 15.
recommendation to put the Coleman-Barry faction in last place on the ballot.\textsuperscript{154} There was little doubt, in Methodist minds, that the ALP’s policies on drink and gambling were inspired by Roman Catholicism and Methodists were urged to think carefully when voting.\textsuperscript{155} The Catholics declared that ‘Beef and Burgundy’ was gift from God to which Phillips replied ‘so too the atomic bomb’.\textsuperscript{156}

Despite the piecemeal liberalisation of licensing conditions, no party was prepared to commit to a change in hotel trading hours without a referendum. It seems the Methodist-led Temperance movement was still seen as a potent threat. Palmer Phillips had the unlikely thought that the anti-drink vote was influential in the election outcome which saw Cain lose office to a Liberal administration led by Henry Bolte.\textsuperscript{157} Bolte must have thought there was something in the claim for he was wary as his new administration approached the issue of Temperance. His government, none-the-less, was determined to liberalise drinking conditions and pursued opportunities to do so.

\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., 4 May 1955, 16.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 18 May 1955, 16.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., 23 March 1955, 15.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid., 27 April 1955, 16; \textit{The Clarion Call}, May-June 1955, 6.
CHAPTER THREE: ‘WHAT HENRY DID’

_The people have determined the liquor issue by their vote and I will respect their wishes even during the Games._

Premier Henry Bolte.¹

This chapter examines how the incoming Bolte government developed its plans to liberalise licensing and dealt with the Methodists. Bolte had thought that the time was ripe to change hotel trading hours, but the Methodists, not yet a spent force, managed to frustrate the government’s expectations. When Bolte tried what was by now the traditional technique of piecemeal change, he was thwarted by the upper house. Bolte had to accede to Methodist demands for a Royal Commission before major change could be contemplated.

Shortly after his election, Bolte, his wife a collegian of Methodist Ladies College, asked for a deputation to discuss licensing matters.² Led by Palmer Phillips, the delegation included another prominent Methodist and spokesman for the local ‘Dry Area Defence League’, Cr. Kenneth McIntyre of Box Hill, who made a strong point that the ‘dry’ areas ought to be retained until a local poll determined otherwise.³ Benson applied pressure at the PSA and, together with local protests and petitions, the Bolte government was forced to reinstate them in 1955.⁴ Another welcome amendment was to the bona fide traveller conditions requiring the provision of a meal.⁵ A referendum on hotel trading hours was part of the agreement with Bolte so the State prepared for it to be held in the preferred month of March 1956.⁶ Phillips had been keen to avoid February, a hot and presumably thirsty month.⁷

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¹ _The Argus_, 26 March 1956, 1.
² _The Spectator_, 21 December 1955, 11.
⁴ Elizabeth Jean Taylor, _Maps Made by Temperance: The Legacy of ‘Local Option’ Controls on Alcohol in Melbourne_, Conference Paper, Urban History Planning History 2018 Conference, 14. The ‘dry’ areas continue to the present time, albeit in vestigial form, surviving the most recent amendments in 2015; For example, _The Spectator_, 2 December 1953
⁵ _The Spectator_, 30 November 1955, 15.
⁷ _The Spectator_, 5 October 1955, 16.
The referendum had been anticipated for months and, hurt by the narrow loss in NSW, the Methodists were determined to carry the day. *The Spectator* carried regular reports of the moral degradation that had been visited on NSW since the change to ten o’clock. Perhaps most convincing were the statements made by Rev. Alan Walker, then leading the high-profile ‘Mission to the Nation’ evangelical campaign. He thought ten o’clock was a ‘moral calamity’ as there had been a large increase in alcohol consumption, drunkenness had increased, social drinking in the new beer gardens had created a new generation of drinkers and the ‘swill’ remained. He was confident that, were Victoria to keep its hotel closing hours to six o’clock, it would provide a lesson so great that NSW
would return to six o’clock. Walker’s view of events was confirmed by Superintendent Gribble of the NSW Police, who condemned the move to ten o’clock. Road accidents had increased as had crime while the ‘swill’ remained. Alcohol continued to be the major cause of social ills: the road toll, broken homes and ruined lives.

The referendum offered Methodists an opportunity to engage with the electorate directly. As for Local Option, the electors would make the decision, not Parliament, bypassing any real or imagined undue influence of the trade on the legislature. Palmer Phillips noted that the fight was being co-ordinated by the VTA representing all Protestant churches, Temperance Lodges and the WCTU. Phillips was Chairman, Rev. Robertson McCue, the Campaign Director and Pastor WW Saunders was Assistant Secretary. Phillips was clear: his position was above denominational loyalties. Using the inspired slogan ‘Stick to Six in 56’, plans were in hand for a press campaign, letter-box leaflets and how-to-vote cards for polling day. Both people and thousands of pounds of money were needed. A public meeting was held in Essendon to launch the campaign and set the pattern for further meetings. Rev. Dr. A.H. Wood was the speaker accompanied by a ‘March of Witnesses’. Houses in the area were canvassed and 10,000 information leaflets distributed. It was a hot topic of debate at the Yarra Bank with Wood, Matthias and others arguing that the trade was only in favour of ten as it would increase their profits and that it had no concern for the welfare of their customers.

The experience of NSW was cited regularly: more young people were drinking, women at home were neglected for longer, children were left outside hotels as their parents drank inside. In the background was a major event for Victoria. Melbourne was hosting the Olympic Games in 1956 and there was a sense of urgency that Melbourne not be seen a provincial hick town unfit to host a world event. Graeme Davison has followed the process of Melbourne’s redefinition as a city of international status, including the concern that visitors would not be able to get a drink after six o’clock. These hypothetical visitors became a key part of the argument to change to ten o’clock.

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8 Ibid., 21 September 1955, 1.
9 Ibid., 1 February 1956, 11.
10 Ibid., 30 November 1955, 16; 25 January 1956, 16.
11 Ibid., 1 February 1956, 3.
12 Ibid., 1 February 1956, 16; 29 February 1956, 19.
13 Ibid., 14 March 1956, 7.
Melbourne might be the laughing stock of the world especially if visiting journalists were inconvenienced.  

Phillips told the PSA that there was no evidence ten o’clock closing would result in more civilised drinking or that amenities for drinking would improve. There was no reason for Victoria to follow NSW as the evils associated with alcohol would not disappear by changing the closing hour.  

Visitors to Melbourne should take it as it was.

*The Vigilante* noted that Wood, a man of high principles and usually broad-minded, was single-minded on this issue. It identified him as the campaign leader, notwithstanding his unofficial status, and thought some might be influenced by his ‘tainted’ use of statistics. His courageous stand, it thought, put him at odds with his inter-denominational brethren. Despite his claims, it said he spoke only for his own denomination. In addition to his many public meetings, Wood was conducting a vigorous campaign through the correspondence section of *The Age*. He regularly reported information from NSW about increased consumption of alcohol, increased drunkenness and more road fatalities and was the source of further correspondence in rebuttal.

The LVA had a campaign of its own, aimed in part at the public and in part to its constituency. In addition to a press and radio campaign, it wanted licensees to be enthusiastic for change and inform their customers about the potential for better service and more civilised drinking. The ‘swill’ would be a thing of the past. A competition was held to find a competing slogan to the Temperance one of ‘Stick to Six in ‘56’ but nothing was forthcoming - the best that could be mustered was ‘I’ll take Ten’. The thrust of the LVA campaign was a charm offensive by publicans reminding patrons of their rights to drink whenever they desired but, close to polling day, it was dismayed to note that there were ‘Quislings in the ranks’. Some publicans were not presenting the LVA case and some were sabotaging the campaign by refusing to make their levied

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16 *The Vigilante*, 23 February 1956, 1.
17 Ibid., 19 January 1956, 16.
18 For example, see *The Age*, 2 January 1956, 2; 1 February 1956, 2; 2 March 1956, 2.
19 *The Vigilante*, 12 January 1956, 8.
20 Ibid., 15 March 1956, 10.
contribution. Jim Coull, Secretary of the Liquor Trades Union, was not a supporter of ten o’clock as he thought employees had been forgotten in the debate and longer hours would not be to their benefit. Vic Stout, Secretary of the Trades Hall Council and life-long teetotaller was also opposed.\(^\text{21}\) Even so, publicans were urged to think again and do their duty on polling day and end 40 years of restrictions and tyranny of the many by the few.\(^\text{22}\)

*The Sun* carried reports of the uproar at a public meeting in the Prahran Town Hall where the two sides met in debate. The LVA called the Temperance campaign ‘exaggerated nonsense’ while the Methodists responded that ten o’clock gave no guarantee of improved drinking conditions. It seems the proceedings were largely drowned out by heckling, interjections, interruptions and calls to order. Interest was such that the meeting was broadcast by radio station 3DB.\(^\text{23}\)

*The Age* invited the two sides to state their cases. The LVA argued that the Maxwell Royal Commission in NSW had concluded that the conditions created by six o’clock closing were ‘deplorable’ and this was also true of Victoria. Overseas visitors enjoyed enlightened drinking hours without adverse consequence, six o’clock disadvantaged rural and shift workers and, with ten, drinking amenities would improve to the benefit of social and cultural life. The VTA thought there was no guarantee of improvement with a change to ten, that more people would drink, the road toll would increase, and family life would be degraded.\(^\text{24}\)

\(^{21}\) *The Herald*, 14 March 1956, 5.  
\(^{22}\) *The Vigilante*, 22 March 1956, 1.  
\(^{23}\) *The Sun*, 17 March 1956, 3; *The Age*, 17 March 1956, 3.  
\(^{24}\) *The Age*, 22 March 1956, 2.
Fig. 3.2. Vote Yes for Ten O’clock Closing. (*The Herald*, 21 March 1956).

*The Age* editorialised that the campaign was generally conducted fairly and individuals should make up their minds without the help of political parties. A vote for six would retain an arrangement that had never been satisfactory and was a legacy of the First World War rather than any rational decision. Further, the Maxwell report had concluded that the conditions created by six o’clock closing were intolerable. On the other hand, there was no guarantee that ten o’clock would eliminate the ‘swill’. It was a pity there was no third option, which might provide a better path to reform.25 *The Sun* thought the likely win for six o’clock was a blow to reform and that continuing the ’swill’ would deny the opportunity for more civilised drinking.26 *The Argus* thought late closing was inevitable and after 40 years of the ‘swill’, change was overdue.27

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25 Ibid., 23 March 1956, 2.
26 *The Sun*, 23 March 1956, 3.
At the beginning of March, The Herald reported that its Gallup Poll showed voters were equally divided on the closing hour question but, by polling day, 60 percent of voters favoured six o’clock, although only 26 percent were total abstainers. Crucially, the opinion poll found 70 percent of women were against ten o’clock. The prediction that six o’clock would be retained proved accurate and only six of the 66 electorates voted for ten o’clock. The Age reported that both sides were staggered by the 272,000 majority to retain six. The LVA said Victorians had voted no confidence in themselves. The VTA thought it was a warning to the trade to reform itself and find ways to stop the abuse of alcohol. Perhaps surprisingly, the VTA indicated its willingness to work with the trade to this end: constructive engagement might be a better way forward. Both Premier Bolte and John Cain, Leader of the Opposition, said they would accept the

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28 Appendix I.
verdict of the electorate. Bolte, perhaps aware of the momentum of the Temperance party, said, as noted in the epigraph, there would be no exceptions for the Olympic Games. The NSW Temperance Alliance, perhaps rueing their lost opportunity in 1954, called for another referendum in that State.

Wood, exulting in the outcome, thought the vote was the beginning of a much-needed moral revival. He congratulated all Methodists for their contribution and Palmer Phillips, Robertson McCue and the VTA for their magnificent campaign. It was a rebuke to the faint-hearted and a sign that the battle for prohibition could be won. The editor added a small note recognising Wood’s own contribution. Phillips gave thanks that the people of Victoria had exercised their democratic rights in such a sensible way despite the biased reporting of the newspapers and radio. The only areas to vote in favour of ten o’clock were those with a preponderance of flats and boarding houses, which determined their home life. He was convinced that those fighting with a genuine concern for the welfare of the people had overcome those whose interests were purely commercial. He thought when issues were brought into the open and political affiliation had no impact, most people judged soundly. Further, he thought the Protestant churches had united in a way perhaps never seen before. Perhaps he was just relieved that there had been no public discord among the churches about the issue. Until now, he said, many thought the churches irrelevant claiming they dealt mostly with pious sentiments without practical consequences but now they could see differently. The Non-conformist conscience had been awakened and had agitated public opinion for the public good. A good first step, he said, but the world still needed turning upside down. But this was the last time a Victorian government trusted the electorate to determine trading hours.

29 The Age, 26 March 1956, 1, 3 and 7.
30 The Spectator, 28 March 1956, 8; 4 April 1956, 3; Appendix I.
The general public and the trade seemed to be happy with the result of the 1956 referendum. It had been carried by a substantial majority and there was little, if any, suggestion in the daily press of regret or disappointment at the outcome. One correspondent thought the question was now closed for twenty years. The Age editorialised that while the underlying problem of the ‘six o’clock swill’ remained and would no doubt be a topic of continuing debate, there were other ‘ways and means’ to address the issue. In 1960, as will be seen, Bolte thought the outcome of another referendum would be the same as 1956. Even in 1966, as will be seen in chapter four, Bolte was sceptical that a referendum to change hotel trading hours would be successful. Nor did the liquor industry give any sign of wanting change. A later Premier, John Cain (Junior), noted that many liquor industry commentators have said

31 The Age, 8 March 1956, 2.
32 Ibid., 26 March 1956, 2.
that the industry ‘has traditionally had the ability to write the legislation as it saw fit with significant variations from time to time’. The industry’s reputation for working ‘behind the scenes’ complicates any investigation to confirm this claim.\(^{33}\) So, while it is possible that the industry was agitating for change behind the scenes post 1956, it is hard to identify any evidence for it. As seen in the 1956 referendum results, some significant sections of the industry itself were opposed to any change in trading hours from six o’clock so, on balance, it is difficult to gauge pressure for change from this quarter.\(^{34}\)

But while there was no demand for change from the general public or from the trade itself, Bolte was not interested in letting matters rest. It was the government itself that wanted change. Arthur Rylah, Deputy Premier, Chief Secretary and Attorney General in office for all the long years of the Bolte ministries, may even have made it a personal campaign to introduce what he saw as ‘civilised’ liquor laws in Victoria. Rylah was a curious mixture. He was extremely prudish in matters of censorship but quite progressive on other social concerns.\(^{35}\) There is no doubt, however, about his personal view in respect of liquor reform. He made it clear in the parliamentary debate on the Licensing (Amendment) Bill prompted by the Fraser Report (see below) in 1960. In referring to the ‘uninformed prejudice of the community’ that made reform difficult, he said: ‘My personal view… is that there are fewer evils associated with longer hours for hotels’.\(^{36}\) Addressing a seminar of the National Catering and Accommodation Association, he used the personal pronoun: ‘I’ve been trying to change Victoria’s licensing laws for many years. Recently I thought I had the numbers but now I’m not so sure. Reporters invariably ask tourists what they think of the six o’clock swill and the reply is that Victoria is behind’.\(^{37}\) The ALP described him as a ‘crusader for saner drinking hours’.\(^{38}\)

In addition to Rylah’s personal views, the pro-development government of Henry Bolte was assiduous in attracting international companies establish operations in Victoria. It

\(^{34}\) *The Vigilante*, 12 April 1956, 8.
\(^{35}\) Interview Charles Hider, 15 November 2017.
\(^{36}\) *VPD*, 17 May 1960, 2951-2952.
\(^{37}\) *The Age*, 27 October 1964, 11.
\(^{38}\) *VPD*, 25 May 1960, 3256.
may be that Rylah, who was largely responsible for the reformist work of an essentially conservative government, felt that Victoria’s international image was being damaged by its restrictive drinking legislation, particularly the poor image resulting from six o’clock closing and the infamous ‘swill’.  

There had been wide concern that Australia would be an ‘international laughing stock’ during the Olympic Games unless Victoria’s drinking laws were liberalised. However, the Games were held and deemed to be successful, ‘the greatest ever’ some reported, notwithstanding the restrictive drinking regime which was, unsurprisingly, the subject of comment by some international journalists.  

Rylah remained convinced that Victoria’s image as a cosmopolitan city of the world was being held back by its 1916-era drinking laws and smarting at this mild backlash from the Olympics, seems to have made it his personal mission to bring Victoria up-to-date with the rest of the world.

Probably unknown to Rylah, his plans were given a boost by a change in church leadership. The veteran Director of the SSD, Rev. H. Palmer Phillips retired following his triumph at the 1956 trading hours referendum and was succeeded by Rev. John Westerman who promised a more pragmatic approach to social issues.

As discussed earlier, since 1926 the SSD had co-ordinated Methodist efforts to deal with social issues. The first Director, Rev. George Judkins was brother to the better-known William Judkins who has been called ‘the most effective Wowser Australia has known’. The second Director, Rev. H. Palmer Phillips, held office after Judkins retired in 1939 until his own retirement, due to age, in 1957. His successor, Westerman, remained Director until 1977. Phillips had known the ‘arch-wowsers’ William Judkins and Revs Henry Worrall and T.S.B. Woodfull personally and was thus an inheritor of the golden age of Temperance work exemplified in the ‘Stick-to-Six’ campaign, but Westerman was of a different generation.

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40 Davison, “Welcoming the World,” 75.
41 Keith Dunstan, *Wowsers, Being an Account of the Prudery Exhibited by Certain Outstanding Men and Women on such Matters as Smoking, Drinking, Prostitution and Gambling* (North Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1968), 267.
43 Ibid., 5 February 1969.
Born in 1914 in Wonthaggi of humble circumstances, his father a coal miner, Westerman was educated in the local primary and secondary schools. On offering for the ministry, he had to resume his studies and matriculate before attending Queen’s College in the University of Melbourne to study theology after completing a Bachelor of Arts and then the degree with honours. Queen’s was where he developed his skills of advocacy, winning the gold medal for debating. Ordained in 1942, he began his ministry in Tasmania in Burnie and Deloraine before moving to Geelong West in 1946. In 1949 he undertook postgraduate study in Edinburgh before being appointed to Korumburra and the Prahran Mission in 1952 and 1954 respectively.

The considerable post-war concern among Methodist clergy for a new social order seems to have had locus in this Gippsland town. The radical ‘pink parson’ Rev Frank Hartley was also born in Wonthaggi, although there is no known connection between him and Westerman. Wonthaggi had a history of industrial troubles at its coal mines and this could have stimulated the concern of Westerman and Hartley with social justice. Wonthaggi also had a reputation for political and industrial militancy that attracted many socialist and radical organisations. Hartley’s mentor, the communist Idris Williams, had a Methodist background and was the principal leader of the miner’s lodge, rising to become head of the national union. Westerman came from a working-class background whereas Hartley’s was more middle-class, but both knew the social distress occasioned by prolonged industrial actions. While it is outside the scope of this research to investigate these links, their formative experiences were clearly conducive to the development of social conscience.

At some stage Westerman, like Hartley, developed an interest in international affairs that was to shape his career and influence his work in the SSD. It may even be that this concern for international affairs overshadowed his interest in domestic social issues. The interest, which might properly be called a preoccupation, likely developed early in

44 Obituary, 19th Uniting Church of Australia Victorian Synod Minutes, AA4.13.
45 Methodist Church of Australasia Ministerial Index, ninth edition to 1961, 110.
his career. He attended the Budapest World Peace Council in 1953 with the Tasmanian Labor Senator Bill Morrow, travelling via China at the invitation of the Chinese Peace Committee, at a time when the Government placed many obstacles to Australian participation. There is no mention of the trip in *The Spectator* which suggests the Church’s lack of enthusiasm for such activity. The visit seems to have been instrumental in developing Westerman’s concern for international relief.\(^47\) It is outside the scope of this research to examine the considerable contribution made by Westerman in this field, but it should be noted that his work through such projects as the ‘Methodist Million’ was most valuable in raising the profile of overseas aid and was in its own way, innovative.\(^48\)

This absence overseas at the Peace Council may have been a factor in ending his ministry in Korumburra as his two-year appointment was not extended by the Quarterly meeting.\(^49\) Circuits maintained their ministers financially, and some were loath to allow absence from local duties. Some may also have been less tolerant toward clergy with a perceived left-wing bias. In Hartley’s case, for example, the church in Murrumbeena had been without a minister during the war because many ministers, like Hartley, served as chaplains with the armed forces. Murrumbeena welcomed Hartley and his energies at the end of hostilities but was not pleased when he wanted to pursue his peace activities with regular visits overseas. He had to find a more accommodating circuit in Newport.\(^50\) For Westerman, the failure to be reappointed effectively ended his circuit ministry. He spent some little time in the Prahran Mission before his appointment to the SSD.\(^51\) It is possible that this relatively short experience in local ministry was responsible for Westerman’s inability to understand the importance of collegiality in decision making. Judkins had been in circuit ministry for 28 years before his appointment to the SSD and


\(^48\) Westerman was instrumental in establishing The Methodist Million Appeal which hoped to raise a million dollars in aid funds for South-East Asia and Oceania. About $850,000 was raised much due to Westerman’s perseverance. See UCA 19th Synod minutes, 1995, AA4.13-4 and *Spectator*.

\(^49\) Interview Rev. Prof. Norman Young 24 May 2017.

\(^50\) Marion Hartley, *Frank Hartley*, 85-89.

\(^51\) Interview Rev. Prof. Norman Young 24 May 2017.
Phillips for 30 years.\textsuperscript{52} They had time and experience to understand the importance of finding consensus and bringing their congregations with them on policy matters. Westerman had only six years, which may not have been enough to develop an understanding of effective decision-making practices.

According to his colleagues, Westerman was known for his intellect and debating skills. Where many in Conference relied on an emotional appeal to sway their listeners, Westerman did not. He preferred to rely on the logic of his argument and was probably bewildered by, or even hostile to, those who disagreed with him. He was ‘a bit blunt and didn’t suffer fools gladly’ according to one interviewee, a ‘man of steel’- unbending once his mind was made up, according to another. Furthermore, he expected others in the church to respect his authority and follow his lead.\textsuperscript{53} Perhaps this reliance on ministerial status and the cool logic of his argument was not the best way to deal with the emotionally charged issue of Temperance.

