

## **JUNE PALLOT: A VOICE OF REASON**

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**ABSTRACT:** *This article commences with an outline of June Pallot's career, during which she took part in New Zealand's public sector financial management reforms. Her interest in public sector financial management issues preceded 1984, the year New Zealand commenced an extreme and rapid period of economic and public sector reforms (see, for example, Pallot and Clarke 1981; Hutton and Pallot 1982), and continued until her death. The second part of the article identifies themes in the work June regarded as her most significant. June Pallot's death from cancer on 5 November 2004 at the age of fifty-one is a great loss to the academic world. Her research on public sector financial management, and New Zealand's public sector financial management reforms in particular, was both prodigious and insightful. June Pallot had a vibrant personality, a great sense of humor, she supported and cared for others, and she always exhibited graciousness and optimism. Beyond recognizing her professional accomplishments, for many, June's death is also the loss of a dear friend.*

Professor June Pallot's research on public sector financial management, and New Zealand's public sector financial management reforms in particular, consists of fifty-five articles, fourteen book chapters, three co-edited books, and three co-written books or monographs. June's work has been hailed as providing a voice of reason and serious research from a country that forged ahead with its public sector reforms, often without much careful analysis beforehand. Her death from cancer on 5 November 2004 at the age of fifty-one is a great loss to the academic world.

### **EARLY YEARS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

June initially qualified as and worked as an architect, but she studied accountancy at the Victoria University of Wellington (VUW) as a means of broadening her career prospects in architecture when she moved to Wellington in 1979. She never returned to

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architecture. June took such a keen interest in the public sector and related accounting issues that she stayed on as an academic staff member at VUW. Consequently, before and during the most intensive period of New Zealand's reforms, June was located in the capital city (Wellington) and worked with senior management in government as part of her academic responsibilities.

June's teaching responsibilities included the course directorship from 1983 to 1988 of a four-week, full-time financial management program for senior managers in government. Subsequently, from 1989 to 1992, June, Jonathan Boston, John Martin, and Pat Walsh ran a master of public policy course, and the four wrote a book about New Zealand's reforms for use in this course (Boston et al. 1991). Jonathan describes this period working with June and the others as the highlight of his career.

New Zealand's "extreme and rapid mover" status in its public sector reforms was achieved, at least in part, through its relatively small and closely knit policy community (Ferlie et al. 1996, 16). Those with different views, even when expressed as moderately as June did, risked marginalization and exclusion from debate. A careful reading of June's work soon reveals her reservations about some aspects of the reforms, especially the depth of her desire for observation of democratic processes and the preservation of constitutional controls, and the need to remember the public in public management developments (see, for example, Pallot 1992).

At VUW, June undertook various committee membership roles, but she also undertook numerous outside committee membership roles. In 1982, the Audit Office established a Public Sector Study Group (PSSG) to investigate the development of accounting standards for the public sector and, in 1985, this group was formalized as the Public Sector Accounting Committee (PSC) of the Institute of Chartered Accountants (ICANZ). June was an influential member of the PSC, which developed standards and guidelines for the public sector. Further, in 1986 when New Zealand's public sector reforms reached the corporatization stage, June was appointed to the Telecom Establishment Board, the role of which was to corporatize the telecommunications parts of the government department providing postal, personal banking, and telecommunications services. From the time of its formal incorporation as the Telecom Corporation of New Zealand Ltd. in 1987 until its sale in 1990 to a U.S.-N.Z. consortium, June was a member of the board of directors (Pallot 1998a).

### **SERVICE AS ASSISTANT AUDITOR-GENERAL**

ICANZ disbanded the PSC in 1992 and prepared to abandon the specially developed public sector standards and guidelines in favor of a purportedly sector-neutral approach to accounting (Pallot 2003). June accepted a two-year secondment (1993-1994) to the Office of the Auditor-General as assistant auditor-general. She saw this as a way of ensuring her voice would be heard by New Zealand's policymakers.

The auditor-general's role is to act on behalf of the people of New Zealand by providing Parliament with a means of controlling and monitoring the executive government, thus maintaining parliamentary sovereignty. This role includes the imposition of financial controls through the controller function, investigation and verification of funds used to ensure their use is in accordance with parliamentary or

legislative authorization, and reporting to Parliament. Early in the reforms, an attempt was made to dispense with the Audit Office altogether and to replace the auditor-general's controller function with controls imposed and maintained by the Treasury (Pallot 2003). The auditor-general condemned this attempt as constitutionally illiterate because the Treasury is an agent of the executive government.