In a wide-ranging interview with \textit{The Spectator} after his appointment, Westerman nominated international affairs and the need to build trust and goodwill among nations as the greatest need and an area where the church could build something ‘creative and constructive to contribute to a frightened and frustrated world’. He listed industrial relationships, marriage guidance, juvenile delinquency, age and invalid care, mental hygiene, unemployment and migration as matters of concern before mentioning the problems of liquor and gambling. He said ‘we will not always be agreed as to what should be done or advocated, but if we focus our thinking more specifically on what the Christian approach to these things should be, rather than on our own personal or sectional attitudes, and if we share our different ideas in Christian fellowship and tolerance, then I believe there will emerge more clearly for us all an understanding of the will of God for His human family’.\textsuperscript{54}


\textsuperscript{53} Interviews Rev. Dr. H. D’A. Wood 26 July 2017; Rev. Dr. R. Gallacher 4 May 2017; Rev. Kerrie Graham 5 April 2017.

\textsuperscript{54} \textit{The Spectator}, 30 April 1958, 7.
Phillips, in his valedictory address, nominated drink and gambling as the greatest social problems and identified the greed and selfishness underlying them. Conceding that it was impossible to legislate against such failings, he thought it should be possible to minimise adverse social outcomes by legislation. All attempts should be made to do so.\textsuperscript{55} Westerman signalled a new approach. It was time, he said, to change from a negative approach of prevention to a positive one. Instead of seeking to control consumption by regulation, it was time to explain the benefits of total abstinence and its basis of deep concern for the community.\textsuperscript{56} This reopened the argument from the 1900s between persuasion and coercion but, very surprisingly, there is no record of dissent from this significant and seemingly unilateral change in policy. Phillips, as we have seen, had wanted just ten years earlier, to move away from a policy solely advocating prohibition, but this was rejected by a large majority. It might have been expected that he, at least, would have commented, but there was nothing.

Westerman did not have to wait very long to put his new policy into practice. In 1958, the Bolte government established a Royal Commission to inquire into off-the-course betting and appointed Fred Russell Beauchamp Martin to conduct it.\textsuperscript{57} Among the terms of reference was the question: ‘is it desirable in the general public interest in Victoria that off-the-course betting should be made lawful?’\textsuperscript{58} In the wider context of gambling, this was a major concern to the churches going back at least to the days of John Wren. We have seen how the Methodist anti-gambling campaigns closed Wren’s Tote and forced Chief Secretary Sir Samuel Gillott’s resignation. Wren’s was not the first attempt to introduce off-the-course betting in Victoria and while its history is outside the scope of this research, it is enough to say that an extension of gambling in any way, shape or form was anathema to the Methodists. Methodists had met previous proposals by mounting a full-scale assault. In 1925, for example, in addition to deputations to the Premier John Allan and exhortations to church members to lobby their local Members of Parliament, the church used its PSA forum to denounce the proposal.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 26 March 1958, 13.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 19 September 1958, 4.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 15 October 1958, 1.
\textsuperscript{58} Report of the Royal Commissioner Appointed to Inquire into Off-the-Course Betting (Melbourne: Government Printer, 1959), 2.
\textsuperscript{59} The Spectator, 28 October 1925, 1029.
Methodist parliamentarian E.W. Greenwood gave a stirring address about the ‘Totalisator Menace’ at the PSA in November 1925 and the government eventually abandoned its plan.\(^{60}\) It was common for Methodists to rail against police for their lax administration of the law and the Postmaster-General for allowing the sale of raffle tickets in post offices and the use of the telephone system to facilitate the evil of gambling.\(^{61}\)

Westerman, like Phillips and Judkins before him, became the spokesman for the Protestant churches.\(^{62}\) Gambling and drinking were the social questions that most stirred the Methodists, so it was natural that Westerman would take the lead. As has already been noted, the Methodists were also the only denomination to have a full-time dedicated minister in the field, so it was also likely a matter of practicality that made Westerman the spokesman.

In 1958, the approach was different from the forthright denunciation employed by Westerman’s predecessors. He gave evidence on behalf of the churches saying that illegal betting could be ‘greatly’ minimised if the Gaming Squad were to be enlarged and the penalties for infringement were considerably increased. Westerman produced statistics from other States and New Zealand showing that gambling had increased significantly following the legalisation of off-the-course betting. There was a major concern, too, that gambling would be given an ‘aura of respectability’. However, he made no general call-to-arms for Methodists to lobby their local MP and no speaker at the PSA embraced the topic. It seems that the Methodist polity was content to leave the running to the SSD. Westerman attended all the Commission hearings. After listening to the evidence and consulting the other churches, he gave further evidence to the effect that while they were still opposed to gambling and believed there were effective ways to minimise it, if the Commissioner thought it was impossible to adequately control illegal bookmaking, the churches would, as a last resort, support a limited form of legalised gambling that discouraged participation.\(^{63}\)

\(^{60}\) Ibid., 4 November 1925, 1059.
\(^{61}\) Ibid., 10 February 1926, 131; 23 August 1939, 676.
\(^{62}\) Report of the Royal Commission into Betting, 5. The churches were the Church of England, the Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Congregational churches and the Salvation Army.
\(^{63}\) Ibid., 18; 19.
This is an example of Westerman’s new approach. Instead of being negative, he was being positive and pragmatic in giving ground on one of Methodism’s signature social issues. He had to defend his position in *The Spectator*, given the surprise at his concession, but there was little more than mild and localised reaction. Westerman probably felt encouraged that the churches endorsed his new approach and the Bolte government, following the Royal Commission report that recommended it, introduced legalised off-the-course betting in 1959.

Westerman seemed comfortable working directly with government and industry rather than adopting the adversarial approach of some of his predecessors. A colleague of Westerman observed that he worked behind the scenes with all the interested parties to establish common ground and find pragmatic solutions. Working directly with small groups seems to have been his preferred method of operation rather than seeking to persuade a larger audience of the merits of his arguments. We will see it again in his dealings with the Social Questions Secretariat and the Standing Committee of Conference. He was good at persuading them to accept his policy decisions based, in his mind, on logic and incontrovertible facts even when they flew in the face of very long-established beliefs and Methodist law. A more experienced minister might have realised the need to bring most of his colleagues and church membership across to his point of view by careful persuasion and not rely on the force of logic alone. It seems neither Westerman nor his colleagues recognised this shortcoming until it was too late.

Meanwhile, the issue of licensing reform was not forgotten. In 1960 Judge Archibald Fraser of the Licensing Court reported on an overseas tour to observe drinking arrangements. The idea of an overseas trip seemed to be the result of an off-the-cuff suggestion of Sir Herbert Hyland of the Country Party. In an unrelated debate in the Legislative Assembly, Hyland referred to the benefits of overseas visits by the Premier and Minister for Housing and suggested the cost of such trips would be repaid ten times. Voicing concerns about the conditions of some hotels in the Melbourne metropolitan area, he thought the government should send Judge Fraser, as the Chairman of the

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64 *The Spectator*, 22 October 1958, 2.
65 Ibid., 11 March 1959, 1.
66 Interview Rev. Dr. Warren Clarnette, 22 March 2017.
Licensing Board, on an overseas trip to inquire into the liquor trade and report about what improvements might be made to the condition of hotels throughout the State.\textsuperscript{67}

Perhaps Rylah sensed an opportunity to advance his reform policies by taking advantage of this Country Party proposal. Since that party had suggested it, he could surely rely on its future parliamentary support? Fraser, whose initial appointment had been controversial in that he had been a Member of the Legislative Council and a member of the Cain ministry before appointment to the Court, had been a parliamentary colleague of Rylah before his elevation and this may also have played a part in the acceptance of Hyland’s suggestion.\textsuperscript{68} Fraser was accordingly sent on a world tour. His report is in the form of a typewritten document of an informal nature.\textsuperscript{69} There is no copy in the Parliamentary Library and this document seems to have no official status or imprint. The casual nature of the whole enterprise was reinforced by Fraser. ‘I was not given any specific matters to investigate and considered such questions as the incidence of drunkenness, and alcoholic strength of liquor and like subjects which, though they play a real part in an analysis of the problem and difficulties associated with the sale and disposal of liquor, were outside the ambit of my enquiries.’\textsuperscript{70} Fraser visited Singapore, England, Scotland, Wales, Eire, France, Italy, Belgium, The Netherlands and several States in the USA.\textsuperscript{71} According to Dunstan, Fraser’s was ‘a dream assignment, spending four months browsing round the pubs of the world inspecting the way others imbibe alcohol’.\textsuperscript{72}

Fraser reported that ‘drinking habits in Australia are, from my observations in the places visited, unique. They are unique in the sense that they are deplorable’.\textsuperscript{73} The Age thought that the report was a blueprint for change as the present conditions were ‘intolerable’ for any decent community. Rylah observed that the report was ‘interesting

\textsuperscript{67} VPD, 8 April 1959, 2947.
\textsuperscript{68} The Spectator, 12 May 1954, 11.
\textsuperscript{69} Archibald Fraser, \textit{Report on Visit Overseas to Examine Liquor Laws and their Operation} (Melbourne; Licensing Court, 1959).
\textsuperscript{70} Fraser \textit{Report}, 1.
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 2.
\textsuperscript{72} Dunstan, \textit{Wowsers}, 126.
and enlightening: worthy of careful examination’.\textsuperscript{74} The key recommendation was the extension of hotel trading hours to ten o’clock, but there were other proposals to break the link between the supply of alcohol and accommodation that underpinned the legislative protection of the industry.\textsuperscript{75} Premier Bolte thought the government was likely to adopt most of Fraser’s recommendations apart from a change to ten o’clock closing. He noted that as it was the policy of all political parties to hold a referendum before any change in trading hours, it was ‘too early to hold another poll’.\textsuperscript{76} This was probably code for his recognition that the Temperance lobby, given time, would achieve the same outcome as in 1956 and the proposal would be soundly defeated.

Although retired, Palmer Phillips reported to the Methodists in \textit{The Spectator}. Westerman would normally have been expected to prepare a response, but he must have been unavailable. Phillips thought that the report was biased in favour of the liquor industry as it was warmly received by them but noted that there were some pleasing aspects. The idea, for example, of breaking the nexus between supply of liquor and accommodation was worthy of examination, as was a sliding scale of licensing fees to recognise the difference. Phillips, however, thought the core Fraser argument that Victoria needed to be brought into line with other countries and remove undue restrictions on personal liberty, was flawed. He countered that there was no need to copy others and as no democracy can operate without some interference to personal liberty, six o’clock closing was a cost the community had to bear for the sake of moderating alcohol consumption. The over-riding objection was that Fraser had failed to consider the impact his proposals would have on matters including social welfare, alcoholism and the road toll. Fraser’s observations were just that, uncorroborated and misleading observations that provided nothing in the way of scientific analysis.\textsuperscript{77}

The government wasted no time. Despite the impressionistic nature of the report, new legislation was prepared. In May, just two months after receiving the report, Rylah introduced legislation to allow, among other things, drinking with meals until ten o’clock with 30 minutes grace and supper licences that allowed drinks until eleven

\textsuperscript{74} \textit{The Age}, 19 March 1960, 1.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 21 March 1960, 2.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 22 March 1960, 1.
\textsuperscript{77} \textit{The Spectator}, 25 May 1960, 15.
thirty, again with 30 minutes grace. In introducing the Bill, he spoke of the ‘uninformed prejudice of the community’ that any change to the Licensing legislation will … in providing more opportunities for drinking … be a bad thing’. He said the government was not satisfied with the drinking conditions in Victoria as they gave the State a bad name with overseas tourists and people generally.\textsuperscript{78} Rylah indicated that he expected ‘speedy passage’ and adjourned debate for just one week, refusing an Opposition request for an additional week.\textsuperscript{79} His failure to justify this haste is difficult to understand especially as the Country Party indicated it might support the legislation or at least part of it if more time were available to consider the proposal.\textsuperscript{80} As drinking conditions had largely been the same since 1916, a week or two more would hardly seem of concern. Furthermore, as the government did not control the upper house, the Country Party’s request would seem irresistible. Even so, it was rejected out of hand.

The Liberal, Country and Labor Parties all had policies that required a referendum before trading hours could be changed. It seems the Liberals interpreted this undertaking to apply to hotel bar hours only, while the other parties applied it to hotels, restaurants or any other establishments that sold alcohol. Perhaps Rylah had been encouraged by recent opinion polls that indicated some change in community thinking since the 1956 referendum. Polls indicated 55 percent of voters now favoured ten o’clock. The VTA countered that opinion polls were not accurate gauges of public opinion, quoting the experience of 1956 when polls had initially showed support for a change to closing hours that faded as the Temperance campaign took hold.\textsuperscript{81} Premier Bolte expressed surprise at the poll findings although\textit{The Age} was surprised at his surprise.\textsuperscript{82} Why the haste? The most likely explanation is that Rylah was anxious not to give the Temperance movement the opportunity to mount a campaign against his proposals. He may even have realised that the Temperance movement, in Westerman’s absence, was temporarily leaderless and that he needed to press on even with the likelihood of defeat in the Legislative Council. By the time the Temperance advocates had started to mobilise public opinion, it was already too late - the legislation was

\textsuperscript{78} VPD, 17 May 1960, 2951.  
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 2959.  
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 25 May 1960, 3254.  
\textsuperscript{81} \textit{The Age}, 9 May 1960, 2.  
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 4 May 1960, 2.
passed within the fortnight. Certainly, as we will see, when further attempts to amend the Licensing Act were frustrated by a hostile upper house in 1963, Rylah’s immediate reaction was to deal with Westerman, not his political opponents. The Temperance movement was clearly a force to be reckoned with.

The Bill encountered opposition in the Legislative Council. The Bolte government did not have control of that house and both the Country Party and the Labor Party were determined to frustrate the government. Labor Party tacticians invoked rarely used standing orders to defeat the Bill. It was reintroduced the next sitting day, but the combined opposing parties emasculated the Bill by amending its critical conditions. The Assembly rejected those amendments, returning the Bill to the Council in its original format. Taking advantage of a sick Labour member’s absence, the government called for a division and votes were tied. Contrary to precedent, the Bill was passed on the casting vote of the President, Sir Gordon McArthur of the Liberal Party. He said that as he was not constitutionally bound to follow usual practice, he had decided to vote to pass the legislation. He claimed his action was based on the report of Judge Fraser, a distinguished and very experienced member of the judiciary and that he was justified in doing so. In any event, by early July Victorians were able to take a drink with their restaurant meal until ten or after the theatre until eleven thus ending the practice of almost fifty years of diners having their glasses taken away at six.

Westerman, who had returned to work lamented in The Spectator at the ‘moral poverty’ of the government’s bulldozer tactics and ascribed the action to the influence of those outside Parliament. He thought the government had departed seriously from its responsibility for community welfare. He seemed, however, to be more concerned about the process than the outcome. Perhaps this was a hint of his future approach to the liquor question.

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83 Ibid., 9 June 1960, 1.
84 The usual practice of the House of Commons, adopted by the Victorian Parliament, is that only a majority of members should change the law: Parliament of Victoria, Fact Sheet D3: Speaker’s Casting Vote.
85 VPD, 8 June 1960, 3671. William Slater MLC had attended during the day but was unable to remain for the evening session. Until 1965, the Liberal Party was known as the Liberal-Country Party but for convenience, the term Liberal Party has been used throughout.
86 The Age, 29 June 1960, 3.
87 The Spectator, 15 June 1960, 4.
Rylah, continued his campaign to reform drinking in Victoria and introduced further amendments to the Licensing Act at the beginning of May 1963. He said there were two objectives. The first was the removal of a few obsolete provisions from the Act such as ‘the obligation of the hotelkeeper to provide a light outside his premises and stabling for horses’. The second objective was ‘designed to improve the conditions available for drinking with meals’. What may have appeared as a series of minor amendments was in reality a significant change. Restaurants were, in many respects, to be put on an equal footing with hotels without the obligation to provide accommodation. For example, they were to be allowed to sell beer in direct competition with hotels and, crucially, restaurant drinking hours were to be extended from ten o’clock to eleven thirty. Given the political situation in Victoria in 1963, Rylah’s reform plan is hard to understand. The Bolte government still did not have control of the upper house and any contentious legislation was sure to attract more than usual scrutiny. Perhaps Rylah thought he could find an accommodation with one of the parties by way of concessions elsewhere. In 1960 the Country Party had hinted that it might support his licensing legislation if it was given more time to consider the proposals, although the government had not accepted that offer and it was more by good fortune than good management that it managed to have the Bill passed. In 1963, however, the Liberals and Country Party were at loggerheads about an electoral distribution that aimed to rebalance metropolitan and rural electorates in favour of the city. As this would considerably disadvantage the Country Party, it seems unlikely that there would be any accommodation from that quarter. It is known that a majority of the ALP parliamentarians, albeit thin, supported extended hotel trading hours, so perhaps the government thought that by making the question one of conscience, it might be able to have the proposals endorsed. This is what the government did: it made the proposal one for a conscience vote with the hope of attracting some stray ALP votes. The ALP did not go along with this idea. Benson at

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88 VPD, 1 May 1963, 3307.
89 Ibid., 3308.
91 The Age, 7 June 1963, 1.
the PSA commended the conscience vote decision, although he probably had different expectations for the outcome.\textsuperscript{92}

This time the churches were ready and determined not to give in without a fight. \textit{The Age} correspondence column was deluged with letters demanding a full-scale investigation into the social consequences of excessive drinking before any changes to trading hours was contemplated.\textsuperscript{93} Westerman wrote two lengthy articles in \textit{The Spectator} noting some constructive ideas in the proposed amendments but sticking to the line that change ought not to be contemplated without a thorough investigation of the problems associated with liquor. He said that, while the government claimed to have honoured its commitment to a referendum before changing trading arrangements, it had by its 1960 legislation, undermined the outcome of the 1956 referendum to the resentment of many. The government should undertake research and take any proposal for change to the people.\textsuperscript{94} This was consistent with Westerman’s policy. In place of a blanket opposition to change, he pursued a policy of constructive engagement and searched for a way forward. \textit{The Age} acknowledged the change.\textsuperscript{95}

The issue was further complicated as the Australian Hotels Association (AHA), previously the LVA, was opposed to the change as it disadvantaged them to the benefit of the restaurant industry and licensed clubs while the Victorian Associated Brewers, usually on the same side, were in favour: ‘why deny people the pleasure of drinking with their meals?’ they said.\textsuperscript{96} The AHA declared that the proposals did nothing for the ordinary people, favouring those on higher incomes and promised to argue against the change.\textsuperscript{97}

The Australian Labor Party State Conference decided, by a large majority, to oppose the Bill, which left its fate in the hands of the Country Party. There was to be no conscience vote for ALP members who had to follow party policy.\textsuperscript{98} The Country Party, locked in

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{92} \textit{The Spectator}, 8 May 1963, 12.
\textsuperscript{93} \textit{The Age}, 1 May 1963, 2.
\textsuperscript{94} \textit{The Spectator}, 1 May 1963, 3; 8 May 1963, 5.
\textsuperscript{95} \textit{The Age}, 15 July 1963, 3.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., 1 May 1963, 1.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid., 4 May 1963, 1.
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid., 8 May 1963, 3.
\end{footnotesize}
confrontation with the government, was never likely to agree, so the changes were ‘doomed’ and the Bill was withdrawn in the Legislative Assembly.\textsuperscript{99}

Rylah, returning from a trip to London, was more convinced than ever that Victoria’s ‘notorious six o’clock swill’ was damaging its reputation overseas but acknowledged that, without a change in approach, any efforts at reform were unlikely to succeed. He announced that he would confer with the VTA to find a way forward.\textsuperscript{100} The Age noted the VTA’s new outlook: forty years earlier the VTA was prohibitionist, twenty years ago it was promoting Local Option but now, under Westerman, it was advocating Voluntary Abstinence.\textsuperscript{101} Both the Labor and Country parties concurred with the government’s approach to establish an inquiry and the VTA was asked to formulate recommendations for the terms of reference.\textsuperscript{102} Considering the Fraser Report and, as we shall see, the Maxwell Royal Commission in NSW - both recommending ten o’clock closing - and the government’s predilection to change trading hours, Westerman’s demand for a further inquiry is puzzling. The outcome would seem to be a foregone conclusion, but the idea must have appealed to Westerman’s ordered mind. The VTA recommendations were duly incorporated into the terms for a Royal Commission and approved by Cabinet in August with an expected starting date of just a few months hence.\textsuperscript{103}

Perhaps Rylah was encouraged by Westerman’s attitude and thought the agreement for an inquiry by his traditional and fiercest opponents provided a way to advance his reforms. Westerman’s pragmatism would have been noted during the off-the-course betting inquiry and Rylah might have judged that he was likely to take the same approach in an inquiry about the consumption of liquor. Dr. John Birrell, the Police Surgeon, noted that Rylah was pleased to confer with Westerman in formulating the terms of the inquiry because of this Methodist’s moderate approach in preference to others who were committed to some form of prohibition. The nature of Birrell’s informal reference to Westerman indicates a close relationship since they worked

\textsuperscript{99} Ibid., 15 May 1963, 1.
\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., 13 July 1963, 3.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 16 July 1963, 2.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 18 July 1963, 8.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 7 August 1963, 1.
together in advancing the cause of empirical testing for alcohol impairment.\textsuperscript{104} We know that the terms of reference were essentially those of the VTA. The Commissioner made clear that the VTA was responsible for the constitution of the inquiry. Its terms of reference, albeit finally framed by the Government’s legal advisers, were so wide that no point of view was to be excluded from its deliberations: there could be no suggestion at the end of the Inquiry that any stone had been left unturned.\textsuperscript{105}

The use of a Royal Commission to handle concerns about alcohol and licensing laws was not new. It seems that such questions were political ‘hot potatoes’ more expeditiously left to impartial investigation than the hands of legislators. As noted earlier, in 1942 Thomas Clyne was appointed to inquire into allegations regarding the administration of the Licensing Laws of Victoria at the instigation of Leslie Hollins MLA.\textsuperscript{106} In 1944, James Moore was appointed to inquire into the Licensing Laws of Victoria for the purpose of removing anomalies in such laws and rendering them more effective in operation.\textsuperscript{107}

Nor was the use of Royal Commissions to deal with licensing laws unique to Victoria. In 1951, a Royal Commission was conducted in New South Wales by Mr Justice A.V. Maxwell.\textsuperscript{108} The issue of closing hours in that State had been put to referendum in 1947, when a substantial majority had voted to retain six o’clock closing. Despite the absence of a direct term of reference, Maxwell made recommendations in respect of closing hours under a catch-all public interest provision. The impetus for the Maxwell Inquiry was the ‘tied-house’ arrangements between breweries and hotels, although there was a requirement to investigate the reinstatement of Local Option which had been abolished

\textsuperscript{104} John H. Birrell, \textit{Twenty Years as a Police Surgeon} (Ringwood: Griffin Press, 2004), 57.
\textsuperscript{105} Report of Royal Commission into the Sale, Supply, Disposal or Consumption of Liquor in the State of Victoria, Transcript of Evidence, PROV 2953/P0000:000005, 3707-8.
\textsuperscript{107} Report of the Royal Commissioner of an Inquiry into the Licensing Laws of Victoria for the Purpose of Removing such Anomalies in Such Laws and Rendering Them more Effective in Operation (Melbourne: Government Printer, 1944). Among other things, this Commission recommended the retention of six o’clock closing.
\textsuperscript{108} Diane Kirkby, “‘Maxwell’s Silver Hammer…’: Licensing Laws, Liquor Trading and the Maxwell Royal Commission in NSW, 1951-4.” \textit{ANZLH E-Journal}, Dec 2005, 118-122. It is beyond the scope of this research to discuss the reasons behind this Royal Commission except as far as its methodology and findings are relevant to the conduct of the Phillips’ Royal Commission.
in 1946. Maxwell interpreted this closely so while there was argument about the reintroduction of some form of Local Option, he could find no support for Local Option as defined in 1946. The Commission uncovered wide spread corruption in the industry which was at least partly blamed on six o’clock closing for encouraging a thriving sly-grog industry.\textsuperscript{109} Despite the Royal Commission’s direct recommendations about closing hours, a referendum was still thought necessary and was held in 1954. As explained earlier, this ended six o’clock by a very narrow majority, less than 10,000 votes out of two million. Keith Dunstan says that for a year the Royal Commission supplied ample fodder for the Sydney afternoon newspapers with ‘stories of black marketeers, thugs and spivs…sly-grogging and the mis-doings of police.’ Perhaps the fact that Maxwell was a ‘small frail looking man and Counsel assisting, W.R. Dovey QC was over six feet tall and wore a monocle’ added to the spectacle. The Melbourne Argus reported that ‘Maxie’s Show is Sydney’s Prime Diversion’.\textsuperscript{110}

So the terms of reference for this latest Victorian Royal Commission were settled and the VTA had what it had long demanded, a wide-ranging inquiry into the social consequences of the use and consumption of alcoholic liquor. How was the government planning to manage the process? As a first step Rylah chose Philip Phillips QC as Royal Commissioner. Described as a ‘bon vivant who enthusiastically grasped the limelight’ offered by his role as Royal Commissioner,\textsuperscript{111} Dunstan says ‘Phillips put on easily as good a show as Mr Justice Maxwell’ being one of the ‘most lively wigs at the Victorian Bar’.\textsuperscript{112} Rylah, from long acquaintance, was on personal terms with Phillips and no doubt confident that he would deliver a favourable outcome.\textsuperscript{113}

How was Philips intending to conduct his Inquiry? The Maxwell inquiry’s terms of reference consisted of just eight points that scarcely filled half a page, whereas Phillips’ had nine sections and numerous sub-sections that used almost three pages.\textsuperscript{114} Section One, headed Social Consequences, asked to what extent alcohol was a significant factor

\begin{footnotes}
\item[109] Ibid., 118-122.
\item[110] Dunstan, Wowsers, 123.
\item[112] Dunstan, Wowsers, 126.
\item[113] Interview Laurence W. Maher, 30 August 2017.
\item[114] Appendix C.
\end{footnotes}
in a variety of areas including accidents and crime and required investigation onto the likelihood that variations in trading hours or the number of outlets would reduce any adverse social consequences.\textsuperscript{115} The VTA must have been confident that somewhere in all these avenues of inquiry, evidence would be found to support its long-held view that alcohol consumption had negative effects for the community.\textsuperscript{116}

Phillips would note in his report that there were several ways of conducting an inquiry. He was familiar with the quasi-judicial approach used by Maxwell in NSW, where ‘the Commissioner himself has nothing to do with the discovery of evidence, with the assembly of it, or with presenting it as these matters are for Counsel assisting the Commission’.\textsuperscript{117} Phillips, however, was inclined to be directly involved in the investigation. To justify his decision, he referred to a Royal Commission into Trade Unionism in England in the nineteenth century that adopted this approach and noted that the approach of ‘answering abstract conundrums’ did little to discover new facts.\textsuperscript{118} It is clear, too, from the transcript of proceedings that right from the first day that Phillips did not hold back from regular direct involvement in proceedings.

Phillips noted that to answer comprehensively the questions proposed by the breadth of the terms of reference would require substantial resources and a considerable period that was clearly outside the practical expectations of the government. It expected a report in eighteen months.\textsuperscript{119} Phillips accordingly adopted a plan to set up a Consultative Committee that would work in parallel to the Public Hearings. This Committee would examine and report on information assembled by the Commission’s Research Officer. The membership of this Committee, eventually 64 individuals, representing most if not all parties involved in the liquor question, was able, according to Phillips, to look at the facts, debate them and come to a meaningful consensus. Brewers, hoteliers, insurers, police and the VTA among others were all represented. Through this mechanism, a

\textsuperscript{116} Appendix C.
\textsuperscript{117} Report of Royal Commission into Consumption, 10.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., 11.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 8.
significant amount of detail was processed from international and local sources that was critical for the formulation of the final recommendations.120

The Royal Commission would also conduct open hearings and Phillips indicated that he intended to deal with such issues as trading hours in this forum. Witnesses had prior discussion with Mr Coleman, the Counsel assisting the Commission. Then, if appropriate, a time was scheduled to give evidence and, if necessary, be cross-examined.121 The invitation was there for anyone to give evidence, but Phillips repeatedly said that he was not interested in opinion, however sincerely held. All he wanted was facts. This rule seemed to be rather flexible and perhaps was more honoured in the breach than its observance. For example, he was prepared to accept the opinion of police officers about the amount of after-hours trading occurring throughout the State but admonished some Temperance advocates for their inability to provide hard evidence for their claims. As will be seen, a former Deputy Commissioner of Police in NSW, a Methodist, reported that - in his opinion - the age of those attending community-based clinics for alcoholism was getting younger presumably because of increased drinking opportunities following ten o’clock closing in NSW but this was thought of little value without proof.122 Perhaps Victorian police were thought more reliable, especially if they were not Methodists. Phillips was rather fond of misquoting Maxwell to some witnesses, and as far as can be seen, only those advocating Temperance. Phillips said that Maxwell stated that the opinions of a witness lose much force if their underlying opinion is that hotels should be closed altogether.123 In fact what Maxwell said was that the opinion of a witness who would, if possible, close hotels altogether, loses much force in the same way that the views of licensees and other liquor interests needed discounting where they are based on self-interest.124 Phillips, through his direct participation in the conduct of the inquiry, also tended to unnerve witnesses. Rev. Dr. A.H. Wood, prominent Methodist clergyman, Yarra Bank speaker,

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120 Ibid., 6.
121 Transcript, 3773.
122 Transcript, 4769.
123 For example, Transcript, 4773.
long-time Temperance advocate, and someone accustomed to public discourse, testifies in his memoirs to the ‘gruelling experience’ of being questioned by Phillips.\textsuperscript{125}

*The Age* editorialised that the drinking public was not well organised, and Phillips agreed.\textsuperscript{126} He remarked that the only conspicuous absentee among witnesses was ‘ordinary drinking members of the public’. He saw it as his duty to represent them himself.\textsuperscript{127} How effective a university-educated senior barrister was in this role is unknown. There may, however, be some merit in his claim to represent drinkers as he admitted to consuming between 12 and 14 seven-ounce glasses of beer a day.\textsuperscript{128}

Phillips received his Commission in October 1963 and was ready to start public hearings by the following February. The Consultative Committee was in operation too, so no time was being wasted, although it is not clear why the Commission seemed to be under such pressure. Perhaps the government was anxious to maintain the momentum its decision to commission an inquiry had created. *The Age* was strongly behind the idea. Rylah may have been anxious to get his pet reforms in place after being thwarted in the parliament. We may never know the reason, but there was to be no let-up.

Rylah had what he wanted: his plans to liberalise licensing were being furthered. His fiercest opponent had shown himself to be accommodating and interested in pragmatic outcomes. Westerman, on the other hand, saw in the Royal Commission the opportunity for a rigorous and systematic investigation of the problems of alcohol abuse. To this time, Methodist policies had been those inherited from a bygone time but now a modern and scientific investigation would show the way forward. This approach suited his way of thinking and would, he was certain, become the basis for a new way of dealing with Temperance. In all the excitement, he seems to have forgotten to involve his colleagues and Church members.

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\footnote{\textsuperscript{125} A.H. Wood, “Personal Memoirs Part II”, in possession of the author, 30.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{126} *The Age*, 5 February 1964, 2.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{127} Transcript, 214.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{128} *The Age*, 26 January 1966, 3.}
\end{footnotes}
CHAPTER FOUR: THE HOUSE OF CARDS COLLAPSES

Commissioner- I would think the interests of the community in not being controlled or regulated was more important...than convenience?

Rev Westerman- I would entirely agree...the better for everybody.

Commissioner- After hearing evidence that filled more than 8000 pages...I find much value in this simple conversation...it illustrates without technical language or meticulous learning a simple straightforward attitude of mind...on a vital moral issue he answered without hesitation.

Philip David Phillips, Commissioner of Inquiry into the Sale, Supply, Disposal or Consumption of Liquor (Alcoholic) in the State of Victoria.¹

The Methodists had what they thought they wanted: a Royal Commission into all aspects of the drink trade. This chapter examines the Phillips Royal Commission (1964-65) and its outcomes. The Church was expecting confirmation of its long-held view that alcohol consumption needed to be minimised through the retention of restricted trading hours. Westerman, however, in discovering that the Church’s arguments were flawed, almost split the Church in the manner of his concession of this to the Commission. The grass-roots membership seemed largely disinterested in the debate as it had few, if any, practical consequences for them, while many ministers had difficulty abandoning the Church’s traditional policy of ‘unswerving hostility’ to alcohol. The government, without an effective opposition, felt able to change hotel trading hours without the risk of a referendum. This chapter examines this chain of events and also considers how the Methodists subsequently changed their approach before church union ended the influence of an autonomous Methodist social conscience.

The VTA was surprisingly unready for the Royal Commission. Probably, it never expected its demands for a far-reaching investigation to be met since the preparation was minimal. Westerman drafted a written submission on behalf of the seven Protestant church members of the Social Questions Secretariat and the VTA. He was unanimously appointed spokesman.²

² Report of Royal Commission into the Sale, Supply, Disposal or Consumption of Liquor in the State of Victoria, Transcript of Evidence, PROV 2953/P0000:000001, 134.
(The Catholic Church was not a member of this group and did not make a submission to the Commission, saying that trading hours were a matter for the government.)

It was natural that Methodists would take the lead as they had done so for many years. They were the most vocal on Temperance issues and Westerman, as Director of the Department of Christian Citizenship (DCC), was the obvious choice. Westerman was full of confidence too. He had the support of Conference as it had recently allowed him, through his pragmatic concessions to the off-the-course betting Royal Commission, to make changes in the interpretation of Church policy on the run rather than through the usual formal channels. In addition, the other churches were probably pleased to have someone shouldering the load. There was little time between the establishment of the Commission and the commencement of its hearings especially with the busy liturgical seasons of Advent and Christmas intervening. They handed Westerman authority with seemingly little oversight. It was considerable responsibility given to one relatively inexperienced person.

The VTA had not met before submissions were made to the Commission. It should have been a major event for the organisation and it might be expected that every effort would be made to secure a positive outcome. Westerman had an unlikely explanation, that the Christmas break that made a meeting impossible. It might be a vote of confidence in Westerman that members dispensed with a meeting: a more likely explanation is that the VTA had largely surrendered its role to the churches and the Methodists in particular. Whatever the reason, the whole case in favour of Temperance rested on Westerman’s shoulders.

Commissioner Phillips was known for his formidable skills in legal argument and cross-examination and was unlikely to let anyone off lightly, especially with the possibility of making his name as the man who ended six o’clock closing in Victoria. Westerman’s previous experience was with Royal Commissioner Martin, Methodist by background, who would have known of the Church’s policy about gambling. He may have eased the way for

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The churches were: The Church of England, the Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist and Congregational churches, the Churches of Christ and the Salvation Army.

3 It was represented in the Consultative Committee by the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau. Previously, for the 1956 referendum, the Catholic Church had indicated its support for the retention of six o’clock closing.

4 In 1964, the Social Service Department changed its name to the Department of Christian Citizenship.

5 Interview Laurence W. Maher, 30 August 2017.
Westerman to make acceptable concessions.\textsuperscript{6} Gambling, in any event, was a far more important issue for Methodists than the other denominations, so they were relaxed about Westerman representing them.\textsuperscript{7} For the Phillips Royal Commission however, where the issues were more topical and the outcome of greater consequence, all the main parties employed counsel to represent them - with the sole exception of the VTA.

Fig. 4.1. Rev. John W.R. Westerman, Third Director, Department of Christian Citizenship, 1958-1977. (Photograph, \textit{The Spectator}, 30 April 1958.)

The VTA had employed counsel for the 1944 Moore Royal Commission. There are no records of the terms of engagement and it is possible that counsel acted pro bono but the

\textsuperscript{6} Stories from the Memorial Board available: 

\textsuperscript{7} \textit{Report of the Royal Commissioner Appointed to Inquire into Off-The-Course Betting} (Melbourne: Government Printer, 1959), 18.
VTA clearly felt the need to be legally represented on that occasion. It will be recalled that it was Palmer Phillips’ policy that the VTA represent the Temperance movement, which may be why he did not appear himself. The potential for the Phillips Royal Commission to reach an adverse outcome was as high, if not higher, than the Moore Inquiry, yet no thought seems to have been given to the employment of counsel. Westerman was inexperienced but he surely had access to seasoned Methodist campaigners such as Revs. Palmer Phillips and A.H. Wood and could easily have sought their advice about past practice. Other experienced senior clergy who were members of the Social Questions Secretariat, such as Dean Thomas of St Paul’s Cathedral, would also have been available.8 There is no evidence that Westerman consulted anyone. The engagement of lawyers could have been discussed and rejected as too expensive and unnecessary on the grounds that Westerman was able to undertake the role himself. It is unlikely he would have demurred.

We shall see that the VTA changed its mind later when Westerman changed his position on trading hours. It needed to recover lost ground quickly and thought legal representation would provide the best chance of doing so. Charles Francis was retained to represent the VTA but was hardly welcomed by Phillips.9 Westerman, Phillips said, had proved to be an excellent representative of the Temperance parties and he thought it unlikely that there was more to be said. In any event, he expected Francis to be a formal advocate and not allow extraneous matters to waste the Commission’s time. The implication was that non-lawyers were given more latitude in their submissions.10 Perhaps Phillips thought he was unlikely to get the concessions from Francis that he had extracted from the inexperienced Westerman.

Another explanation for the low-key approach of the VTA can be found in the policies of the three political parties. Since at least the 1940s, the Liberal Party, the Country Party and the Australian Labor Party had virtually identical positions on altering trading hours for alcohol consumption. They all mandated a referendum on the question before any legislative change was made. As we have seen, the Liberals interpreted this to refer to hotel bar trading hours only, whereas the others took a wider view and held that trading hours encompassed all liquor sales. The VTA was aware of these policies and might have thought the Royal Commission

8 Transcript, 3704.
9 Charles Francis, a barrister, took silk in 1969.
10 Transcript, 144. If Westerman had the same right to cross-examine witnesses as legal representatives, there is no example of him doing so. Phillips participated in regular exchanges with witnesses and seemed not to favour cross-examination by others, even actively discouraging it. Usually, cross-examination would allow parties to the inquiry to develop their case and Westerman’s inability or disinclination to do so may not have served the VTA well.
was not the end of the process. Whatever its findings, and even if it recommended an extension to trading hours, any such change would have to be put to the people. Hence they could have judged that they needed to conserve their resources to fight another referendum. We can never know what was in the mind of those deciding to place all their faith in Westerman, but the belief there was a second chance to hold the status quo against the insidious tide of the liquor trade must have played some part.

Having prepared the submission with little contribution from the constituent Churches and nothing from the VTA, Westerman was now making the Temperance case in this very public forum. Phillips cajoled him. He told Westerman that if his personal opinion differed from his formal submission, he would be pleased to have the benefit of it. Even if it was just a degree of emphasis, he was not to be backward in indicating.\(^{11}\) The hearings of the Royal Commission were of great public interest and they were reported extensively, especially in *The Age*. This was an opportunity to make the Temperance argument in the strongest and most persuasive manner possible, but it seems that Westerman was seduced by Phillips.

Phillips paid considerable attention to Westerman’s claim to speak for the churches and the VTA. Westerman explained the process whereby, from his dealings with the churches over time, he was able to synthesise a common policy that was then referred to the relevant committee in each church for comment. Apparently, he did such a good job that no amendments were necessary. Phillips went further. Had the submission been put to the church membership at large? Westerman explained the process whereby the relevant committee had authority from its parent body to determine such things. Presumably, if there was any doubt, they would have consulted more widely and that had not been found necessary. Westerman advised that the VTA committee had not had the opportunity to meet but he was of a mind with the Secretary and, while he expected its full support, he reserved the right to make further submissions if that was not the case. The Commissioner happily accepted Westerman as the spokesman for the Temperance movement.\(^{12}\)

Westerman was the first witness called at the public hearing sessions of the Commission. He began with a statement of the VTA’s position:

> the only concern we have … is the welfare of the people and we have no other concern than the sociological one. I want to make that very clear because sometimes

\(^{11}\) Transcript, 137.

\(^{12}\) Transcript, 145.
we seem to be in the position of being somewhat negative… but we have no interest or concern in restricting the enjoyments of people. Our only concern is whether any change in trading hours would be in the interests of the community.\textsuperscript{13}

Despite his opening statement, Westerman did not attempt to advance an argument such as that of John Wesley as given in chapter one: the strong have a duty to the weak. Nor did he argue that some adverse outcomes of alcohol consumption are incapable of direct measurement notwithstanding their real cost to society. Westerman, from the beginning, did not challenge the importance the Commissioner placed on empirical evidence and made no attempt to raise the possibility that some critical matters are subjective in nature. (At the end, Phillips’ recommendations were based on subjective values such as personal liberty, although this was not argued in any submission before the Commission). It was, perhaps, unfair to expect Westerman to challenge Phillips’ emphasis on demonstrable effects, for he himself relied on logical deduction from facts in his own argumentation. Any opportunity to argue the case differently was lost at the beginning.

The VTA submission was a reformulation of the old argument that increased trading opportunities must result in increased consumption. While it had undertaken some investigations following the 1954 changes to licensing in New South Wales, perhaps because of limited resources these were not wide-ranging or detailed. It is remarkable that there seems to be very limited interaction between the State-based Temperance organisations. A National Council of Temperance bodies existed and while it was instrumental in projects like national pledge-signing campaigns, it seems the exchange of information was limited.\textsuperscript{14} Westerman admitted that most of his research was based on newspaper clippings from around Australia. These were accumulated and analysed by the DCC rather than it initiating any form of independent research.\textsuperscript{15}

The Temperance movement had an intuitive, long-held and unshakable belief that increased trading hours and/or an increased numbers of trading outlets must equate to increased consumption. This assumption was boosted by a conviction that the liquor industry was unlikely to promote any change that was not in its commercial interests. Hence the increased costs of extending trading hours indicated an expectation of increased consumption and increased returns. This reasoning made the acceptance of any contrary position almost

\textsuperscript{13} Transcript, 146.
\textsuperscript{14} The Spectator, 3 November 1965, 5.
\textsuperscript{15} Transcript, 174.
impossible. Subjective statements made by commentators about the negative results of the change to ten o’clock closing in NSW were accepted without critical analysis by those eager to believe them. Even in 2017, despite Phillips’ conclusions and the numerous inquiries held since confirming the lack of any correlation between consumption, trading hours and the number of outlets, there are still calls by agencies such as the Alcohol Policy Coalition for government to control alcohol consumption by restricting trading. The unsupported assumption seems hard to correct.

It is understandable that Westerman’s colleagues had great difficulty accepting any other conclusion. A recent study has confirmed this cultural blindness in the evaluation of evidence. It is not new as an old proverb, perhaps derived from Jeremiah 5:21, claims that ‘there are none as blind as those who will not see’ and expresses the phenomenon concisely. In the same way Temperance advocates were anxious to believe any testimony that supported their preconceptions and were unable to comprehend any information that challenged them. While the files of newspaper clippings files used by Westerman are yet to be found, it is likely that they would, in any case, have been biased towards the newsworthy, sensationalist, negative stories of bad behaviour of those who had imbibed too much alcohol. Bad news is more newsworthy than good news.