As assistant auditor-general, June was responsible for accounting and financial management policy, this responsibility ranging from the establishment of a research capability for the Office of the Auditor-General and policy formulation and strategic planning for the office as a whole to providing technical advice on accounting and financial management issues, acting as liaison to international accounting standard-setting bodies and to select committees of Parliament, and the production of reports for Parliament. She served on the government-appointed task force to develop long-term policy for school property, on the Society of Local Government Managers working parties on accounting for infrastructure assets and on nonfinancial performance measures, and convened and chaired a technical forum of major audit firms in the public and private sectors on accounting for electricity distribution assets.

### **ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL SERVICE IN A COMPELLING ENVIRONMENT OF CHANGE**

By this time (1993-1994), New Zealand was well advanced in its economic and public sector reforms, which were regarded by critics as taking the Washington consensus to their neoliberal extreme (see, for example, Kelsey 1995). Those reforms were so unpopular with the voting public that in a binding referendum that accompanied the 1993 general election, voters endorsed a change to a proportional representation electoral system. New Zealand's unicameral structure meant that under the previous first-past-the-post electoral system, whichever of the two main political parties was elected to government could dominate Parliament. Expectations were that a proportional representation electoral system would result in more political parties and an increased likelihood of coalition governments. This, in turn, was expected to reduce single-party dominance of Parliament and increase Parliament's power.

The politics of this period were fascinating, as evidenced by the farcical Infrastructure Assets Forum in October 1994, at which differing views of the accounting treatment of infrastructure assets were supposed to be aired and discussed as part of a newly adopted consultative approach to developing accounting standards.<sup>1</sup> There, the clash between the Office of the Auditor-General and the Treasury came out into the open, as did the alignment of ICANZ's accounting standard-setters with the Treasury's position. June described this clash as a battle between democratization, which favors wider public and constitutional accountability (Office of the Auditor-General), and privatization which, lacking wider public support, tends also to favor the minimization of public accountability (the Treasury) (Pallot 2003, 150).<sup>2</sup>

Although June confined her published research to public sector issues, she did not confine her administrative activities to those issues. She was always very supportive of others and included among her numerous committee memberships was her status as a founding member of the Women Accountants' section of ICANZ and, at VUW,

treasurer and committee member of the Association of Women Academics. In 1993, June was awarded the Suffrage Centennial medal commemorating one hundred years of women having the right to vote in New Zealand. In 1995 she was made a fellow of ICANZ. June continued to hold a sizeable portfolio of committee memberships both for ICANZ and within her university which, from 1996, was the University of Canterbury. Right up to her death she made submissions or advised on matters where she considered she could contribute and, demonstrating that she had earned her suffrage medal, these included equal employment opportunity issues.

June's interest in local government had been stimulated while she was assistant auditor-general. Major local government reforms had occurred in 1989 as part of the wider public sector reforms, and these were revisited in 1996 and 2000, following which further change to local government legislation occurred. With her move to the University of Canterbury in 1996, and away from the seat of central government, June shifted some of her research efforts to local government (Pallot 2001a; Lapsley and Pallot 2000; Ezzamel et al. 2004a, 2004b).

In 1997, June was appointed associate editor for the *International Public Management Journal* and for the *Financial Accountability and Management Journal*. Two years later she was appointed to the editorial board of the *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal* and the *Australian Accounting Review*. Few could hope to equal June's productivity or her ability to carry such a heavy workload. That she did it all with a spirit and zest for life was illustrated by the way she bounced back after her initial cancer scare in early 2000 with an "end of radiation treatment" party, and then carried on as before. She became visiting professor at the University of Edinburgh, associate editor of the *International Public Management Review*, and advised on government accounting and budgeting reforms in Japan and Scotland.

### **CONTINUED PRODUCTIVITY UNDER PERSONAL ADVERSITY**

In late 2002, shortly after her forty-ninth birthday, June was told the cancer had recurred and a cure was unlikely. From then on, she underwent a series of grueling chemotherapy regimes, while continuing in her academic role--always determined to ensure she carried a load she considered adequate. June was enthusiastic and energetic in the classroom, and very supportive of her students, encouraging them to develop and express their thinking. Sitting in on her public management class during 2003, it was easy to see why June had been nominated one of the one hundred great teachers of the century at VUW when that university celebrated its centennial in 1999.