Although it had little in the way of original research, the VTA was certainly aware of the reports by Judge Fraser and the Maxwell Royal Commission. It must have been known that both these recent reports recommended a change to ten o’clock closing. While blinded by anecdotal reports that the introduction of ten o’clock closing in NSW had been ‘calamitous’, the decision to repeat old arguments would seem unwise. At the very least, the VTA might have been expected to consider other possible remedies. For example, the work of British economist Arthur Pigou on externalities had been known since the 1920s. He argued that the cost to the community of alcohol consumption in providing things like police, prisons and hospitals ought to be paid by taxes on alcohol. Those reaping the benefit should pay and

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16 For example- Alliance Record, January-February 1956, 2; The Spectator, 3 June 1964, 12.
18 Dan M. Kahan, “More Statistics, less Persuasion: A Cultural Theory of Gun-risk Perceptions,” Faculty Scholarship Series, Paper 106 (2003), Yale Law School; this is a study of gun control and the inability of some to understand that regulation of guns and violent crime are connected.
19 Arthur Cecil Pigou, 1877-1959, was noted for his work in welfare economics. https://www.britannica.com/print/article/460259 [3 October 2018].
increased prices would discourage consumption. Nowadays this concept is unexceptional.\textsuperscript{20} Westerman did not explore the issue in these or any other terms. It stayed with the old formulae that increased trading hours meant increased consumption and increased consumption must produce undesirable consequences for the community. Given his demands for a full-scale inquiry into the consequences of alcohol consumption on the community, this complacency is hard to understand.

Westerman’s written submission to the Commission was twenty-two pages in length, with sixteen taken up with closing hours. The key issues covered were the ‘six o’clock swill’, the lack of public demand, the needs of tourists, the need to be competitive with other countries and the argument that restricted hours were an infringement of liberty. He used information and statistics from interstate and overseas to support the case. For example, the British Home Secretary, R.A.B. Butler, complained about the ten o’clock swill in his country: closing time was not the issue, it was the habits of drinkers. Quoting the Melbourne \textit{Herald}, Westerman contended that there was little interest in longer hours given the experience following their extension in 1960. He noted that only a small number of tourists seemed to complain about restricted hours and that society had to accept some restrictions on liberty in the interest of ‘an orderly, progressive and happy community’.\textsuperscript{21} In summary, his argument was that the burden of proof lay with those pressing for change: they needed to produce evidence that there would be no adverse consequences from a change in hotel trading hours. After all, more drinking must mean more drunkenness, more alcoholism, more people drinking, especially women, and a greater road toll.

Westerman’s submission that the onus of proof was on the liquor interests found no support in the Commission. He argued that there needed to be evidence that any change would have no negative social consequences. However, he was the first witness and was expected to show that extended trading hours did produce adverse outcomes. We cannot know if Phillips had any hand in these arrangements but, given his interventionist approach, it is hard to think that he did not. Had the VTA been professionally represented, the outcome might have been different.

Westerman took a cautious approach in his testimony. In the interval between preparing the written submission and appearing before the Commission, problems with his argument were

\textsuperscript{20} \textit{The Economist}, 19 August 2017, 55-56.
\textsuperscript{21} J.W.R. Westerman, Submission to the Royal Commission-Liquor Inquiry, PROV 07704/P0001, 000003, 14.
becoming apparent and it was increasingly obvious that his submission was built on foundations of sand. He indicated that, with the benefit of examining the Consultative Committee’s first and second working papers, he was starting to doubt the strength of his position.\textsuperscript{22} There is evidence of hesitation in his initial expression of concern about appearing negative and insistence that he would have positive suggestions to make such as a reduction in the alcohol content of beer. Westerman conceded that the Consultative Committee was working ‘far more adequately than any one of us has been able to do so far’, indicating that his evidence might be better put to the Committee for analysis.\textsuperscript{23} Phillips did not give this idea even a moment of consideration. He said the Committee was working in parallel and while it might touch on matters affecting trading hours, that was not its primary purpose. The matter of trading hours ‘ought to be the subject of the public inquiry’\textsuperscript{24}. Westerman then made a damaging admission:

\begin{quote}
I would like to indicate that our advocacy may be a mistaken advocacy, we may be mistaken in the use we make of some of the evidence we have, in some of the conclusions we draw from it but all we can do is draw the most accurate conclusions we can in the best possible way from them.\textsuperscript{25}
\end{quote}

Things did not improve. During his testimony, Westerman was propositioned by Phillips: ‘If it can be shown that the consequences (of extending trading hours) are not shown to be worse or better, but there was an increase in human freedom, would most people say, why not?’\textsuperscript{26} Westerman replied: ‘yes, why bother?’\textsuperscript{27} In that moment Westerman again surrendered an opportunity to mount a moral argument that community welfare was not necessarily served by considering its members as no more than consumers. As quoted in the epigraph for this chapter, Phillips made much of this in his report quoting Westerman at length: a ‘witness of critical importance was invited to give guidance… and answered without hesitation’.\textsuperscript{28} Phillips went on to deny that Westerman had been ‘trapped by virtue of inadvertence or lack of appreciation’, but that had a rather hollow ring - perhaps it even betrayed a twinge of

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{23} Transcript, 147.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 147.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 146.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 175.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 175.
\textsuperscript{28} Report of Royal Commission into Consumption of Liquor Part II, 11.
\end{flushleft}
guilty conscience.\textsuperscript{29} Press reports noted Phillips’ tendency to lead witnesses. His excuse was that it saved time.\textsuperscript{30}

*The Spectator* carried a strange report of Westerman’s testimony. It noted that longer trading hours did not result in better sociological (sic) outcomes for the community because the real root of the problem was alcohol itself. Alcoholism, drunkenness, physical and mental disorders, road accidents and crime existed regardless of trading hours. As there was no evidence that these problems were reduced by longer trading hours, why should there be a change from six o’clock? Even if alcohol consumption might not increase, more people would start drinking and that would invariably lead to trouble. The problems could not be reduced just to statistics: the consumption of alcohol affected people’s lives.\textsuperscript{31} This report was significantly different from what Westerman presented at the Commission. Its author seems not to have noticed Westerman’s concessions that, in the absence of evidence of harm being caused by later opening hours, there were no reasons to oppose change. Had the report of Westerman’s evidence been closer to the truth, there might have been a different reaction among Methodists, though it seems unlikely. All that would have happened is that the storm would have come earlier.\textsuperscript{32}

A few days after Westerman had appeared, *The Age* reported that, while Phillips had not yet decided, he was giving the general impression that he favoured a change to ten o’clock closing. There is no evidence that he tried to counter this impression even in this early stage of hearings. Irving Benson responded in his preamble at that weekend’s PSA. He thought the Royal Commission should remember that wives and mothers were the ones most affected by any likely change in hotel hours.\textsuperscript{33} It seems, however, that he did not expect a change as he did not schedule any speaker at the PSA in 1964 about Temperance nor did he take the opportunity to appear before the Commission himself.\textsuperscript{34}

When Westerman completed his evidence, Phillips offered him the opportunity, should he so desire, to make further submissions later. He told Westerman that should any part of his

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 11.
\textsuperscript{30} *The Age*, 6 March 1964.
\textsuperscript{31} *The Spectator*, 19 February 1964, 1.
\textsuperscript{32} Westerman may have written the report himself, anticipating his testimony or someone used his written submission without the benefit of the transcript.
\textsuperscript{33} *The Age*, 10 February 1964, 3.
\textsuperscript{34} *The Spectator*, 1964.
initial submission need change, he could make another. In April, Westerman announced to the Commission that he was amending his submission in respect of trading hours. He said he had presented the case ‘as strongly and as reasonably as I could although, as you have noted, without the sincerity of conviction that would have characterised such a presentation several years ago’. After studying the reports prepared for the Consultative Committee and hearing the evidence before the Commission, he had come to the view that the volume of liquor consumed was unrelated to trading hours. Furthermore, he was unable to say that, with the consumption of the same amount of liquor over a longer period, any adverse social consequences would result. He had consulted the churches and had found unanimous support, apart from the Salvation Army (which wanted to disassociate itself from the amended submission) and the Churches of Christ (who wanted to consult their parent body before making a decision). Westerman explained that while he could have kept quiet, it would in his mind be dishonest to withhold his reconsidered understanding of the facts. Accordingly, he changed the submission in respect of trading hours to one of neutrality since he was unable to say whether ten o’clock was the best alternative.

Fig. 4.2. Description of Westerman’s Revised Testimony. (The Spectator, 22 April 1964).

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35 Transcript, 2895.
36 Ibid., 2896.
37 Ibid., 2900. According to Ian Williams, the Salvation Army was not actively interested in promoting Total Abstinence as it concentrated on rehabilitation of alcoholics. Interview Ian Williams, 23 August 2018.
38 Ibid., 2898-9.
*The Spectator,* noting the ‘The Switch from Six’, described Westerman’s decision as ‘very courageous’, although it would be a great surprise and trouble many Churchmen. The editor observed that while there was no ‘lessening of concern’ for those adversely affected by alcohol, Westerman’s stand showed there was a change in the Church’s attitude to social questions. No longer was the Church relying on emotion and prejudice to make its case, but in future it was going to make it on ‘factual and well-authenticated grounds’. This change in attitude would strengthen the Church’s influence in the future. The editor’s optimism was misplaced. The Church was divided, with many ‘expressing dismay’ and criticising Westerman for his ‘unworthy capitulation to the liquor trade’. Some found his stance was totally unimaginable and were not backward in saying so.39 The columns of *The Spectator* were kept busy for many weeks and Methodists used the daily press to express their concern with Westerman’s position. One correspondent expressed outrage in song:

*Stroll on! Meth’dist soldiers,*  
*What can you do more?*  
*With Committees and Departments,*  
*Going on before.*  
*Circuits all may languish,*  
*Local missions go.*  
*Backward into limbo*  
*Retreating from the foe…* To the tune St Gertrude (Onward Christian Soldiers)40

Benson used the PSA to say that Methodists were still committed to six o’clock closing. His words were prominently reported in *The Age.* He said Methodists had had a hand in the introduction of six o’clock closing and were opposed to any change. Reminding his congregation that no individual had the authority to change Church policy, it remained unaltered and, like the Salvation Army, was in complete opposition to any change in trading hours. Methodists were not narrow-minded or intolerant and they didn’t want restrictions just to deny joy to the people. Their real concern was the protection of mothers who carried the greatest burden of alcohol abuse.41 Rev Alan Walker, the prominent Methodist evangelist based in Sydney, wrote to the editor expressing his ‘profound disagreement and distress’ at

39 *The Spectator,* 29 April 1964, 16.  
40 Ibid., 12 August 1964, 5.  
41 *The Age,* 20 April 1964, 3.
Westerman’s change of position. The decision to be neutral would prove to be as calamitous for Victoria as had the introduction of ten o’clock closing in NSW where women and girls were molested in the street by drunks after ten each night. Westerman, he said, was naïve if he thought there was no connection between trading hours and problems associated with alcohol. Westerman had ‘negated all the past witness of the Church for social righteousness and put little or nothing in its place’.42 A.H. Wood, another leading Methodist churchman, wrote in support of Walker noting that the Methodist Church had not changed its policy. He was confident that Conference, in October, would make no change and neither would the VTA.43 Rev. Harold Freeman, President of Conference, wrote that Conference would consider its position in October but in the interim the Standing Committee of Conference supported Westerman and his reconsidered position. What was certain, he stated, was that there was no diminution of Methodist concern for the problems caused by alcohol.44 Rev. Mervyn Trenorden, Superintendent of the South Australian Methodist Social Services Department, wrote that Westerman’s expression of neutrality ‘was one of the most serious setbacks received by the Temperance movement in years’. Westerman’s position was ‘ill-timed, ill-advised and premature’ and would undoubtedly affect Local Option Polls in South Australia. He concluded there was ‘no greater misfortune’ for the Temperance cause and it would have repercussions in Australia and beyond.45 Westerman did not retreat. He defended his position on television: trading hours and consumption were unrelated and he thought ten o’clock closing would stop ‘furtive and surreptitious’ drinking.46 He later corrected the record: he did not favour ten o’clock closing himself but was neutral on the question of closing hours.47 Benson perhaps summed it up by saying at the PSA that ‘Methodism was split asunder over liquor hours. Methodism’s long history of official opposition and leadership of the community in the question of trading hours gave him the right to continue the crusade for his conscientious convictions’. He was relieved that all three political parties had promised a referendum before hours were extended: the great body of Protestants was ready for the fight and would have their say.48

42 Ibid., 22 April 1964, 2.
43 Ibid., 23 April 1964, 2.
44 Ibid., 24 April 1964, 2.
46 Ibid., 27 April 1964, 7.
47 Ibid., 28 April 1964, 2.
48 Ibid., 26 October 1964, 7.
In addition to this very public dispute, arguments flared in the Church itself. Correspondents in *The Spectator* referred to ‘muddle-headed thinking behind the surrender to liquor’ and the ‘shameful betrayal’ of Methodist law. The Local Preachers’ Association lamented that Westerman’s position was not one of ‘unswerving hostility’. One local preacher of 56 years standing wrote that he nearly had a heart-attack when Methodism lowered its flag to the brewers, something he thought hitherto unthinkable. It seems, however, that most ordinary members were not too concerned. They had personally accepted Methodism’s code of total abstinence so trading hours were of little consequence to them and a campaign to convert others to the cause was far from their minds. Temperance Sunday was no longer a big thing. A common thought was that Westerman had let them down.

Westerman wrote an article explaining his position. It was only natural that there should be ‘shock, confusion and anger with the apparent sudden change’ but once Methodists had had time to consider the issues calmly they would undoubtedly understand why he had changed his position. There was no question that Methodist policy was ‘unswerving hostility’ but there was no official policy on trading hours. The evidence showed that there was no connection between trading hours and consumption and he thought the Church had been building barriers between itself and the community for years due to its stubborn advocacy of six o’clock. It would be a new era for the Temperance movement if the debate moved from the question of closing hours to the adverse consequences of alcohol abuse. An educational programme was needed to restate the case of Total Abstinence.

It was quite some time before anyone considered the question calmly. Freeman expressed his continuing confidence in Westerman, and Wood, despite continuing emphatic opposition to Westerman’s changed submission, had no doubts about Westerman’s sincerity and hoped that ‘the whole Church (would) respect him and pray for him’. Westerman was his own worst enemy in making sure the debate continued. Whenever a letter critical of his position was published in *The Spectator* or *The Age*, he answered almost invariably to the effect that he had been there and had heard all the evidence whereas his critic was not there and could not understand all the facts: better to keep your uninformed opinion to yourself. He made the

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49 *The Spectator*, 22 April 1964, 22.
50 Ibid., 6 May 1964, 12.
52 *The Spectator*, 29 April 1964, 3.
53 Ibid., 29 April 1964, 5.
point that none of his critics had bothered to speak to him about the submission, so they were
doubly damned for speaking from a position of ignorance. Wood wrote to The Spectator that
he had in fact been to see Westerman for half an hour, so the claim was not completely
accurate. Westerman responded: yes, Wood had come to see him but had not asked the right
questions. Benson continued to speak out at the PSA about Westerman’s lack of authority to
speak for the Church or change its policy towards the liquor trade. Westerman responded by
saying that the Royal Commission was open to all comers and Benson, and Alan Walker for
that matter, should take the opportunity to prove him wrong. Benson declined saying that he
was not authorised by the Church to speak on its behalf. Westerman again replied: you do not
have to represent anyone but yourself: if you have information that contradicts my
submission, you owe it to the Commission to bring it forward. Benson declined again saying
it was not appropriate for him to appear. This state of almost open warfare continued for
months, causing one Methodist correspondent to ask how could it be expected that we will
live in harmony when our leaders, who should be setting an example, cannot? Wood noted
the division in ministerial ranks and hoped the arguments were not taken personally.54 His
hope was almost certainly in vain.

The exchange of correspondence over two weeks is illustrative of the seemingly never-ending
debate. Wood noticed an article in The Age by the NSW consultant psychiatrist Dr. John
McGeorge stating that his prediction that there would be a crime wave following the
introduction of ten o’clock closing in NSW had proved correct. Wood thought it unfortunate
that McGeorge had not given evidence to the Royal Commission.55 Westerman replied that
he was present during the whole Royal Commission, sifting and analysing evidence. While
there was no argument about a connection between crime and alcohol, there was no evidence
that crime increased because of ten o’clock closing. Wood was in the all too familiar pattern
of accepting blindly, without proper analysis, of anything that supported previously held
prejudices. If anything, such an attitude harmed the cause of Temperance.56

Another correspondent asked why, if Westerman was ‘neutral’ about trading hours, he kept
attacking the churches and Temperance organisations when there was more to the argument
than statistics.57 Westerman replied that while there were gaps in the statistics and they did

the author), 30.
55 The Age, 29 December 1964, 2.
56 Ibid., 31 December 1964, 2.
57 Ibid., 2 January 1965, 2.
not tell the whole story, the evidence was clear, things were no better or worse with six or ten o’clock closing. Westerman’s argument was with those who brushed aside the evidence and made trading hours the main issue when there were so many other aspects of reform to consider.58 Dr. McGeorge corresponded that he was amused at the pre-occupation with statistics, ‘arithmamania’ he called it, and referred to studies published by the British Academy of Forensic Sciences showing that there was more to the subject than what might be statistically proven. He said it was certain that more women were drinking following the change to ten o’clock and there was plenty of evidence to support the claim.59 Westerman replied again: McGeorge may not have followed the debate from Sydney, but the Royal Commission was working to separate fact from opinion.60 Another correspondent thought Westerman was the ‘victim of vituperation’ and his passion for the truth should be respected instead of sticking to the sacred cow of six o’clock.61 Benson rounded off at the PSA by deploring Conference’s decision to drop its opposition to a change from six o’clock and lamenting the split this had caused in the Church.62 The Age clearly thought the debate about hotel trading hours was in the public interest and that evidence of Methodists at war with each other should be on the public record. The display of disunity among the Methodists was a clear sign that the Temperance cause no longer enjoyed anything near unanimous support and was starting to fade.

Late in April 1964 Westerman had presented his case to the Standing Committee of Conference and had won its support, but that was only an interim position. Conference could over-rule the decision in its annual session in October. Conference was unable to amend Methodist policies, the most it could do was make a recommendation to the General Conference, which was scheduled for 1966. Records of the DCC, while detailed, are incomplete and those for the period 1946-1968 are missing. All that is available is the draft policy put to Conference. It will be recalled that the policy of the Church was concise and called for ‘unswerving hostility’ to the liquor trade. The new statement on alcohol was anything but concise and appears in full as Appendix E. It said the Church should aim to minimise the urgent social problem of alcohol abuse through ‘education, example, co-

58 Ibid., 5 January 1965, 2.
59 Ibid., 7 January 1965, 2.
60 Ibid., 8 January 1965, 2.
61 Ibid., 8 January 1965, 2.
62 Ibid., 11 January 1965, 3.
operation with other bodies and by seeking legislative reform’. There was nothing of the unremitting warfare against the liquor trade that had been the Church’s hallmark for decades.

The Spectator’s reports indicate the 1964 Conference was a fiery affair and it is disappointing that Conference minutes merely record the decisions and provide no details of debates. Wood moved four resolutions to the effect that the Church maintain its opposition to any change from six o’clock closing, retain its current policy of ‘unswerving hostility’, argue that there should be no change in trading hours without a referendum and keep the situation under constant review. Westerman countered that trading hours were irrelevant, and the Church’s concern should be the welfare of the people. Debate continued for four and a half hours with Wood’s resolutions lost by 171 votes to 220. The Church had moved to support neutrality on trading hours and adopted the DCC recommendations to argue for a change at General Conference. The progressive elements had carried the day, but it seems certain that the abuse directed toward Westerman played a part in the decision.

In similar debates in the Presbyterian and Baptist Churches, the move to neutrality was defeated. The Anglican Church noted the report from its Social Questions Committee and it was argued that it had made no change from its previous policy.63 Ironically, the only major church to change its policy to support Westerman’s revised submission was the Methodists who, for generations, had been the strongest and loudest advocates for closer regulation of the liquor trade. An even more startling move was to upset the normal progression to the presidency of Conference. There appears to have been an unwritten rule that, as the ballots were taken each year, the man with the second highest vote would be selected the following year. If this rule had been followed, Rev. Ern Lechte would have been President-elect in 1965 but there was an unexpected change. John Westerman was moved into the succession to become President in 1966. All previous Directors of the DCC had been President and it was likely that Westerman would have been at some stage, but this was unexpected. Westerman expressed his astonishment but it seems clear that Conference was showing its support for a colleague under attack.64 Lechte became President in 1967.65

Benson was not going quietly. He spoke of his respect and affection for Conference, but he would not relent on a crusade born of his conscience. The new Methodist statement on liquor

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63 Ibid., 17 December 1964, 2.
64 Interview Rev. John Lukies.
was unlikely to get much acceptance from him.\textsuperscript{66} A.H. Wood was certain that when the time came for the referendum, ‘the great body of Methodists with the Presbyterians, Baptists, Churches of Christ and the Salvation Army will successfully campaign to retain six o’clock’.\textsuperscript{67}

The General Conference in June 1966 was perhaps less persuaded by any need to repair Westerman’s reputation. A motion to remove the policy of ‘unswerving hostility’ to be replaced with ‘total opposition’ was successful. While the words changed, the reality of Methodist policy of ‘unswerving hostility’ remained unchanged although with some recognition of a need for more constructive engagement with the community.\textsuperscript{68}

In Westerman’s revised submission to the Royal Commission he reported he had met personally with five of the church committees dealing with the issues and that he had the full support of the churches except the Salvation Army and the Churches of Christ. He made it clear that church committees were unable to bind their governing bodies, which could overrule their decisions at some later time.\textsuperscript{69} Westerman made a further submission in December to advise the Commission in respect of decisions made by the various church governing bodies. The Church of England Social Questions Committee had reported to Synod expressing confidence in Westerman’s neutrality and suggesting that its concentration should be on the social issues resulting from the abuse of alcohol. The report was not debated nor was it adopted. Westerman interpreted this as support for neutrality. The Congregational Church confirmed the recommendation to hold a neutral position regarding trading hours and urged the Victorian Government to keep its promise of a referendum. The Baptist Church declared itself strongly in favour of retaining six o’clock closing and reaffirmed its view that no change should be made without a referendum. Helpfully, the Baptist Public Questions Committee attached a copy of its recommendation to support neutrality to the correspondence to the Commission advising its official policy. The Churches of Christ confirmed six o’clock in the absence of any compelling positive results wherever later closing had been introduced and supported a referendum. The Presbyterian Church’s Church and Nation Committee’s recommendation to support neutrality was rejected by the Assembly in favour of support for six o’clock and strong opposition to any change without a referendum. The Methodist

\textsuperscript{66} \textit{The Age}, 26 October 1964, 7.
\textsuperscript{67} \textit{The Spectator}, 28 October 1964, 12.
\textsuperscript{68} Appendix B.
\textsuperscript{69} Transcript, 2900.
Church, as we have noted, endorsed a position of neutrality with a resolution calling for a referendum before any change. The Royal Commission could now see that the churches were divided on trading hours and could not have been unaware of the differences in opinion within the Methodist Church. The only element of unanimity was the call for a referendum regardless of any recommendations that the Royal Commission might make. None of the churches that opposed Westerman’s position - the Presbyterians, Baptists, Churches of Christ and Salvation Army - were moved to make their own representations to the Royal Commission to explain their decision.