Until late 2002, June maintained a punishing international travel schedule so that she could keep contact with and share ideas with her many colleagues. She loved this aspect of her work. After a break for medical treatment in the first half of 2003, June was looking forward to attending the International Public Management Network (IPMN) workshop in Monterey, California in September 2003, before continuing on to Scotland to visit the University of Edinburgh. June's fiftieth birthday was in September 2003 and, knowing she wouldn't have many more birthdays, June planned to celebrate this one well. She arranged her travel carefully with the dateline crossing in mind. The morning and afternoon of her fiftieth birthday would be spent in Christchurch celebrating with

family and friends, and then she would fly out to Los Angeles in the late afternoon. With California time twenty-one hours behind New Zealand's, June's travel schedule meant she could celebrate her birthday twice. When she arrived in California, it would be the morning of her birthday again and time for a second round of celebrations. Sadly, the planned second celebration did not eventuate because June's health deteriorated suddenly two weeks beforehand and she was unable to fly. She didn't let that bother her, though, and celebrated at home with family (including her husband, Graeme, and daughters Rebecca and Caitlin) and friends, and at work with her colleagues at the University of Canterbury.

With her health deteriorating, June remained cheerful and optimistic. She saw 2004 as providing her with challenges and targets which, not surprisingly, included travel targets. In her high school days, June had earned the highest marks in New Zealand for the school certificate, a national examination sat for at about age sixteen. When interviewed by a newspaper reporter at the time, June had responded to a question about her aspirations by saying she wanted to visit Surfers' Paradise, a holiday resort in Queensland, Australia. Although she had traveled the world during her academic career, June had never been to Surfers' Paradise, so she and her mother took a week's holiday there in July. June's mother is Japanese, and June had always enjoyed contact with her Japanese relatives. She was invited to speak at Waseda University in Tokyo at a seminar on local government held in late August 2004, and she was determined to go. According to Colin Talbot, who was unable to travel and attended the seminar via video link, June was, "as always, lively, intelligent, and gracious" and gave no indication of her illness. June enjoyed the seminar and the chance to see some of her Japanese relatives one last time, but she was most excited to report on her return to Christchurch that, from the window of her accommodation, she looked out onto the area where her mother had played as a child.

While she could, June continued her research activities. These included her comparative research with international colleagues on the use of accounting information by devolved parliaments (see Ezzamel et al. 2004a, 2004b), and efforts to debate changes proposed to the legislative base of New Zealand's public sector reforms. She made considerable effort to talk to members of Parliament and political parties, to write articles for newspapers and the business press (Pallot and Newberry 2004; Newberry and Pallot 2004b), and to provide an overview of these changes for international consideration (Newberry and Pallot 2004c). After her death, in the last week of Parliament before the Christmas recess, the changes passed into law. Although her efforts were unsuccessful, a tribute to her during the final debate is recorded in Hansard, as is her warning about the nature of the changes that the Parliament subsequently passed: "Contrary to the statement made by the Minister of Finance in tabling the bill, we conclude that overlooking the political implications is a risk, especially if New Zealand is to 'set the world benchmark for public management,' and that politicians need to be educated in accounting matters and their significance for the democratic process. A wolf (risks to taxpayer funds) appears to be entering the New Zealand Government using innocuous sheep's clothing (technical accounting matters)" (Hansard, 16 December 2004).

## ASSESSING JUNE PALLOT'S ACADEMIC CONTRIBUTION

June wrote so much it would be impossible here to review all her work. The strong link between her teaching and committee activities and her research is apparent from the brief review of her career. Frequently, she wrote about issues she was dealing with at a practical level. Initially, she wrote about conceptual issues, and she clearly had thought deeply about the extent to which accounting ideas developed in the private sector for business purposes could be transferred into the public sector (Pallot 1990, 1991a, 1992). June had studied the history of parliamentary control of the executive government and considered important the constitutional implications of financial management reforms (Pallot 1991c, 1992; Boston et al. 1996, chap. 15). These were important in her role as assistant auditor-general, and this role provided her with the insights to comment later on particular accounting issues such as accounting for infrastructure (Pallot 1995, 1997) and performance measures (Pallot 1994, 2000; Neale and Pallot 2001), and on changes to the auditor-general's role and relevant legislation (see, for example, Pallot 2003). June's role on the Telecom Establishment Board and then as one of the Telecom Corporation's board of directors gave her the insight to comment on the role of accounting in the corporatization and privatization process (Pallot 1998a). In addition, with her teaching activities involving senior managers in government, June built up a range of ongoing contacts and was ideally placed to provide the overviews of New Zealand's reforms for which she became so well known (see, for example, Boston et al. 1991, 1996; Pallot 1998b, 2001b). The depth of June's knowledge and her ability to work with others made her an excellent research collaborator on international developments (see, for example, Laughlin and Pallot 1998; Pallot and Yamamoto 2002) and international comparative research (Lapsley and Pallot 2000; Ezzamel et al. 2004a, 2004b).