The VTA was not involved in Westerman’s original submission, nor consulted when he amended it. The VTA claimed subsequently that the amended submission created the ‘greatest turmoil in the ranks of the Temperance movement in Australia’ and determined almost immediately to engage counsel to make separate representations to the Royal Commission in defence of six o’clock closing. Any other course of action would ‘see the flag of Temperance lowered’ and result in suffering for men, women and families. Charles Francis was given a brief to reopen the issue.

Westerman’s position as President was untenable given this basic disagreement over policy and he and Secretary Rev. E.S. Sanders were obliged to resign. Sanders had made it clear that he supported Westerman’s revised submission. The exact circumstances are unclear. It has been suggested that not all members were present at the meeting convened to discuss the turmoil and that a biased group acted to dismiss Westerman and Sanders whereas, the outcome may have been different had all members been available.

Following the resignation of Westerman and Sanders, the VTA reached into its past and was represented by Wood as President of the Australian Temperance Council and Rev. J Robertson McCue, interim Chairman. McCue, had been Secretary of the VTA for 27 years until 1957 when he retired from active ministry. The editorial in Impact that reported these events also announced that it was to be the last issue of the publication as the future of the organisation was unclear.

70 Transcript, 8081-8091.
71 The Age, 24 April 1964, 5.
Francis appeared before the Commission seeking leave to represent the VTA in the question of trading hours. The Commissioner made it clear that he was interested only in practical enquiries and that he was not going to be assisted by ‘listening to people’s beliefs or wishes or hopes of fears’. Mr. Westerman, he said, had been a constant attender at the Commission and was ‘an extremely experienced spokesman and was unlikely to have overlooked any practical field of investigation’. 73 Phillips made it clear that the Commission had really finished its work in respect of trading hours and while he had effectively come to the point where that he would recommend a change to ten o’clock, he was still open to hear evidence notwithstanding ‘the probability of any witnesses having valuable information not already before the Commission as extremely remote’. 74 *The Age* reported that the VTA had been in touch with Alan Walker to be a star witness and it may have also hoped to enlist Benson as another, but in the end neither appeared. 75 We have seen earlier why Benson refused but there was no indication why Walker was unprepared to back up his rhetoric with an appearance at the inquiry.

Rev. Dr. A.H. Wood, former President-General of the Methodist Church of Australasia and Principal of Methodist Ladies College was the highest profile individual prepared to risk his reputation in what was essentially a lost cause. The VTA also had the services of the retired Deputy Commissioner of Police in NSW, Walter Richard Lawrence, a former Member of the NSW Parliament and active Methodist. A further witness from South Australia was identified but was apparently unavailable at times suitable to the Commission. 76

Lawrence, who had also spoken on the subject at the PSA, explained that he had spent a lifetime dealing with the problems associated with alcohol and that, in his opinion, later closing hours caused more young people to drink and suffer character deterioration. He had seen statistics that were undoubtedly in the possession of the NSW Police. They would be available through official channels. Phillips asked Lawrence why his evidence should be given any weight given the comment of Maxwell, misquoted by Phillips, that his opinion of a witness who would close hotels altogether loses much force. Lawrence stated that he only wanted to restrict hotels, not close them altogether. 77

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73 Transcript, 3608-09.
74 Ibid., 3614.
75 *The Age*, 1 May 1964, 3.
76 Transcript, 4760.
77 Ibid., 4762-4773.
Wood testified that he had studied the problems associated with the consumption of liquor over many years, particularly in relation to young people. He quoted the ABC programme, Four Corners, which noted that more young people were attending hotel bars in NSW following the introduction of ten o’clock closing, and suggested that the reason why expenditure on liquor in NSW had not increased was the introduction of poker machines which diverted spending that otherwise would have gone to alcohol. Phillips was not impressed and again misquoted Maxwell to Wood. Wood responded that he respected the decision of the majority but was still hoping to persuade them of the merits of prohibition.  

Phillips delivered his reports in 1965. Despite the VTA’s rear-guard action and to the surprise of very few, Phillips recommended, among other things, a change to hotel trading hours from six o’clock to ten. He began the report by outlining the complication of finding answers to the numerous questions in the terms of reference. He thought inquiries into these matters might usefully extend for many years when the formidable set of ‘sociological,
medical, legal and other problems’ involved could be considered. He noted investigations underway in many parts of the world into such questions and said there was a pressing need for such research to be carried out in Australia. Meanwhile, he had to make practical recommendations and formed the view that he could do so using the imperfect set of information available. He noted that sociological investigation was no longer a field for amateurs and ought to be left to professionals, most likely meaning that the Temperance advocates needed to embrace scientific research instead of relying on emotion.

He dwelt on the evidence put before the Commission, saying that among the Temperance advocates, there were those who selected facts without much intellectual rigor to support their argument and others who ‘rejected any guidance from statistical or other objective data’. He thought it was among the older age groups that there was an emotional commitment to the cause that made them immune to any rational persuasion. It is not clear if he was referring exclusively to witnesses at the hearings or to other commentators. He noted that among the Temperance party there were ‘conspicuous demonstrations of intellectual integrity - examples as stimulating to observe as they were reassuring to the observer’. ‘For these individuals, the facts were sacrosanct. If these facts were inconclusive, moral integrity demanded a suspended or neutral judgement’. ’Such minds represent the product of a free community of which we can be proud’. 80 There is little doubt that he had Westerman in mind.

Phillips acknowledged that, while his report was based on scientific findings to the fullest extent possible, there were invariably value or moral judgements to be made in addition.81 In respect of trading hours, the recommendation could be based entirely on empirical evidence. Noting that Maxwell thought the ‘swill’ caused by six o’clock closing was ‘intolerable in a civilised community’ and that Fraser had reported the ‘swill’ ‘deplorable’, Phillips thought the argument about the ‘swill’ was over-rated and that the argument should centre on the denial of freedom that restricted trading hours entailed. The principal opposition to extended hours was based on the belief that longer trading hours would necessarily result in increased consumption. Increased consumption might be a social evil but if it were found that consumption did not increase with longer trading hours, the argument reverted to one of personal freedom.82 As noted above, Phillips had put this proposition to Westerman in his

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80 Report of Royal Commission into the Consumption of Liquor Part II, 12.
81 Ibid., 13.
first appearance at the Commission: less regulation was in the interests of the community, other things being equal. Westerman’s reply was one of full agreement.  

Phillips had not finished with Westerman’s evidence. Westerman changed his submission to one of neutrality on trading hours, but he may not have expected to be extensively quoted in the Royal Commission’s final report. Not only were almost all Westerman’s words quoted but so was the process whereby the other churches were consulted and, apart from the Salvation Army and the Churches of Christ, all supported the change. Phillips congratulated Westerman on his ‘moral leadership of the community at the very highest level’ and must somehow have overlooked information in Westerman’s third submission that the Presbyterians and Baptists had withdrawn their support. Phillips summed it up neatly. Mr Justice Maxwell, he said, thought that the opinion of a witness, however honest that opinion might be held, who would, if possible, close hotels altogether, loses much of its force. He had the same experience: some witnesses were unbalanced and injudicious in their handling of evidence. However, what if people with such beliefs and alert to the social evils flowing from extended trading hours were balanced? Their evidence would have ‘special value’. If such a witness discovered, during the inquiry, that there were no reasons to resist extending trading hours and accordingly withdrew its opposition, the case for extending hours became much

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83 Ibid., 11.
stronger. Methodists who had successfully led the opposition to extended trading hours for 50 years were now in the unhappy position of being extensively quoted as the compelling reason to change to ten o’clock.\footnote{Ibid., 6-7.}

After the Royal Commission finished its sittings in December 1964, while Phillips prepared his report, the Government had to deal with its policy that no change to hotel trading hours could be made without a referendum. The idea of a plebiscite to change trading hours can be traced back to the Local Option Polls which had been abolished in 1946, but now the three main political parties had identical policies: no change to trading hours without a referendum. The Premier and Chief Secretary regularly and very publicly confirmed that policy even as late as February 1965.\footnote{The Age, 16 February 1965, 1.}

Bolte must have thought the chance of success at a referendum was still low despite the expected strong recommendation from Phillips and disarray among the churches over the issue. He was concerned about the ‘wowser vote’ and inclined to move carefully.\footnote{Peter Blazey, Bolte: A Political Biography (Milton: The Jacaranda Press, 1972), 123.} Benson, Wood and others were vocal in their insistence that there be a referendum.\footnote{The Spectator, 19 May 1965, 10.} Sir John Jungwirth, a respected public figure and a long-serving Secretary of the Premier’s Department quoted Rylah back at himself: ‘the only democratic way is to have a

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\caption{Premier Henry Bolte and Chief Secretary Arthur Rylah. (Photograph by Gordon F. De’Lisle, apcsociety.com.au).}
\end{figure}
Charles Hider, then President of the Young Liberals and later MP for Monash Province, thought the chance of success for a referendum was very low and judged that Bolte would be unwilling to risk his government’s reputation. He believed that if Bolte had to have a referendum, the question of ten o’clock closing would be shelved indefinitely. *The Age* agreed. It thought that there was some evidence of change in community attitudes but there was still strong opposition to change. In the event of a referendum, emotional arguments were likely to swamp Phillips’ recommendations. The churches promised that the Bolte government would be swept away if it attempted to change trading hours without a referendum.\(^89\) It seems unlikely that this threat was taken seriously as, despite his public statements, Bolte was searching for a way to change party policy. He consulted the Party’s State President Andrew Peacock about the problem and possible solutions. Peacock suggested the best method was a change in Party policy at the February 1965 State Conference. Resolutions of State Council were not binding on the Parliamentary Party but were influential. Peacock spoke to his partner in their legal firm, Charles Hider, who agreed on the stratagem and arranged for the Armadale Branch to put a resolution to State Conference to remove the need for a referendum.\(^90\)

The motion attracted a lot of interest with debate of more than one and a half hours and 17 speakers. There was some controversy. The debate was deferred, which disenfranchised some country members who were obliged to go home. It is unclear if Bolte was an instigator of this tactic to reduce the influence of the more conservative elements in the party, but it seems likely since he was keen to have the motion passed. Hider told State Council that the churches now supported a change in trading hours (this was incorrect, the churches were neutral but public perception was, it seems, otherwise) and as the Royal Commission, which was supported by all political parties, was likely to recommend a change, a referendum was unnecessary. Bolte argued that it should be for the Parliamentary Party to decide once Phillips’ recommendations about these complex issues had been received. He said that Liberal MPs would have a conscience vote if legislation was introduced. The motion was carried overwhelmingly despite correspondence to each delegate from the VTA urging retention of the existing policy position.\(^91\)

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\(^{88}\) Ibid., 15 September 1965, 13.

\(^{89}\) *The Age*, 10 June 1965, 2.

\(^{90}\) Interview Charles Hider.

\(^{91}\) *The Age*, 26 February 1965, 6.
There was still the obstacle of the Legislative Council, where the government did not have a majority. The ALP’s Country Conference considered the issue of ten o’clock in March 1965. It was thought there might be support as rural workers were often said to be disadvantaged by the current trading hours’ regime since they might not finish work in time to visit the local hotel. The move was narrowly defeated. Benson, no doubt harking back to the historical connection between Methodism and the labour movement, was full of congratulation. The Temperance movement, he said, owed much to the Labour Party and again it was standing up to the liquor industry. The ALP Parliamentary leader Clive Stoneham thought differently. He had supported the motion for change, saying that six o’clock discriminated against the workers as the wealthier folk belonged to clubs where there were practically no restrictions on drinking.

In 1963, when the ALP State Conference had last voted on the referendum policy, it was retained by only eleven votes. Perhaps change was coming. One major factor was the death of the veteran Secretary of the Trades Hall Council J.V. Stout in March 1964. Details of ALP politics in Victoria are outside the scope of this research but Vic Stout was influential in the party for most of his life, being first elected a Trades Hall delegate in 1915. He was a non-smoker, a Temperance campaigner and influential in having and retaining the referendum as part of Labour policy. His death was the loss of a leading voice in the union movement arguing to keep the policy. In 1965, The Age reported that the union movement had changed sides and was in favour of a change but was concerned that the ALP would become involved in political point-scoring instead of a grasping a rare opportunity for liquor reform.

The 1965 ALP State Conference voted overwhelmingly to change its policy, though not before a ‘stormy debate’. There were claims that the press had conditioned the minds of the delegates to accept the proposals for liquor reform whereas the only beneficiary was the Carlton and United Brewery and not the working man. Bolte would be let off the hook was another claim, but the majority supported the idea that the Royal Commission had investigated the matters thoroughly and its recommendations should be adopted. The Age thought this was a ‘wise and progressive decision’ and signalled a green light for liquor

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92 The Spectator, 14 April 1965, 12.
93 The Age, Monday, 8 March 1965, 1; 6.
95 The Age, 11 June 1965, 3.
96 Ibid., 14 June 1965, 1.
Benson expressed his disappointment that the ALP had denied people the right to express an opinion. He thought that the community would be thrown back to the desperate days of the nineteenth century and the whole Temperance movement would have to be rebuilt to challenge the liquor trade again. Wood noted that *The Age* had three leaders in one week against the referendum, a unique event in his experience and lamented that the ALP, while claiming to be the people’s party, did not trust the people to decide.98

The Country Party’s 1965 Conference decided overwhelmingly to retain its policy for a referendum. The conference did not voice any preference for six or ten o’clock but thought the question should be put to the people.99

A move to rescind the previous motion was made at the next Liberal Party State Council meeting but was soundly defeated. Party President Peacock denied there was any disunity in the Party despite claims that many members were disaffected by the policy change.100 Wood, in a further rear-guard action, unsuccessfully urged the 1965 Methodist Conference to ask the government not to proceed with a change to ten o’clock.101 Correspondence in the press continued unabated on both sides. For example, a claim that ‘for 50 years a vocal minority has imposed stupid “swill” hours on the majority and reform is long overdue’ was countered by the reminder that ‘the 62 percent who voted last time to keep six o’clock are not a minority and Phillips thought the “swill” argument was over-rated’.102 It all came to a head on 19 October 1965, when Chief Secretary Rylah gave his second reading speech to legislation that implemented most of the Royal Commission’s recommendations, chief among them the introduction of ten o’clock closing.103 The ALP announced its support for the legislation but, unlike the government, did not give its members a conscience vote. The Liberal Party did and seven of its members voted against the legislation. The Parliament did not divide, so it is not possible to identify the MPs involved, but Wood commended them for standing by their conscience.104 Rylah announced that ten o’clock would be introduced on 1 February 1966.105 Westerman asked Methodists to be positive and constructive and allow

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97 Ibid., 14 June 1965, 2.
98 Ibid., 14 June 1965, 13.
99 Ibid., 22 June 1965, 2.
100 Ibid., 29 July 1965, 7.
101 Ibid., 21 October 1965, 5.
102 Ibid., 14 September 1965, 2.
103 *VPD*, 19 October 1965, 849-857.
104 *The Age*, 13 December 1965, 2.
105 Ibid., 7 December 1965, 1.
time for evaluation of the change. It was a time, he said, for Methodists to set an example to the community through voluntary Total Abstinence which was the best method of solving the problem. Benson called it ‘Black Tuesday’, a day that the community would come to regret, but in due course the advocates of Temperance would be vindicated. In fact, there is little evidence that the community had any regret and the influence of the Temperance movement was fading fast.

‘Ten o’clock closing unremarkable’ was the headline of *The Age* which reported that the day passed uneventfully and, while the city hotels were quiet, suburban bars were crowded with the notable absence of any swill drinking. Rylah made an improvised tour and reported that drinkers seemed more relaxed and that there were more women in attendance. Westerman welcomed these better drinking patterns, although Wood thought that it was too early to judge and there would most likely be an adverse impact on family life.

Once the VTA stopped publishing its journal in February 1965, there is little record of its activities. Previously the Director of the DCC had been its President but Westerman was no longer acceptable. Westerman reported to Conference that the DCC had resigned its membership due to the VTA decision to campaign strongly for the retention of six o’clock. Methodist leadership of the foremost Victorian temperance organisation continued however as Wood became President in his place and Palmer Phillips Vice-President. In 1968 Conference was persuaded to make Rev. Brian Moxon available as VTA Secretary. It is not known if Moxon’s salary was paid by Conference in whole or in part, but one interviewee thought there was some financial support. The Methodist Conference did not publish accounts, so it is not possible to determine the level of support: nor is it possible to know what, if any, other financial support the VTA received. The Alcoholism Foundation seems to have become the leading community organisation warning of alcohol abuse and Moxon was also involved in its activities.

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107 Ibid., 2 February 1966, 11.
109 Ibid., 2 February 1966, 3.
112 Ibid., 16 October 1968, 1.
113 Interview Rev. Dr. W. Clarnette.
Moxon was the antithesis of Westerman. He was emotionally invested in the cause and less troubled by logical argument.\footnote{114 Interview Rev. Dr. H. D’A. Wood.} It seems he became a leading figure in the Temperance movement and, according to his obituary, was ‘often sought as a specialist by many universities throughout Australia’.\footnote{115 UCA Synod Minutes, 1998, AA4.9.} To what extent Moxon and Westerman were able to cooperate, given their differences in temperament, is unknown. As we will see, Westerman continued to be involved in issues concerning alcohol but he was becoming distracted by wider matters including conscription and Australia’s involvement in Vietnam. Methodists did not step back from their general policy against alcohol. They continued to officially observe Temperance Sunday in September each year, but it is unlikely that it featured much in suburban Church life.\footnote{116 The Spectator, 15 January 1969, 6.} In 1969 the VTA offices were moved to the Methodist Centre in 130 Little Collins Street, Melbourne.\footnote{117 Ibid., 30 November 1966, 8-9.}

The two great Methodist Temperance warriors, Wood and Benson, retired due to age in 1966 and 1967 respectively. Whilst it did not stop their campaigning, particularly Wood’s, they moved away from the limelight. Wood continued an active involvement in Temperance and other areas of social concern. As Chairman of the Australian Temperance Council (ATC) he was involved in the formation of a new Temperance body, the ‘Commonwealth Advance Movement Encouraging Responsibility towards Alcohol’ or CAMERA for short. While the ATC planned a nation-wide pledge-signing campaign as an antidote to the liberalisation of hotel trading hours, its research showed that the Temperance movement was held in low regard by many people both inside and outside the churches and that Australians were unlikely to respond favourably. Accordingly, this new group was formed to work in parallel to the ATC and State-based Temperance Alliances. Its leaders included, in addition to Wood, high profile names from Victoria - Dr. Edgar French of the University of Melbourne, Sir John Jungwirth, Walter Nixon, a Chartered Accountant, and Lars Spjuth, General Manager of ANSVAR Insurance. One leading minister withdrew from the committee when CAMERA’s aims were defined as a campaign for total abstinence or a personal reduction in drinking. Almost certainly this was Benson, who was unbending in the cause of total abstinence. The others apparently believed if the argument for total abstinence was difficult to prosecute, the next best outcome was a reduction in consumption.\footnote{118 Ibid., 30 November 1966, 8-9.}
The CAMERA proposal was based on ‘education and persuasion’ and it planned to use public relations techniques to submit material for media consumption in addition to its own printed matter. It also investigated acceptable alternatives to alcoholic beverages and the establishment of a fund whereby Australians could invest money to meet the social needs of the community. It anticipated clashes with the traditional Temperance organisations that held to Total Abstinence as the only possible solution to the problems of alcohol but the VTA, for one, allied itself with CAMERA, perhaps indicating an overlap of leadership. The ambitious plans anticipated the establishment of 42 regional branches to cover the capital cities and regional centres. Membership was open to any person 16 or older subscribing to its aims and similarly sympathetic organisations. The Committee had advice that $300,000 was needed to fund its activities over the next three years. How Methodists would react to this different solution to the problems of alcohol was unknown. Moderate drinking had been almost a greater problem than alcoholism in the eyes of an older generation. Moderation suggested that alcohol was not a universal social menace and could be managed effectively by many.

Methodists reacted with indifference. Westerman reported that nothing was known of its main projects, although Quarterly Meetings had been informed of its existence.\(^{119}\) Given this rather indifferent attitude, he did not see CAMERA as the means of Methodism’s new approach to the problems of alcohol. Apart from the initial report in *The Spectator*, there is no further record of its activities. Only one interviewee remembered it and had attended one of its meetings, but otherwise it seems to have disappeared without any record of press campaigns or publications.\(^{120}\)

For Temperance Sunday in 1967, Westerman lamented that the work of the Royal Commission had not been continued. He thought the forum created by the Commission had brought all the parties together so that the questions raised by alcohol abuse could be considered in calm and reasonable ways. He hoped some form of statutory body could be established to maintain this dialogue to meet ongoing concerns, but representations to government had to date been unsuccessful. Wood, as spokesman for the VTA, hoped that best solution to the problems of alcohol, Total Abstinence, would not be overlooked in all the analysis of scientists, economists and social workers. Total Abstinence was still Methodist policy and it was time to speak out and set an example. Even though these views are not contradictory, they must have reinforced in the mind of Methodists the lack of unity and

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\(^{119}\) *Minutes of Conference* 1967, 166.

\(^{120}\) Interview Rev. Dr. H. D’A. Wood.
focus among their leaders and the impossibility of presenting a unified position to
government and the general community.

Perhaps the last opportunity prior to union for Methodists to resolve their differences and
present a coherent policy was in 1971. The Master of Queen’s College asked Conference for
permission to allow liquor in Queen’s under certain circumstances. The Master, Owen
Parnaby, made the argument that the blanket prohibition was the exception to the rules of the
College which were otherwise made through consultation with the staff and students. He also
noted that the present rule could not be enforced. He felt it would be better to have discretion
and allow students to cope with the issues surrounding liquor consumption, which were part
of everyday life outside the College. Conference went into closed session. There is no
obvious reason why the subject was not discussed in the presence of the press, but it seems
Conference was still bruised from the bitterness of the 1964 debate and thought it better to
keep disagreements in-house. The effect was to increase public interest. It seems the debate
was on a knife-edge when Wood rose to speak. The usual custom in Conference was for
speakers to alternate, for and against: Wood rose when it was the turn of one in favour of
granting permission to speak. The President said to Dr. Wood: ‘I am sorry, it is the turn for
someone in favour to speak. Wood replied: ‘I am in favour. His argument was simple. The
Church trusted those appointed to do their best and if it was Parnaby’s judgement that this
was best for Queen’s and its students, Conference should support him. This argument by the
old warrior for total abstinence turned the vote and Conference moved to have the law
forbidding alcohol on Methodist premises amended at the next General Conference. It was
almost the final act showing that Methodism had finally realised that there was more to the
management of alcohol abuse than prohibition. There was a flurry of correspondence in The
New Spectator outraged at the decision, but Palmer Phillips summed it up neatly in his letter
in support: ‘some who are most opposed to the use of liquor hinder rather than help our cause
by failing to recognise the need for reappraisal of past attitudes’. The Age reported that a
number of Methodist ministers were opposed to the move as was the Local Preachers’
Association and the VTA. It noted that if the policy changed, it would have serious
repercussions for the Church.

121 Interview Rev. Prof. N. Young, 24 May 2017.
123 The Age, 24 November 1971, 3.
Just when it appeared there was a break-through in Methodism’s engagement with the wider community, General Conference rejected, by a large margin, the Victorian Conference’s request to amend the law. Although Parnaby was supported by colleagues Rev. Dr. R. Maddox of Leigh College in NSW and Dr. Ian Grimmett of King’s College in Queensland, General Conference heard from those such as Rev. Alan Walker who appealed for the Church not to take a further step towards changing its ‘absolutist stand on liquor’. The Age did not report the outcome. Perhaps no-one cared.

Certainly, there seemed little interest from the other churches in the lead-up to union in 1977. Despite A.H. Wood’s prominent role in the negotiations, there is no record of Methodist laws on alcohol and other social questions being the subject of negotiations with the Presbyterians and Congregationalists. So Methodism’s strident and effective advocacy for social reform came to an end. Some, like Breward, thought this a good thing but perhaps not everyone was so convinced. Who was to be the voice of social conscience now?

125 Ian Breward, The Uniting Church in Australia: The First 25 Years, William W. Emilsen and Susan Emilsen, eds (Armadale: CIRCA, 2003), 203.
CONCLUSION

_Alcohol is the cause of, and the solution to, many of life’s problems._

Homer Simpson, American philosopher.¹

As the observation above suggests, society’s attitude to alcohol is often conflicted. This was seen in the difficulties almost all governments seem to have encountered in determining and administering Licensing policies. The Methodist Church, on the other hand, seemed to be in no doubt: there was duty of care to the weaker members of the community and drink was a scourge that society would be better off without. However, it became as conflicted as the rest of society.

This thesis has explored how the Church did its best to influence public policy to confront the problem of alcohol. While it commended to its members total abstinence and a policy of ‘unswerving hostility’ to the drink trade, it went further. It campaigned actively to ensure the electorate at large had the opportunity to decide for itself the question of prohibition.

The study has traced Methodist activity and influence over the period 1902-1977. The Church argued from a position of strength. It was arguably the most active Christian denomination in Victoria and was determined to pursue social betterment for all. Unlike other churches, it dedicated full-time ministers to the Temperance cause and organised regular public forums to engage the community: the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon and, later, its stand in the Yarra Bank. It showed little reticence in making its policy positions well known and government was unable to ignore its activities. So strongly were Methodists associated with antagonistic attitudes to drink, that a word even entered popular usage to describe them and their fellow prohibitionists - wowsers.

The underlying intent of Methodist policy was to introduce prohibition. At the beginning of the period, there was widespread community concern about the social problems resulting from the ready availability of alcohol and the Methodists were best able to articulate it. They did so in a manner that forced government to respond. It was this initial success that encouraged the Methodist policy of ‘unswerving hostility’, which remained unchanged for 75 years, despite its increasing irrelevance to public policy.

¹ _The Economist_, 25 August 2018, 46.
Methodist influence on public policy peaked early in the twentieth century but faded away by the time of Union in 1977. There are two likely reasons. The first was its failure to adapt its message to a changing society as its early successes encouraged complacency which proved its undoing in the longer term. The second was the growing importance of the ministers and the institutional Church at the expense of the laypeople. Early in the period, much of the work was done by laymen, but as ministers shouldered more of the load, Methodism’s reformist edge seems to have been blunted.

In 1906, the Bent government, through its misadventure in challenging the Methodists over questions of gambling, was cornered into action on licensing. The state-wide Local Option Poll was thought to be key to the introduction of prohibition, but it was another reform, the Licences Reduction Board (LRB), that effectively minimised the underlying problem of alcohol abuse. Methodists were encouraged by the war time introduction of six o’clock closing and their small success at the first Local Option poll in 1920. Prohibition seemed possible, but as the hard-won restrictive regime was quietly dismantled by successive administrations, that outcome became unlikely. Methodists seem not to have noticed as they maintained the same policy come what may. Even as alcohol abuse manifested in different ways, their response stayed the same: prohibition. Just as some Methodists had begun to question the suitability of their absolutist policy, any thought of revision was derailed by the unexpected success of the ‘Stick-to-Six in ‘56’ campaign that saw the retention of six o’clock closing. Methodists thought this signalled community endorsement of their uncompromising position. It was the 1964 Phillips Royal Commission that finally revealed the untenability of the Methodist policy, but, even then, they were slow to recognise the need to change and much slower to act.

Why did prohibition persist as the hoped-for outcome? It was no longer an issue of concern for many although Westerman’s methods raised a few eyebrows. However, a significant minority reverted to the old argument about persuasion and suppression. If suppression were no longer viable, surely persuasion was. By remaining unswervingly hostile, this would somehow permeate society and bring about the only complete solution to alcohol abuse, real or imagined. Opposition to longer trading hours was only part of unswerving hostility, not an end in itself. Wood, for example, was undoubtedly sincere in expressing his hope for prohibition at the Royal Commission, while completely realistic about the unlikelihood of that outcome. He was nevertheless unwilling to give up the fight. If just one lost sheep could be rescued from the thrall of alcohol, that was more than enough justification.
The Methodists continued to influence public policy even as their own policy position became increasingly anachronistic. The Methodist tactics of 1906 were unsubtle, and successive governments clearly had some residual concerns that the Methodists might repeat them. No government was prepared to run the risk of proposing major change to the licensing regime, preferring small and carefully timed amendments to avoid rousing the Methodists. Even at the end, Bolte went to some pain to avoid a referendum on the question of trading hours having some concern that, even in their state of disarray, Methodists might once more influence the community.

Much of the Methodists early success came from the work of laymen. An active laity had always been a distinguishing feature of Methodism and a key part in the Church’s early progress. That was also true for Temperance. Early on, laymen were the leaders in the Temperance campaign, but after 1926 this changed. Layman W.H. Judkins, in his muscular campaign for Local Option, had the almost unanimous support of ministers and Church members. E.W. Greenwood MP was in the vanguard of the 1920 Local Option Poll and scored a rare success of two ‘dry’ areas. But there were indications that the unanimity of opinion was unravelling. Judkins’ LRB had done its work well and there were signs that alcohol abuse was no longer the pressing issue it once was. Greenwood could see that laypeople were becoming disinterested and recommended that the institutional Church take over. How else was the fight to be maintained, much less escalated? While support for his proposal was contested, what was the alternative? The fight had to be sustained and so the Social Service Department (SSD) was established with a full-time minister specifically for the purpose. This allocation of scarce resources was the mark of Methodist commitment, unique among all the churches. The proud tradition of social activism had to be maintained.

So in 1926 the SSD took over leadership of the Temperance fight. Greenwood and Judkins were larger-than-life characters and ideally suited to propelling the largely emotionally based campaign and, while the first Director Rev. G.A. Judkins and his successor, Rev. H. Palmer Phillips, undoubtedly did their best to enthuse the Church, it was not the same. Their ministerial status may have restricted their methods. The decision to set up the Department had not been straight-forward. It involved a significant change in the way of tackling the problem. It is not clear if Greenwood expected the minister in charge to be the co-ordinator of lay efforts or, as happened, more directly involved in the day-to-day work. In any event, alcohol was no longer seemed the menace it did at the turn of the century. That unswerving
hostility was a legacy of Methodist activism seemed more of passing interest than a spur to further action.

The expectation that ministers would do the work did nothing to re-engage laypeople. They provided the hands and feet of the Department but were not at its head. The capacity of the SSD to prosecute the cause was further reduced by the expectation that it would shoulder the management of more and more social issues. Resources were more thinly spread, not increased.

Later Local Option polls confirmed that Temperance was on the wane and when Palmer Phillips, sensitive to the members’ lessening interest, suggested compromise, the old ministerial guard shouted him down. There was to be no swerving from the Methodist policy.

Rev. John Westerman, the third Director of the SSD, promised a different approach. He said it was time to be positive in solving the problems of alcohol abuse and time to ditch the negative policy of ‘unswerving hostility’. Westerman, the Methodist spokesman at the 1964 Phillips Royal Commission, was his own worst enemy. Had he prepared his submission carefully and had it debated, the shock of his recanting Methodist policy might have been avoided. As it was, his tactless approach polarised the Church and ruined any chance of a constructive outcome. It is hard to imagine laypeople were encouraged by the unedifying public spectacle of senior ministers in battle with each other instead of the hoteliers. The squabbling Methodist hierarchy could not command the support of the members, much less the public.

Any opportunity to suggest other ways to tackle the problem of alcohol abuse was lost. Westerman complained that he led, but not all followed. He thought that, because he understood the issue best, he had the authority to lead. He seemed not to understand that the members were no longer much interested in Temperance as a social issue, whatever the Church had to say about it. On this issue at least, the membership and leadership were at odds, and it seems to have been a surprise.

Most Methodists were satisfied practising personal total abstinence as commended both by Church policy and long habit. They were certainly not engaged by any scheme to impose prohibition on others. There was a growing separation of the membership from its leadership. Who did the leaders lead?
This was a critical question for the Church. If the disconnection between the hierarchy and the members was in respect of Temperance only, the consequences might not be too important. If however, as seems more likely, it was indicative of a deeper separation, the consequences for the Church and its future were significant. Further study of the Methodist Church is needed to interrogate this important proposition that the Methodist leadership was at odds with its membership.

It is deeply ironic that the Methodist, W.H. Judkins, was the force behind the introduction of the restrictive licensing regime in 1906 while in 1964 another Methodist, Rev. J.W.R. Westerman, was the star witness a Royal Commission relied upon to dismantle what little there was left of it. The only tangible reminder nowadays of Methodism’s ‘unswerving hostility’, is the absence of hotels in Camberwell and Box Hill and it is unlikely that many are aware of the Methodist connection. The current government, in threatening to abolish the ‘dry’ areas as ‘archaic’, certainly seems to have no understanding of the democratic decision made almost a hundred years ago, nor the fate of the Cain government in 1955.2

The Methodism tradition of strenuous social activism disappeared with union in 1977. The idea of reforming zeal or a militant social conscience seems foreign to the new Church. For example, a recent report published in *The Lancet* of research which claims to be a summary of 694 recent studies involving 28 million people, delivered an ‘uncompromising message’: there is no healthy level of alcohol consumption and recommends governments advise total abstinence.3 It is not clear who will argue for public policy reform now that the voice of Methodism has been stilled.

The 1986 Nieuwenhysen report showed that Victoria’s licensing regime was more restrictive than the other states because of its Methodist-influenced policies. It would be useful to compare the licensing policies of each state to identify the forces involved in their development to see if the Methodists in Victoria were distinctive. It seems likely that these restrictive policies had other public policy outcomes, such as the almost monopolistic power of the breweries, and an investigation of these consequences would be worthwhile. Also, as this study has been about the influence of the Methodists on public policy, it has, unfortunately, had to skirt around the issue of the relationship society has with alcohol. At the

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2 *The Age*, 6 November 2018, 4.

Beginning of the twentieth century it was a vexed one and the cause of much concern. The Methodist-inspired reforms seemed to have alleviated the problems but there has been no study to make a definitive conclusion. Further investigation into this important social issue would be worthwhile.
APPENDIX A: METHODIST GOVERNANCE and NOMENCLATURE

Wesley, in forming his Methodist Connexion, had no thought of it being a denomination separate to the Church of England. Remaining under its umbrella, however, proved to be impossible and the Methodists began the process of separating from the mother Church in 1739.

Wesley’s followers were formed into ‘classes’ of ten to twelve people, meeting regularly, often weekly, for fellowship and spiritual education. This notion of ‘connexion’ was a fundamental tenet of Methodism from the beginning. Membership of a Class was qualification for membership of the Connexion, so it was not possible to be a ‘nominal’ Methodist. Membership was a commitment and members were expected to be active in sustaining their faith and ‘doing good’.

The Class Leader was responsible for those in the Class, taking care that they attended regularly and made a financial contribution. The Class Leader was accountable to the Minister of the Local Church or Congregation to whom he would report regularly. Local Churches were grouped into Circuits which were the foundation on which the church was built. Circuits were formed into Districts and Districts into the Conference. Where, as for the Australian States, there were several Conferences, there was a further level, a General Conference.

The Class system faltered by the end of the nineteenth century as the Church became more middle-class and moved away from its working-class origins. The Local Church became the focus of the connexion but even early in the twentieth century there were nostalgic calls for the reinstatement of Classes. The system had real value for early Methodists in sustaining the connexion and its loss was keenly felt.

Authority in the Methodist Church was centralised and while it may appear authoritarian, it was not. The laws were set by General Conference, interpreted by the President-General and applied to all without exception. This had the advantage that everyone had a clear understanding of theological doctrine and social mission but had the disadvantage of an inbuilt conservatism. Change could be slow coming. Change had to wend its way through the hierarchy before official adoption. Further, to guard against any concentration of power, there was the principle of itinerancy. In the beginning, local ministers were expected to move to a new locality every year although this was modified to three, five and finally every seven years. The President of Conference served only one term of a year so there was little
opportunity to build a following based on personality. This, however, also militated against change as those in charge had limited opportunities to develop and implement new policies based on experience.

Each local church, preaching place and home-mission station had a Leaders’ Meeting. Its place in the hierarchy was limited to local concerns. It comprised the minister(s) and the leaders of the church in that place. For example, the Superintendent of the Sunday School and a representative for each 100 scholars attended. It received reports of ill-health, both physical and spiritual, of members and attended to administrative matters. It had to meet at least once a quarter but usually, in practice, met more frequently. Local Churches were grouped into Circuits usually based on geography.

Each Circuit had a Quarterly Meeting which was a more influential body. Comprising representatives from each local church, the senior minister in the Circuit was the Superintendent and membership consisted of all ordained ministers, ministers on probation and local preachers (see below). The Stewards and Trustees of each church, the Sunday School Superintendents, the Choir Leaders and representatives of societies connected with the church. There were also representatives elected by the membership, one for each thirty members. The Methodist Church had a system of local preachers. Originally without qualification, they had a calling to preach: probably more emotion than theology. Later they received some training and were officially recognised. The use of local preachers was important in the early success of Methodism as local churches could flourish without the need of ordained clergy especially in thinly populated and newly settled areas. Within Methodism, lay men and women were also important with status and recognition from the time of Wesley himself. While mostly men and only occasionally women, they were vital parts of the Methodist connexion and its success.

The Quarterly Meeting managed the finances for the Circuit and on the matter of its spiritual state, asked the question, ‘what more can be done?’ Perhaps most importantly it handled matters of ministerial candidacy: does the applicant have the ‘grace’, the ‘gifts’ and has ‘God given him the fruits of his labours?’ There were also invitations for ministers to remain in place after four years. A fifth year needed a two-thirds majority while sixth and seventh years required three-quarters.

Circuits were organised into Districts which met annually as a District Synod. This is where another Methodist principle came into play. There had to be equal ministerial and lay
representation. While the ministers met separately as a Ministerial Session, the Representative Session included the ministers, probationers and home missionaries (non-ordained but commissioned to preside at the sacraments, in areas too poor to afford a church and paid by the Conference Office), Heads of Church schools in the District, circuit stewards and treasurers and lay representatives. The Representative Session could make recommendations to Conference. The Ministerial session had oversight of the clergy in the District. Each year every minister had to be the subject of the following questions: has he the character, the belief in Methodist doctrines, the discipline and ability to work? Hopefully, a colleague would answer in the affirmative. The Chairman of the District was an important figure in the hierarchy especially in stationing and the role of maintaining ministerial discipline. This process was uniquely Methodist.

**Conference** was the annual meeting of ministers and an equal number of lay representatives elected by Quarterly meetings, one for each Circuit. It also included the heads of Church schools and other Church organisations. It was responsible for the overall operation of the Church in the State, setting policy, budgets and the stationing of ministers. Conference was, for most things, the final decision-making authority. Debate was often lively and lengthy. The business of Conference was managed by the Connexional Secretary, a full-time position in the Conference Office. Many matters were referred to ‘Committees of Details’ to be prepared for Conference debate and others were referred by Conference Departments such as the Department of Christian Citizenship (formerly the Social Service Department).

The ministerial session’s prime concern was the stationing of ministers: who would move and to what location or position. The process was convoluted and time-consuming but of considerable consequence for the best working of the Church.

The President of Conference was an important position as he had the final say on matters between Conferences. He was assisted by a Standing Committee of the immediate past President, the Secretary and Chairmen of the Districts but was able to make decisions with or without their advice. Conference elected the President annually although the usual procedure was that the Secretary of Conference would become President for the following year. The interesting election was for the incoming Secretary-elect who would take a place in the queue.

**General Conference** was the triennial meeting of delegates from the State Conferences. It was called the General Conference of the Methodist Church of Australasia as it also included
the Conferences of Tonga, Samoa and Fiji. New Zealand was also included until it became an independent Conference in 1907. General Conference was again equal in ministerial and lay representatives. Ministers were elected by Conferences in proportion to its membership: one for every 15 ministers up to 195 and one in thirty thereafter. Lay representatives were elected in equal number.

General Conference’s business was Overseas Missions, Church Law and policies affecting the national Church, for example, matters in respect of church union. Only General Conference could make or amend the law except for the Doctrines of John Wesley and the General Rules issued by him in 1743. These were unchangeable. The President-General had similar authority to Conference Presidents between meetings. He was able to interpret the laws between meetings. These interpretations had the force of law unless over-ruled at the next General Conference.

Work of the General Conference was undertaken by specific Committees in the time between meetings.

There were a few important exceptions to the principle of Itinerancy. Missions were outside the Circuit system and were established as outreach centres to deliver welfare and support for those in need. Often, while not directly connected to any one Local Church, they received support from nearby Circuits. Wesley Central Mission in Melbourne was a notable exception: the Superintendent of the Mission was also minister of the adjacent Wesley Church. The position of Superintendent had to be renewed annually by Conference, but it was common for the incumbent to stay for many years. Missions had fewer constraints about fund-raising. As Conference-wide agents, the more money they could raise, the more work they could do. They were also allowed to operate businesses. The Wesley Central Mission had a business that offered a cure for alcoholism and another that offered employment to the unemployed.

Another exception was Conference Departments. Directors were appointed and often stayed for longer than a usual Circuit appointment. This made some sense for the longer-term delivery of consistent policy and activities.

This appendix is based on discussions with Rev. Dr. H. D’Arcy Wood and the Book of Laws and Regulations of the Methodist Church of Australasia.
APPENDIX B: METHODIST TEMPERANCE POLICIES AND THE LAWS OF METHODISM

Initially, the Methodist Church of Australasia adopted the 1890 laws of the Wesleyan Methodists pending an opportunity to revise them, presumably by considering those of the other Methodist branches and codifying them.¹ Methodist laws could be made only by the triennial General Conference and as the minutes of proceedings are limited to a record of decisions taken, there is little opportunity to understand the thinking that prompted any change.

The wording of the 1890 law in respect of Members’ duties makes it unlikely that anyone could be in doubt about the Church’s expectations: personal total abstinence. The law also gives expression to the Methodists unfailing conviction that all people would eventually be persuaded to adopt prohibition as the only solution to the evils of alcohol consumption through the mechanism of Local Option.

Under the heading ‘Admission and Duties of Members’, Part VIII, ‘Temperance’, Paragraph 25 of 26 reads:

The Methodist Church regards intemperance as among the most serious moral and social evils and requires its members and adherents to discountenance those drinking and other customs of society that foster this vice, and to promote such legislative measures as aim at restraint or extinction of the liquor traffic. The right of citizens to regulate the issue of public-house licenses is recognised, and the principle of Local Option is approved. While asserting that the Methodist Church to be itself virtually a Temperance society and advising the formation of Temperance Societies and Bands of Hope in connection with our own Church, our members and adherents are recommended, so far as is consistent with due attention of other Christian enterprises, to co-operate with independent temperance and total abstinence associations.²

By 1905, the Church’s stance had become more concise but less certain. Perhaps there was a presumption that, as Methodists were always Total Abstainers, this did not need articulating.