Some months before her death, as part of her application for promotion, June had identified from among her many published works those she considered her most significant. These are identified with asterisks in the references. The following analysis, mostly drawn from those works, illustrates how her published research sought to contribute to New Zealand's financial management reforms, tracked their progress, and commented on issues June believed required further consideration. Two recurrent themes run through June's work: her desire to preserve democratic constitutional controls, and her concern for remembering the public in public management.

June traced the commencement of New Zealand's public sector financial management reforms back to a 1978 report (known as the Shailes report) by the auditor-general of the time, Fred Shailes (Pallot 2003). The Shailes report regretted that efforts to introduce a program planning and budgeting system (PPBS) advocated even earlier (1967) by the World Bank had failed, and urged improvements in public sector financial management and accounting systems. Developments following the Shailes report included, in 1981, a New Zealand Planning Council report and the establishment of the PSSG, and then later, the establishment of a parliamentary committee to review financial management.

As might be expected, those involved in the PSSG, and later the PSC, held differing views. Still, June believed they were united in seeking improved public sector

accounting and financial management (Pallot 1991b). As an academic accountant, June was well aware of the conceptual framework for accounting adopted in the U.S. by the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB). Although this had been devised for businesses, the FASB attempted to apply it to the nonbusiness sector. In the U.S., at least for the public sector, this attempt was rejected. With Australia and New Zealand both moving to adopt the same conceptual framework, June also rejected it as inappropriate for the public sector.

The conceptual framework for accounting is rooted in private property ideas, and June was one of many who considered those ideas unsuitable for some property found in the public sector (see, for example, Mautz 1988; Glazer and Jaenicke 1991; Barton 1999a, 1999b; Carnegie and Wolnizer 1995, 1999). This property includes heritage items such as national parks and museum collections, and infrastructure (Pallot 1990). Working with the PSSG and the PSC, June developed the concept of community assets, and argued that such assets should not be treated for accounting purposes in the same manner as assets are treated in the private sector (1990, 1992). The concept of community assets was included in the first set of public sector accounting guidelines developed by the PSC, but ICANZ subsequently rejected the PSC's guidelines in favor of a purportedly sector-neutral approach to accounting, based on the conceptual framework.<sup>3</sup>

June also believed the starting point adopted for accounting's conceptual framework for businesses, pursuit of an objective of decision usefulness, predominantly for shareholders, was inappropriate for the public sector. It overlooks the moral dimension of accounting and the need for fairness (Pallot 1991c). ICANZ proposed the conceptual framework could pursue two objectives at once: decision usefulness and accountability. June rejected the concept of accountability adopted as narrow and managerialist, seeking a wider form of public and constitutional accountability for the public sector (2003). Citing Gladstone's warnings about the consequences for liberty should Parliament lose control of the public purse, she proposed that accounting in the public sector should be shaped to allow parliamentary constraint of the executive government through democratic control of public funds (1992).

For infrastructure assets, June proposed that accounting be developed to prompt explicit public decision making over the condition and maintenance of those assets and, in Pallot (1997) she describes and advocates a form of renewal accounting designed to do this. She believed that accounting manipulations such as depreciation, which involves double counting of costs, risked removing significant questions about resource allocation from public debate (1990, 1997). These conceptual debates about the appropriate starting point for accounting in the public sector and about the concept of assets illustrated the point that accounting is not a neutral technical device and should not be presented as such (Hines 1988; Pallot 1992).

If accounting is not neutral or merely technical, what role does it play in social and organizational change? June observed that Telecom used accounting to construct new organizational forms and boundaries, to shape agendas and meanings, and to influence public debate. In the case of Telecom, she believed accounting helped facilitate "the transfer of power from the public (as distinct from the government) to private interests (including private interests operating within the state)" (Pallot 1998a, 185).