¹ Minutes of General Conference (Melbourne: Spectator Publishing, 1904), 65.
² Minutes of General Conference of the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Church, 1890 (Melbourne: General Conference of the Australasian Methodist Church, 1890), 8.
The 1905 edition of the laws, under the heading ‘General Regulations for the Guidance of Members, Paragraph Seven reads:

The General Conference having affirmed its adherence to the principle of the direct veto in relation to the drink traffic, without compensation, members should support that principle.3

In the 1918 edition, however, there was a change to clear away any ambiguity or uncertainty and the emotive and memorable term, ‘unswerving hostility’, was introduced.

The 1918 General Regulations, Paragraph 26 reads:

the attitude of the Church towards the liquor traffic being that of unswerving hostility, members are enjoined to use their influence to secure the election of representatives to Parliament who are known to favour the prohibition or restriction of the importation, manufacture and sale of intoxication liquor and who are willing to grant to the people the right of local and state options on this question.4

The rule remained in force until 1950 when it was amended again. By then, only the most optimistic could have imagined that Local Option was a likely outcome and it was removed and replaced with a plea for a more personal advocacy of prohibition. Hence

1950 General Regulations, Paragraph 22:

The attitude of the Methodist Church to the liquor traffic is one of unswerving hostility. Members are therefore urged to accept the standard of personal abstinence and to use their influence to discourage the use and manufacture of alcoholic beverages.5

The 1965 edition added the words ‘the church forbids the raising of any money from functions at which intoxicating liquors are consumed or the sale, use or consumption of alcoholic liquor in trust premises’.

1965 General Regulations, Paragraph 46:1 reads:

3 The Laws and Regulations of the Methodist Church of Australasia (Melbourne: General Conference of Australasia, 1905).
4 The Laws and Regulations of the Methodist Church of Australasia (Melbourne: General Conference of Australasia, 1918).
5 The Laws and Regulations of the Methodist Church of Australasia (Melbourne: General Conference of Australasia, 1950).
The attitude of the Methodist Church to the liquor traffic is one of unswerving hostility. Members are therefore urged to accept the standard of personal abstinence and to use their influence to discourage the use and manufacture of alcoholic beverages. In accord with this the church forbids the raising of any money from functions at which intoxicating liquors are consumed, or the sale, use or consumption of alcoholic liquor in trust premises.

Following the Phillips Royal Commission in 1964 and the brouhaha in respect of hotel trading hours, Westerman proposed amendments to Methodist law at the Victorian Conference to be considered at the 1966 General Conference. Westerman subsequently prepared a pamphlet for distribution to Methodists in Victoria and Tasmania to explain his reasoning. He noted, with some degree of understatement, that the liquor question had been on the minds of many following his decision to adopt a neutral stance in respect of hotel trading hours. He said that the Church needed to be in the ‘forefront of progress’ and adopt a policy position that would enable it to act when the time was right. It removed the concept of ‘unswerving hostility’ replacing it with ‘every possible effort’. Conference adopted the following in October 1964:

New Statement of Policy on Alcohol:

Alcohol inflicts heavy loss upon the community and causes great harm to many people. Every possible effort should therefore be made to reduce the consumption of alcohol and to lessen the dangers consequent upon its consumption.

As followers of Christ we are called to the highest in mental and bodily health. Because of this, and for the sake of others in the community, we call upon our people to accept the personal standard of voluntary total abstinence, and also to make sure as far as possible that easily accessible supplies of non-alcoholic beverages are available at any function with which they are associated.

Local Option rights should be restored, so that in any area where no licence exists a licence shall not be granted without a vote being taken of electors within the vicinity of the proposed site for such licence; in other areas, on a petition of ten percent of electors in the vicinity, a poll of electors should be held before a licence is granted or renewed.
There should be compulsory blood and/or other chemical tests for car drivers suspected of intoxication, on the basis of a driver’s licence being issued subject to his consent to submit to the above tests if required by the police to do so.

There should be available a lower alcohol content beer, to sell at a cheaper price than beer with a higher alcohol content. The co-operation of the Federal Government should be sought so that the necessary arrangements regarding excise may be made.

No club licence should be granted unless a club is bona fide, i.e., exists and would continue to exist without a licence. Hours of club trading should be limited at the discretion of the Licensing Court to the hours when the club usually operates, and the hours of trade for the sale of bottled or canned liquor for off-premises consumption should terminate not later than the closing hours for hotels.

Factual education programmes should be carried out in schools, among young people, and in the adult community generally, so that there may be an awareness of the effects and dangers of alcohol. Such programmes should be prepared and carried out on a co-operative basis by all interested organisations.

The Government should ensure adequate provision for the establishment of clinics for the proper treatment of alcoholics and for the maintenance of ‘half-way’ houses for alcoholics who have received treatment but are not fully rehabilitated.

It is essential that adequate research into the sociological consequences of the consumption of alcohol be carried out, in order to ascertain the facts. Long-term projects to this end should be undertaken on a co-operative basis by all interested organisations, and finance made available by the State. In addition, there should be serious study and research into the factors in our society that promote the excessive consumption of alcohol.

There should be no change in hotel closing hours without a referendum.

The role of the Church in relation to this urgent social problem is to endeavour, by education, example, co-operation with other bodies, and the seeking of legislative
reform, to reduce to a minimum the harmful effects upon people of the consumption of alcohol.⁶

In 1966 General Conference considered the proposal and the law was extensively amended. Many of the issues raised by Westerman were included but not the crucial omission of ‘unswerving hostility’. While ‘Unswerving Hostility’ was changed to ‘Total Opposition’, it is unclear if there was any significant practical difference, perhaps it just sounded less confronting. It seems likely that there was some sympathy for Westerman’s courage and the inclination to reject his suggestions outright was absent. As we will see the issue was not finished and was revisited at the 1969 General Conference.

The resurrection of Local Option was surprising. Both the Maxwell and Phillips Inquiries ruled it out almost without a second thought and there had been no success with the process since 1920. Perhaps the age of miracles was thought not to have passed.

1966 General Regulations, Paragraph C;

Christ calls us to the highest in mental and bodily health, and because of this, and for the community’s sake, we express our total opposition to the liquor traffic. We urge our people to accept for themselves the standard of voluntary abstinence, and we call on our members to use their influence to discourage the use, manufacture, sale and consumption of alcoholic liquor.

The following principles should be observed in laws governing the sale of alcoholic liquor:

(a) The local community should have the right to express its opinion by vote of the electors before any new licence is granted or any old licence transferred to a new area.
(b) Alcoholic liquor should not be supplied or sold to persons under 21 years of age.
(c) No club licence should be granted unless the club is bona fide, i.e., exists and would continue without a licence.
(d) Facilities for gambling and drinking alcoholic liquor should be dissociated.

Compulsory blood and/or other chemical tests should be used for car drivers suspected of intoxication; a driver’s licence should be issued subject to his consent to submit to such tests if required by police to do so; it should be a legal offence for a person with a blood alcohol content in excess of .05% to be in charge of a motor vehicle.

Alcoholism

Every reasonable method should be used to create a greater awareness of the personal and community problems caused by alcoholism, and every effort made to provide adequate treatment and rehabilitation facilities. The Church, through fellowship and compassion, should make it clear that her concern is for the rehabilitation and not the condemnation of the alcoholic.

Research

It is essential that adequate and continuing research into the sociological consequences of the consumption of liquor be carried out in order to ascertain facts and trends. Long-term projects to this end should be undertaken on a co-operative basis by all interested organisations and financed at least in part by the State. Such a research programme should include analysis of the reasons why some people drink to excess and of the factors in our society that promote excessive consumption of liquor.

Education

Education programmes should be carried out in schools, among young people, and in the community generally, so that there may be an awareness of the effects and dangers of liquor. Such programmes should be prepared and carried out on a co-operative basis by all interested organisations. The material should be factual, avoiding exaggeration and over-emphasis, and should include the latest scientific findings concerning alcohol.

Alcohol Content of Beer

Beer of reduced alcohol content should be made available in addition to that already available, preferably at a lower price.

Adequate Alternatives
Every endeavour should be made to promote an attractive variety of non-alcoholic drinks, so that the requirements of hospitality can be met adequately without the provision of liquor. It should be an accepted principle by all hosts and hostesses who supply liquor for their guests that non-alcoholic drinks should be freely available, especially for young people, without there being any necessity to ask for such drinks.

Role of Church

The role of the Church in relation to this urgent social problem is to endeavour, by education, example, co-operation with other bodies and the seeking of legislative reform, to reduce to a minimum the harmful effects of the consumption of liquor.\(^7\)

In 1969, General Conference had a wide-ranging debate on the alcohol problem. Some, including Wood, were strong in opposition to any weakening of the Methodist stand against the liquor traffic. It was thought that the current rule read more like a recommendation than a policy statement and the words needed to be clearer. Especially problematic was the omission of the law in respect of alcohol on church property. It was resolved retain the 1966 law and reinstate the words:

The sale and consumption of alcohol is forbidden on premises owned or controlled by the Church except where premises have been leased to others. The raising of money at any function where alcohol is served is also forbidden.\(^8\)

The seems to be no new edition of the Book of Methodist Laws after 1969, so it is necessary to rely on reports in *The Spectator*.

In 1972, General Conference debated the alcohol issue again. it was noted that many Christians consumed alcohol including an increasing number of Methodists but a proposal to conditionally allow alcohol in Queen’s College was rejected, as is discussed in chapter four, and the law in respect of church property tightened. Where previously it had referred only to the sale and consumption it was widened:

the manufacture, sale, preparation for sale, storage for commercial purposes and distribution of alcoholic liquor in addition to the consumption of alcohol on church

\(^7\) *The Laws and Regulations of the Methodist Church of Australasia* (Melbourne: General Conference of Australasia, 1966).

\(^8\) *The Spectator*, 4 June 1969, 2.
property is forbidden as is the raising of money at any function where alcohol is served.  

The last General Conference in 1975 showed no change in attitude. Alcohol was the nation’s number one drug problem, the conference was told, and this was no time to alter policy. Methodists needed to lead by example. Perhaps that is why Westerman pondered the extent to which Conference policies reflected ‘the mind of the church’?  

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9 Ibid., 7 June 1972, 1.  
10 Ibid., 4 June 1975, 2.  
11 Ibid., 16 July 1975, 1.
APPENDIX C: PHILLIPS ROYAL COMMISSION TERMS OF REFERENCE

Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Sale, Supply, Disposal or Consumption of Liquor (Alcoholic) in the State of Victoria.

Philip David Phillips, CMG, QC, Commissioner.

To inquire into and report upon, and make recommendations with respect to the sale, supply, disposal or consumption of liquor (as defined in the Licensing Act 1958) and in particular the following matters:

1. Social Consequences
   (a) To what extent is the consumption of liquor a significant factor in causing-
      (i) Accidents (both road and industrial)
      (ii) Crime
      (iii) Divorce and broken homes
      (iv) Child delinquency and neglect;
      (v) Ill health.
   (b) What is the incidence of alcoholism (habitual excessive consumption of liquor) in Victoria and what relationship, if any, exists between alcoholism and the sale, supply, disposal of consumption of liquor?
   (c) Would either-
      (i) A variation on trading hours; or
      (ii) A variation in the existing number of outlets for the sale or consumption of liquor;

      reduce any and what conspicuous social consequences for the community?
   (d) Would a reduction on the alcohol content of liquor be a significant factor in reducing the incidence of undesirable social consequences of the consumption of liquor?
   (e) Would staggered hours of trading or the closure of hotels for meal breaks contribute to better social habits of drinking?
   (f) Should a campaign be undertaken to educate young people in regard to the consequences of excessive or unwise liquor consumption? If so, in what form and by whom?
(g) Are there any and what undesirable practices associated with the promotion of the sale or consumption of liquor which, in the interests of the community, should be regulated or prohibited?

2. **Hours and Conditions**

   (a) Should the hours, during which liquor may be sold, supplied, disposed of or consumed in- 
        
        (i) hotels
        
        (ii) Restaurants
        
        (iii) Clubs
        
        (iv) Other premises
        
    be changed in the interest of the community in any and what way, having regard to the convenience of the public and other relevant factors?

   (b) Is it desirable to create a restricted form of licence whereby on approved restaurant premises not otherwise licensed, liquor bought in by the customer may be consumed?

   (c) Is there any and what way in which conditions affecting the consumption of liquor on licensed premises can be improved? For example-
        
        (i) should seating be provided in bars;
        
        (ii) should cocktails or ‘before dinner’ drinks be permitted to be served in hotels and restaurants without or by special permit and before the meal to persons about to partake of a meal on the premises?

   (d) Are there any conditions with respect to the sale, supply, disposal or consumption of liquor operating in other parts of the Commonwealth which could with advantage to be public be adopted in Victoria?

3. **Accommodation**

   (a) Having regard to the changes in the community, including habits and methods of travel, is it necessary or desirable for all hotels to provide residential accommodation and dining-room facilities?
(b) If some hotels are not to be required to provide the facilities referred to in paragraph (a) should a higher licence fess be payable in respect thereof?

(c) Should any and what changes be made in the law requiring the provision of accommodation or amenities at licensed premises or clubs?

4. Economics

(a) Are there any and what localities in which it is considered that there are –

(i) too many hotels;

(ii) too few Hotels?

(b)

(i) Should the existing method of computing compensation for surrender or taking away of licences be changed and, if so, would such a change reduce the number of unnecessary hotels?

(ii) Generally, what change, if any, is recommended in the existing method of computing such compensation?

(c)

(i) Should any and what provision be made relating to the valuing of licensed premises for the purposes of rating?

(ii) Is there any and what justification for land used or occupied by any registered club to be excepted from rateable property within the meaning of the Local Government Act 1958?

(d)

(i) Are there any particular practices in the liquor industry relating to the leases of licensed premises, such as for example, the granting of short-term leases?

(ii) If yes, should such practices be prohibited or regulated in any and what way?

(e) Do the conditions affecting the profitability in the retail sale of liquor in hotels prejudice or affect the provision of facilities or amenities available to the public? If yes, could these conditions be improved or altered?
5. **Permits**

(a) Is the existing special permit system operating satisfactorily? If nay, in what respects is it not so operating and how could it be improved?

(b)  

(i) Should registered clubs and other clubs, bodies or associations be permitted to hold a limited class or number of functions at which liquor is consumed on their premises under conditions laid down by the Licensing Court?  

(ii) Should organisers of charitable functions at which liquor is provided be permitted to charge or accept donations for admission to such functions under conditions approved by the Licensing Court?

6. **Entertainment on Licensed Premises**

(a) Should entertainments on licensed premises be regulated or controlled by the Licensing Court either as to conduct of the entertainment, the prices at which liquor is sold or otherwise?

(b) Is it desirable or necessary to provide by way of licence or permit for late entertainments and if so-

(i) Should such licence or permit be available to -  

   o hotels  
   o restaurants  
   o places conducted solely as night clubs:  

(ii) to what hour should such licence or permit extend; and  

(iii) what other conditions should apply to such licence or permit?

7. **Special Areas**

(a) In areas regarded as tourist areas –

(i) is it necessary or desirable for provision to be made for the grant of restaurant licences to take effect only during the tourist season;  

(ii) should provision be made for any and what modification of the obligations attached to victuallers’ licences during and what period of the year?
(b) Other areas – Is it necessary or desirable to make provisions for the variation of the normal hours of trading of hotels in certain areas, such as the Victoria Market, ports or country areas?

8. Administration

(a) Should the Licensing Court perform both judicial and administrative functions?
(b) What administrative functions of the Court, if any, should be vested in the Registrar or other administrative officer?
(c) Is the existing system of inspection by Licensing Inspectors and Supervisors of Licensed Premises efficient? If not, what changes in their functions are recommended?
(d) Are any and what changes in the functions of the Court or its administration considered desirable to promote greater efficiency or flexibility?

9. Licensing Act

In addition to any recommendations with respect to the sale, supply, disposal or consumption of liquor –

(a) Should the Act or any part or parts thereof be redrafted in accordance with any and what principles with a view to achieving greater simplicity or uniformity in its application, administration or expression?
(b) Should any and what provisions of the Act be –
   (i) omitted altogether for obsolescence or other cause
   (ii) restated or replace to conform more with modern conditions, customs or usage;
   (iii) rearranged to enable all provisions relating to –
       o hotels
       o clubs
       o restaurants
       o licences, permits or authorities in respect of other kinds of premises or purposes to be collected together and be more readily accessible;
(iv) amended to simplify applications and objections to the Court and reduce
the cost of such applications or objections?¹

APPENDIX D: THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT AND THE VICTORIAN TEMPERANCE ALLIANCE

The Temperance movement rose from the need to solve the problems of alcohol consumption in the nineteenth century. Rev. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, had already noted the problems of drink in the eighteenth century but, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, excessive consumption had become a major social problem in both Britain and the USA.\(^1\) Richard Evans has described alcohol as the ‘lubricant of industrialisation’.\(^2\) Rising standards of living, the availability of cheap spirits and the social importance of the public house fuelled a social crisis. While authorities tried, largely unsuccessfully, to manage drinking, it was the damaging negative social effects of over-indulgence that gave rise to the movement.

The cause was promoted through organisations like The Preston Temperance Society, the first Temperance society founded in England in 1832 by Joseph Livesey, a Methodist, and the Woman’s Christian Temperance Movement (WCTU), founded in the USA in 1873 by the Methodist, Frances Willard, among many others.\(^3\) Such organisations had come to the view that Temperance, which Wesley had defined as abstinence from spirits, was no longer appropriate to meet contemporary concerns, and that the only effective approach was Total Abstinence from all alcohol. In the USA, the Temperance movement became politically organised from 1895 when a Methodist minister, the Reverend Alpha J. Kynett, convened a meeting of the hundreds of Temperance organisations. He argued for a body to co-ordinate their activities and the Anti-Saloon League was formed. This League became a powerful secular lobby group under whose sway national Prohibition was introduced in 1920.\(^4\) The movement never achieved such influence in England. Moderation was a more acceptable

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\(^1\) It is not known to what extent other countries had similar problems though it is likely that concern about excessive alcohol consumption was widespread. The WCTU, for example, had branches in Canada, South Africa, India, China, Japan in addition to many European countries.


policy, and one that proved successful as alcohol consumption in Britain fell by 30 per cent over the century to 1931.⁵

Australia quickly established a reputation for a drinking problem that needed attention and it is not surprising that the Temperance movement arrived in Australia as early as the 1830s. The use of alcohol as a centrepiece of social life had been imported from England, where it was already a problem, but drinking in Australia seemed to be taken to new levels. Diane Kirkby quotes Cyril Pearl who described drinking as a national religion in Australia and Marcus Clarke, who claimed that Australians were just a nation of drunkards.⁶ Milton Lewis has suggested several reasons for this heavy drinking: the climate, the predominance of males in the population and traditions of a ‘work/bust’ cycle of rural life and the custom of ‘shouting’.⁷ The real cause is probably a combination of them all. Rum was central to life in early colonial times and was even used as a currency. It gave its name to the ‘Rum Rebellion’ that saw the overthrow of Governor Bligh by the New South Wales Corps, which was anxious to protect its monopoly in the trade.⁸ Macquarie, Bligh’s successor, was instructed to prohibit the use of spiritous liquors and sought to do so by imposing substantial import duties. Governor Gipps, as part of his instructions to protect the Aborigines, tried to prohibit the sale of drink to them. Also concerned with general population’s overconsumption of alcohol, he became the patron of the new Sydney Temperance Society.⁹ Ian Tyrell, and other historians, have claimed that per capita alcohol consumption was higher in the colonies than in Britain until the 1860s, but without much empirical evidence.¹⁰ N.G. Butlin’s analysis of the available statistics casts doubt on the veracity of such claims. He thinks consumption in Britain was greater than Australia. It is, he says, hard to sustain the argument that drinking in

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In 1838, Gipps made it an offence to serve liquor to aborigines to the extent that they became intoxicated.
¹⁰ Ian Tyrrell with Jack S. Blocken Jnr. and David M. Fahey, *Alcohol and Temperance in Modern History* (Santa Barbara: ABC Clio, 2003), 75.
Britain was too high as the country successfully waged a war with Napoleon: but Butlin fails to explain the rapid growth of the Temperance movement shortly thereafter in response to community concern for overconsumption. Excessive drinking was a real problem in both Britain and Australia.

The Australian Temperance movement started in 1832 when two Quakers brought it to Tasmania, and it quickly spread to the other colonies. While these first local and independent societies flourished, it was the introduction in the 1840s of branches of the international Temperance organisations such as the Independent Order of Rechabites that gave the movement impetus. While it had the support of most churches, the clergy were less convinced of the efficacy of organisations that put the efforts of men above the redeeming power of Christ. There may have been an element of jealously behind their concern, however, given the Temperance societies’ success in recruiting members. The Temperance societies also competed between themselves for members so, while there was some co-operation in respect of Temperance ideals, there was also a degree of rivalry.