Questions about the social and political roles of accounting extended to include issues about the role played by the Audit Office and the auditor-general. Recalling her experience as assistant auditor-general, June commented that the Audit Office tried to promote democratic processes and defend them against attack. However, the legislation contained narrower managerialist requirements which displaced wider public and constitutional accountability. Some of the audited reports required by the reforming legislation had no precedent in the private sector, and the Audit Office was forced to invent ways to audit them. In doing so, the Audit Office helped to facilitate the changes, lending support to the idea that the reports are appropriate for public sector reporting and represent reality (Pallot 2003, 151). As more public sector-specific reporting requirements emerge, so too do more auditing challenges and potential conflicts of interest. For example, audited long-term financial strategy reports are supposed to improve transparency in the public sector. Whether an auditor's certificate can adequately assure the public about long term plans remains to be seen, especially when a declared intention to, for example, sell assets, several years in advance of the sale date, seems likely to have a long term signalling effect on the price to be achieved (2001a, 654).

New Zealand might have been a world leader in aspects of its public sector financial management reforms, but other countries soon followed and, by 2001, New Zealand's reforms were regarded as fairly conventional (Scott 2001). Laughlin and Pallot (1998) considered how the financial management reforms developed and spread internationally, and identified the existence of epistemic communities with like ideas. These included groups with a particular set of theoretical and analytical ideas drawn from economics, including agency theory. New Zealand is especially known for the strength with which the Treasury promoted those economic theories and ideas. The epistemic communities also included more pragmatic groups, especially management consultants involving the major transnational accounting firms, who offer "instant packages for making the public sector into a look-alike private sector" (96). The link between these two epistemic communities was especially strong in New Zealand (Pallot 1998b), and Laughlin and Pallot (1998) questioned how some epistemic communities come to dominate policy.

When anomalous effects of New Zealand's public sector financial management reforms emerged, questions about the nature of accounting resounded and June raised democratic accountability concerns as well (Pallot 2001a, 657). The new incentivized system which had freed managers to manage was supposed to improve motivation but, by 1998, chief executive and staff motivation was at an all time low (State Services Commission 1998). Despite claims that improved management would result from the financial reforms, by 1998 departmental capability had deteriorated, their financial resources had been run down, and the means by which this occurred seemed to have escaped parliamentary scrutiny (Controller and Auditor-General 1999). With the central agencies of government apparently unable to explain, and similar reforms being imposed on local governments, June questioned the usefulness of the financial reports emerging from this reformed financial system (Pallot 1999, 2001a). It seemed that elected representatives, citizens, management, and even central agency officials might not understand those financial reports. More recently, the Treasury has acknowledged

widespread public confusion over the contents and meaning even of core financial reports (Hosking 2005).

The reforming legislation delegates secondary regulatory powers to unelected officials in the central agencies, such as the Treasury. Over time a largely hidden layer of detailed rules had been developed which mixes accounting, funding, and economic tools (Pallot 2001a, 654; Newberry and Pallot 2003). The combination of rules is damaging to the public sector, and illogical and incoherent if considered in relation to declared intentions, but highly logical and coherent if developed in pursuit of a hidden privatization agenda (Newberry and Pallot 2003, 468; 2004a, 262). The possibility of inadvertence must be considered, especially because sources within the Treasury acknowledged the damaging effects of the rules but said those effects were unintended (Jones 2003). However, with no signs of attempts to fix those damaging rules, and the latest changes likely to drive the damaging effects even further, questions arise about the application of agency theory in the public sector, and the use of delegated powers (Newberry and Pallot 2004a, 2004c).

Goal congruence poses obvious difficulties when applying agency theory in the public sector. For example, taxpayers and beneficiaries, widely regarded as the ultimate principals, might have conflicting goals, and elected politicians cannot hope to please them all if, indeed, they are focused on pleasing them. Further, when Parliament delegates responsibility for making seemingly technical rules, such as financial management rules, it grants to the executive government an opportunity to pursue policies that have not been subjected to parliamentary debate. And if the ministers of the executive government leave that detailed rule-making role to unelected officials, then those officials, too, have the opportunity to do the same (Newberry and Pallot 2004a, 261). Thus these more recent findings that agency theory does not translate well to a public sector setting bring to mind June's characterization of the battle between the Audit Office and the Treasury as one of democratization versus privatization and the minimization of public accountability (Pallot 2003). At the delegated, more detailed level of rule making, the financial management system seems "to have been designed to achieve objectives to which neither departmental managers nor the public at large have agreed" (Newberry and Pallot 2004a, 262).

New Zealand's public sector financial management reforms were never a purely accounting development (Pallot 1991b, 2001a), and efforts to apply accounting ideas and practices originally devised for the business sector inevitably fall short. For example, whole of government financial reports conceptualize a government as a separate identifiable corporation or super-individual when, in fact, the boundary between government and nongovernment is fuzzy. Further, the idea that follows from the super-individual conceptualization is that this super-individual owns property when that property might be better conceptualized as common property (Pallot and Yamamoto 2002, 136, 141-142). Certainly, New Public Management involved efforts to reinvent and marketize governmental activities and might have seemed suited to rules and accounting practices which depict the public sector as a look-alike private sector. However, Pallot and Yamamoto (2002, 137-138) identified three other governance--as opposed to government--pressures for which such rules and accounting practices are inappropriate.

The first of these is the impact of globalization, the shift to rule making at an international level by supranational organizations, and the need for public management to mediate conflicting interests, some of which are outside the state border. The other two are: decentralization, a central government load-shedding response to fiscal constraints, which increases the financial responsibilities borne directly by communities; and demands for increased accountability and citizen participation in response to declining trust in government. These differing governance pressures raise numerous challenges for accounting and financial management in the public sector especially because they require shared responsibility between the government and others, including local government, private sector charitable and commercial ventures, and citizens. They generate accountability and disclosure challenges to which the individualistic accounting model devised for the business sector is unable to respond. The challenge is, therefore, to move on from that model to find new forms of accounting better suited to collective decision making and democratic accountability (Pallot and Yamamoto 2002, 142, 143).

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

June Pallot's work is especially well known for providing an overview of New Zealand's public sector financial management reforms, but June had thought carefully about the constitutional implications of reforms and especially about why parliamentary control of the public purse had been imposed in the first place. She provided far more than an overview. June's starting point was clear: she believed in the need for maintenance and observation of democratic processes, including constitutional and democratic controls over the executive government; and she held communitarian views about some assets held for the benefit of society, thus rejecting managerialist and individualist approaches to accounting and accountability in the public sector. She recognized that accounting is not merely a technical device and proposed forms of accounting intended to preserve parliamentary control over the executive government and to prompt explicit public debate and decision making over, for example, the continued maintenance, and ongoing need for, community assets. She kept a close eye on the direction of the reforms over time, identifying lessons to be learned from them and the challenges they pose.

Throughout her career, June sought to contribute to debate over the direction of New Zealand's reforms and to influence accounting developments, both in New Zealand and internationally. With New Zealand's close-knit policy community forging ahead with the reforms, June's calls for further thought about some aspects of those reforms were not always heard. However, she remained on good terms with all involved in the reforms, both in New Zealand and internationally, and remained optimistic that changes could be made to reinforce the features she considered especially important. True to the spirit of IPMN, June was always willing to discuss and debate future changes, and to work with and assess fairly the changes made.

Professor Lee Parker of the University of Adelaide, commenting on June's modesty about her achievements, said her influence has spread far beyond anything she would have recognized. With New Zealand's financial management reforms providing a small-

scale model for others to observe and assess, June's proposals, overviews, suggestions for change, and identification of future challenges become all the more significant internationally. She has indeed provided for all a voice of reason and serious research.

### NOTES

Susan Newberry was senior lecturer, Department of Accountancy, Finance and Information Systems, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand when this tribute was written. She studied under June Pallot as a doctoral student and was a close colleague. She is now associate professor, Discipline of Accounting and Business Law, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Sydney, Australia.

1. The author attended that forum, making notes at the time of events there.

2. Perhaps illustrating the point that privatization favors minimizing public accountability, June mentioned in discussion the difficulties she and her audit colleagues encountered at times in obtaining information from the Treasury, and that although prior consultation was required on some important issues, such consultation as there was sometimes occurred only at the last minute, thus leaving inadequate time for those consulted to consider the issues involved and respond.

3. Both New Zealand and Australia claimed to be applying a sector-neutral approach, but the claims do not bear close scrutiny (McGregor 1999; Newberry 2001, 2002; Barton 2002; Carnegie and Wolnizer 2002).

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