Victoria was little different from the rest of Australia. The licensing regime, until 1902, was liberal and largely unregulated. Ann Mitchell has studied the liquor industry in Victoria in the nineteenth century demonstrating that there were few limitations on the number of licenses issued and that, in any event, unlicensed establishments proliferated. An accurate record of the number of licences, she says, is practically unobtainable as no centralised records were kept until 1917 notwithstanding the establishment of the state-wide Licenses Reduction Board in 1906. Prior to 1917, records were kept separately at each courthouse. Liquor was freely available. It was, for example, only after 1854 that trading on Sundays was restricted to ‘bona fide’ travellers who had travelled at least ten miles. Trading on other days was limited from 6am to midnight until 1885, when these hours were reduced to 6am to 11.30pm. She notes that from the earliest days there was a consensus of all concerned, brewers, licensed victuallers and the other liquor retailers as well as Temperance groups and others concerned

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with the adverse social effects of excessive alcohol consumption: there were too many licenses and that something needed to be done.\textsuperscript{14}

The Victorian Temperance Alliance (VTA) came into being late in the nineteenth century to serve as the public face of the movement. Formed in 1881 with many Temperance societies as members, the first issue of the VTA journal, \textit{The Alliance Record}, stated its aims: ‘to stimulate public debate in relation to the traffic in intoxicating liquor and its evils … stimulate thought into action, arouse the careless and indifferent … and remove the curse of drink’.\textsuperscript{15} It was to represent the major Temperance societies and expected to be a major contributor to debate on the Temperance question and influence public policy to restrict the supply of liquor.\textsuperscript{16} The long-term goal was for total abolition. It is unclear if the VTA was the result of a groundswell within the Temperance movement wanting to politicise its activities or a vehicle for aspiring politicians wanting to take advantage of Temperance’s popularity. The VTA did, in some ways, advance the cause of Temperance but was not at the core of major legislative changes that shaped Victoria’s licensing regime for much of the twentieth century. In the 1940s, the VTA effectively became an agency of the Methodist Church, identical in outlook and activity and different in name only. The view that the VTA was more a political instrument of aspiring politicians than the co-ordinator of a body of committed Temperance advocates explains its lack of lasting success. Methodist Temperance campaigners had their church behind them and made them more politically influential.

The first President, and driving force, was the Hon. James Munro MLA. Munro was ‘a pillar of the teetotal cause in Melbourne and a member of every prominent temperance society devoting as much of his time and means to the causes of Total Abstinence and the promotion of social purity as possible’.\textsuperscript{17} It seems that his Temperance credentials were important in his election to Parliament in 1874 when he was President of the Permissive Bill Association, a predecessor of the VTA, and it is likely that he cultivated the Temperance movement at least partly for his political gain. Munro, also an Elder of the Presbyterian Church in Toorak was later Premier of Victoria in 1890-92. Perhaps a highlight for him was his Presidency of the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[14] Ibid., 8-12.
\item[15] \textit{Alliance Record}, 15 October 1881, 2.
\item[16] There is no definitive list of Temperance Societies in Victoria but VTA members included: Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, Independent Order of Rechabites, Independent Order of Good Templars, Sons and Daughters of Temperance and the Melbourne Total Abstinence Society.
\end{footnotes}
International Temperance Convention in 1888, coinciding with the Centennial International Exhibition. The Convention which brought delegates from the United Kingdom, The United States of America, New Zealand as well as other Australian Colonies did nothing to diminish his Temperance credentials. The conviction was growing, delegates were told, that it was only the self-sacrifice of the strong that would be the salvation of the weak, and it was only the practice of abstinence by everyone in all circumstances that would help the needy widows and children.\(^\text{18}\)

Munro was involved in the 1880s land boom through his Real Estate Mortgage and Deposit Bank. Mitchell claims his respectability and ability to attract deposits was enhanced by his involvement with the Temperance Coffee Palaces of which he was a key shareholder. It however did nothing to save his financial empire when the bubble burst in the early 1890s, coinciding with his short-lived Premiership.\(^\text{19}\)

Mitchell says that the individual Temperance bodies did little on their own account to promote the Temperance cause and produced ‘no shattering legislative innovations or cataclysms of evangelical Temperance fervour’.\(^\text{20}\) They were, most likely, more interested in managing their activities as Friendly Societies. Most of their political activity was delegated to the VTA which was formed to present a united public face for Temperance.\(^\text{21}\)

This is not to suggest that the Temperance movement did not have broader public support. Among the VTA’s vice-presidents was Alfred Deakin MLA, later Prime Minister of Australia. He was, his biographers suggest, less interested in any personal aggrandisement than improving conditions of the working classes as his support for the Temperance cause continued after he left the Victorian Parliament for the Federal Parliament in 1901.\(^\text{22}\) In 1885 Deakin had presented a petition to Parliament in favour of Local Option, organised by the Women’s Committee of the VTA, and signed by over 44,000 women.


\(^{21}\) The Victorian Temperance Alliance has had several names over the time, Temperance League and Victorian Local Option Alliance for example, but for this study it is referred to as the VTA for convenience.

This brought some legislative success when a limited form of Local Option was introduced and trading after 11.30pm prohibited and while the VTA was also active in opposing licence renewals and organising local option polls there was little else in the way of public policy outcomes to boast about.\textsuperscript{23}

Local Option was the fundamental demand of the Temperance movement. It was the process by which those in a locality could vote to refuse new licences or decline to renew existing licences to sell alcoholic drinks. It thought, sooner or later, all citizens would be convinced of the value of Prohibition and vote for its implementation. The process was complicated by questions about who should participate - just men or all adults, ratepayers or all residents? - and what constituted a locality. Was voting to be compulsory and, if not, what constituted the threshold for a valid ballot? The answers varied over time, but the fundamental concept remained the same: the decision should be made directly by the people. Local Option had been an important part of Victorian Temperance policy from at least the 1860s, when ratepayers had entitlement to object to new licences. A form of Local Option, rejected by the Victorian Parliament in 1871, was eventually enacted in 1876.\textsuperscript{24}

While there was an impressive list of Temperance organisations supporting the VTA by 1900, all was not well.\textsuperscript{25} It was noted at the Annual General Meeting in 1893, that the VTA was still alive in these depressed times and while it could not claim any recent victories, it was still doing good work.\textsuperscript{26} The underlying problem was a debt of £511 that forced it to retrench staff. An urgent appeal for funds was launched but it is unclear if this was successful.\textsuperscript{27} The financial problems continued. One initiative was that of Mrs Bessie Harrison Lee, a Christian of uncomplicated faith and a well-known and popular Temperance evangelist of international standing. She was involved with both the VTA and the WCTU.\textsuperscript{28}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\item Mitchell, “Temperance”, 153-5.
\item \textit{Alliance Record}, January 1900, 1.
\item They included the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, Melbourne Total Abstinence Society, Church of England Temperance Society, League of the Cross, Independent Order of Rechabites, Sons of Temperance Benefit Society, International Order of Good Templars, South Melbourne Total Abstinence Society, Ballarat Total Abstinence Society, Bendigo Total Abstinence Society, Prahran and St Kilda Band of Hope Union, Northern Suburbs Band of Hope Union and the Ballarat Band of Hope Union.
\item Ibid., September 1893, 19.
\item Ibid., March 1895, 19.
\end{thebibliography}
She proposed raising funds by selling 7500 photographs of herself at 1/- each. It is not known if this enterprising proposal was taken up or if so, whether it was successful. The VTA identified part of the problem. Its membership was mostly made up of affiliated organisations and it had few direct members. Without a broad membership base, it relied on funds provided by its constituent bodies. A proposal was put forward to reduce the subscription for individuals from 5/- to 1/- to boost membership, though the expectation this would increase aggregate income was very optimistic.

The underlying difficulty was most likely the precarious financial state of the Temperance Friendly Societies that made up much of the VTA’s institutional membership. Blainey reports that subscriptions for Friendly Society membership in the latter part of the nineteenth century were bordering on the unaffordable for unskilled labourers. In any event, the actuarial calculations to determine subscriptions were based on optimistic expectations and it seems the Societies were kept solvent by membership turnover since entitlements ceased immediately a member left while the organisation kept the accumulated funds. Mitchell notes that although the Temperance Societies supported the VTA financially and in kind, their own ‘business matters’ had higher priority. The Societies made every effort to retain members: although abstinence was a condition, the penalties for ‘backsliding’ were mild. Friendly Society membership peaked early in the twentieth century. Then, as old-age pensions and then widows and invalid pensions were introduced, government benefits eroded much of the reason for their existence. The pressure of falling membership and revenues meant there was little capacity to increase contributions to the VTA or engage in direct activities to advance the Temperance cause. Efforts to run businesses exclusively on Temperance principles proved unsuccessful. Temperance Hotels and Coffee Palaces were short-lived ventures, as were Life Assurance companies, which had to admit non-abstainers to be viable. The Temperance and General Mutual Life Assurance Company is a well-known

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30 Alliance Record, December 1906, 180.
33 Ibid., 115.
34 Ibid., 119.
35 David Green and Lawrence Cromwell, Mutual Aid or Welfare State: Australia’s Friendly Societies (Hemel Hempstead: George Allen and Unwin, 1984), 221.
example. It is likely that this systemic flaw in VTA funding had been camouflaged by the support of Munro and associates. Munro was generous in his support of the VTA and other Temperance organisations, but, after the collapse of the land boom and his Real Estate Bank in 1892, any capacity to fund his favourite personal causes was limited. This confluence of events left the VTA short of funds. The best it could do to influence policy formulation was to endorse existing candidates with an expectation of their future support for Temperance legislation.

While there is no suggestion that the VTA was not actively involved promoting Temperance, its capacity to influence public policy was limited. For example, early in the twentieth century it failed to achieve much governmental response in the face of mounting public disquiet about widespread illicit Sunday trading and the seeming inability or disinclination of the police to act. It was at this time that the Methodists became the principal public advocates of Temperance and were instrumental in the important 1906 legislation that introduced the Licenses Reduction Board and regular state-wide Local Option Polls.

In 1915, the VTA tried to restore its effectiveness with a renamed journal, The Advance, but there was no obvious improvement. While it was actively involved in the campaign to bring in six o’clock closing during World War I, war-time patriotic fervour was probably more responsible for the outcome than any argument advanced by the VTA.

In 1920, another make over was attempted when the VTA changed the name of its journal again, this time to The Clarion Call, and joined forces with another prohibition advocate, the Strength of Empire Movement. The VTA was certain that the Temperance forces were united as never before, and that under its leadership Australia would become the most progressive, sober and righteous people in the world. However, when the VTA’s organising capacity was put to the test for the 1920 Local Option Polls, it was found wanting. The Methodists filled the gap by forming a new body, the Victorian Anti-Liquor League (VALL). A prominent Methodist, EW Greenwood MLA, had concluded that the VTA was incapable of managing an effective campaign and went about establishing a separate organisation.

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37 Ibid., 150-52, 205.
38 For example, The Age, 2 April 1903, 4.
39 The Advance, December 1915, 2.
41 Clarion Call, 5 July 1920, 1.
42 Ibid., February 1920, 91.
While *Clarion Call* readers were encouraged to read reports of 3,668 meetings, with attendances of over 350,000, it seems likely that some, if not most, of these meetings were organised by the VALL. In addition, it was reported that over 60,000 posters had been produced, almost 5,446,000 leaflets, including how-to-vote cards, and that 12,000 voluntary workers had been enlisted to the campaign.\(^\text{43}\) Greenwood reported to the Methodist Conference that the VALL had conducted 4,897 meetings and distributed six million leaflets: most likely there was some double counting.\(^\text{44}\) Neither the VTA nor Greenwood were precise about the period covered by these statistics: they gave the impression it was just one year but there may have been some hyperbole. The idea of ten well-attended meetings every day of the year is unlikely but doubling that to more than twenty is hardly credible – and press reports give no evidence that it occurred. The VTA and VALL were working together but, missing among all the achievements the VTA reported was a turnaround in its financial situation. It continued to incur deficits and regularly appealed for financial help: this suggests its capacity to prosecute its aims was curtailed.\(^\text{45}\) There was no reported improvement in 1922 or 1923 when the number of VTA meetings had fallen to 75 with only 7,335 attendances.\(^\text{46}\) Unfortunately, there is a gap of about 30 years in accessible library holdings of *The Clarion Call* so there is no full record of its activities but there is no evidence, in other sources, of any major initiative in this period.

In 1926 the Methodists set up the Social Service Department (SSD) to promote Temperance and it and the VTA were now, in theory at least, working in parallel. There is no suggestion that the VTA was interested in adopting or learning from the Methodist’s approach: it continued to conduct business as usual. Further, if the absence of any commendation or ringing endorsement of the Methodists’ activities in *The Clarion Call* is any indication, the VTA was not entirely pleased in being relegated to the junior partnership.

The first item of business at the first meeting of the new Department was the reception of a deputation from the VTA. There are no details of the discussions, but it was resolved to cooperate toward the common objective: the prohibition of the liquor traffic.\(^\text{47}\) No doubt attention was directed to the Local Option Poll scheduled for 1930 as clearly this would

\(^{43}\) Ibid., 18 February 1921, 91.
\(^{44}\) *The Spectator*, 22 March 1922, 224.
\(^{45}\) *Clarion Call*, July 1920, 2.
\(^{46}\) Ibid., March 1922, 365 and December 1923, 185.
\(^{47}\) Methodist Social Service Department Minute Book, 16 February 1926. UCA Victorian Synod Archives 3068/4.
require a supreme effort on the part of all involved if success was to be achieved. Unfortunately, *Clarion Call* is not available for the relevant period, so we cannot know how the VTA viewed this Methodist innovation, but in 1929, it put forward a proposal to amalgamate with the SSD, initially until 1930. Even though Conference claimed to understand the urgency attached to the upcoming poll and imminent threat to Christian civilisation posed by the liquor traffic, it decided not to accept the VTA’s proposal.\(^{48}\) Conference said that while it was always prepared to co-operate with the VTA in every way, amalgamation would prevent the SSD from doing its work in its own way.\(^{49}\)

The outcome of the 1930 Poll was also disappointing as no further ‘dry’ areas were created, but that did not greatly dampen the resolve of the SSD to continue the fight. In 1931 the VTA again put a proposal to Conference to amalgamate forces. Why the VTA made another approach is unknown, but the minute of the SSD meeting where the proposal was discussed refers to the removal of apparent competition between the two bodies and the opportunity for cost reduction.\(^{50}\) Perhaps the VTA’s interest was genuine and it saw the benefit of presenting a united Temperance front, but it seems more likely that its support base was still declining, its financial position deteriorating and its survival threatened. Conference’s reply was essentially the same. Methodists, while willing and ready to co-operate, had little to gain from an amalgamation believing that their own work was the best contribution to the fight to eliminate the liquor traffic.\(^{51}\)

G.A. Judkins retired as SSD Director in 1939 and was followed by Rev. H. Palmer Phillips. The 1938 Local Option Poll had not achieved any positive outcome but Judkins, in his retiring remarks, was confident that the ‘battle was not lost, and that Methodists had gained a new enthusiasm for the fight’.\(^ {52}\) Phillips, however, seems immediately to have had to deal with a lack of enthusiasm in the VTA. He argued that the VTA had a co-ordinating role within the Temperance movement. It was well suited to representing the movement in the Licensing Courts, collecting and distributing information, dealing with the press and organising political campaigns. While the VTA should continue, it needed to be more efficient as currently it provided a poor return for the money invested. Some degree of restructure was also necessary to avoid overlap between its activities and the Protestant

\(^{48}\) Minutes of Conference, 1929, 85.
\(^{49}\) The Spectator, 20 March 1929, 291.
\(^{50}\) SSD Minutes, 11 February 1931. UCA Victorian Synod Archives 3068/4.
\(^{51}\) Minutes of Conference, 1931, 81.
\(^{52}\) The Spectator, 5 April 1939, 265.
churches. No doubt he was also interested in an opportunity to recruit other denominations to share the load. Co-operation between the Protestant denominations was strong in Victoria and while other churches were perhaps reluctant to publicly put their names to the Temperance cause, this was a way to offer support. The Methodists would underwrite the VTA by pledging a minimum of £100 annually, with additional funds as necessary to fund special campaigns. He hoped other churches and organisations would follow the example. He assured Methodists that the reconstructed VTA, through the strength of their representation on its Council, would recognise the importance of Methodism’s contribution.

It seems that this arrangement was enough to keep the VTA going although, as Phillips had foreshadowed, it effectively became an agency of the churches as its connection with the wider Temperance movement weakened. We do not know the VTA’s side of the story. While financial troubles seem to have been a problem for decades, exactly how serious the situation had become is unclear. Finance still seems to have been a problem even in 1951 when *The Clarion Call* became a bi-monthly, although with the hope of a return to a monthly issue as soon as possible.

Churches dominated the membership. These were the Anglican, Baptist, Congregational, Methodist, Presbyterian, Seventh Day Adventists, Unitarian, Welsh, Churches of Christ, Salvation Army and Society of Friends. Temperance organisations included the Independent Order of Rechabites, Independent Order of Good Templars, Melbourne Total Abstinence Society, Order of the Sons of Temperance, the WCTU, the Young Men’s Christian Association and the Young Women’s Christian Association. The extent of active involvement of any of these bodies is unclear but the Methodist leadership of the VTA is not. Although the record is incomplete, it seems that the Director of the SSD was almost the de facto President of the VTA. Rev. H. Palmer Phillips was President at the time of the trading hours referendum in 1956 and Rev. John Westerman similarly during the Phillips Royal Commission in 1964.

In 1961 an agency agreement was made with a Swedish Insurance Company, ANSVAR, which carried risk solely for Total Abstainers. It seemed the VTA finally had an independent

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54 *The Spectator*, 12 April 1939, 290, 24 May 1939, 409.
56 *Clarion Call*, May-June 1951, 7.
57 *Impact*, May-June 1964, supplement.
source of income and ANSVAR was highly recommended to the VTA’s membership, and Methodists generally, by Westerman as President of the VTA. It was reported in *Impact*, the latest incarnation of the VTA’s journal, that it had attracted 4,500 policy holders in its first two years of operation.58 The agreement was that the VTA would receive a thirty percent commission on policies sold but had to bear the operating expenses. Expenses, however, exceeded revenue and the agency was relinquished in 1964. ANSVAR decided not to press for payment of moneys owed and thereby avoided the infliction of more financial pain.59 In December 1964, the VTA and the Methodist Church parted ways following the Phillips Royal Commission when Westerman withdrew opposition to the retention of six o’clock closing.60 Westerman was forced to resign and the Methodist Church withdrew financial support for the VTA which maintained its hard-line policy in respect of trading hours.

Once the VTA stopped publishing its journal in February 1965, there is little record of its activities. The Alcoholism Foundation, partly funded by government, seems to have become the leading organisation warning of alcohol abuse.

The VTA did not disappear completely as, in 1964, the Melbourne Total Abstinence Society sold its Temperance Hall in 172 Russell Street, Melbourne and was prepared, given a degree of cross-membership, to support the VTA financially. It continued to hold meetings until they were abandoned in the 1990s. The VTA survives as the Delgarno Institute although its Temperance activities are minimal.61

58 Ibid., March-April 1964, 5.
59 Interview Mr. Ian Williams, 23 August 2018.
60 *Minutes of 1965 Conference*, 195.
APPENDIX E: 1964 NEW STATEMENT ON ALCOHOL

The following revised statement of policy on alcohol was adopted at the Annual Conference of the Methodist Church of Victoria and Tasmania in October 1964.

Alcohols inflicts heavy loss upon the community and causes great harm to many people. Every possible effort should therefore be made to reduce the consumption of alcohol and to lessen the dangers consequent upon its consumption.

As followers of Christ we are called to the highest in mental and bodily health. Because of this, and for the sake of others in the community, we call upon our people to accept the personal standard of voluntary total abstinence, and also to make sure as far as possible that easily accessible supplies of non-alcoholic beverages are available at any function with which they are associated.

Local Option rights should be restored, so that in any area where no licence exists a licence should not be granted without a vote being taken of electors within the vicinity of the proposed site for such a licence; in other areas, on a petition of ten percent of electors in the vicinity, a poll of electors should be held before a licence is granted or renewed.

There should be compulsory blood and/or other chemical tests for car drivers suspected of intoxication, on the basis of a driver’s licence being issued subject to his consent to submit to the above tests if required by the police to do so.

There should be available a lower alcohol content beer, to sell at a cheaper price than beer with a higher alcohol content. The co-operation of the Federal Government should be sought so the necessary arrangements regarding excise may be made.

No club licence should be granted unless the club is bona fide, i.e. exists and would continue to exist without a licence. Hours of club trading should be limited at the discretion of the Licensing Court to the hours when the club usually operates, and the hours of trade for the sale of bottled or canned liquor for off-premise consumption should terminate not later than the closing hours for hotels.

Factual education programmes should be carried out in schools among young people, and in the adult community generally, so that there may be an awareness of the effects and dangers

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of alcohol. Such programmes should be prepared and carried out on a co-operative basis by all interested organisations.

The Government should assure adequate provision for the establishment of clinics for the proper treatment of alcoholics and for the maintenance of ‘half-way’ houses for alcoholics who have received treatment but are not fully rehabilitated.

It is essential that adequate research into the sociological consequences of the consumption of alcohol be carried out, in order to ascertain the facts. Long-term projects to this end should be undertaken on a co-operative basis by all interested organisations, and finance made available by the State. In addition, there should be serious study and research into the factors in our society that promote the excessive consumption of alcohol.

There should be no change in hotel trading hours without a referendum.

The role of the Church in relation to this urgent social problem is to endeavour, by education, example, co-operation with other bodies, and the seeking of legislative reform, to reduce to a minimum the harmful effects upon the people of the consumption of alcohol.
### Nominal Religious Affiliation in Victoria 1901:

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<th>Religious Affiliation</th>
<th>Number Affiliated</th>
<th>Percentage of population</th>
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<td>37%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>263,710</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>191,503</td>
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<td>Methodist</td>
<td>180,272</td>
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Source: *Victorian Year Book* 1902, 33.

### Religious Attendance in Victoria, 1901.

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<td>Roman Catholic</td>
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### APPENDIX G: RELIGION OF THE POPULATION 1901-1981

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Source: Victorian Year Books
## APPENDIX H: LOCAL OPTION POLL RESULTS

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<th>1938</th>
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<td>For reduction of licences</td>
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<td><em>971,241</em></td>
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## APPENDIX I: RESULTS OF THE 1956 TRADING HOURS REFERENDUM

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<td>% of Total</td>
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**Voted Yes**


Denominational/Political Affiliation from ‘Re-member.’ Available [Online]:
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Author/s:
Barelli, Kenneth Douglas

Title:
The voice of Methodism: temperance policy in Victoria, Australia 1902-1977

Date:
2018

Persistent Link:
http://hdl.handle.net/11343/220733

File Description:
THE VOICE OF METHODISM: TEMPERANCE POLICY IN VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA 1902-1977

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