Stocktake of Initiatives that Support Men to Engage in Caring and Unpaid Domestic Labour

Prepared for: Office for Women, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

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Glossary

ABS Australian Bureau of Statistics
AIHW Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
CESU Chèque Emploi-Service Universel (France)
CSA Child Support Agency (Australia)
ECEC Early Childhood Education and Care
EU European Union
FaHCSIA Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
GDP Gross Domestic Product
GEM Gender Empowerment Measure (United Nations Development Program)
HILDA Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey
ISSP The International Social Survey Program
LCSS Life Course Savings Scheme (The Netherlands)
MTUS Multinational Time Use Study
OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OfW Office for Women (Australia)
PLD Parental Leave Directive (European Union)
ROI Return on Investment
UK United Kingdom
USA United States of America
WFB Work-family balance
WFTEC Working Families’ Tax Credit (United Kingdom)
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Introduction

With the increase in dual-earner families, men and women struggle with how to achieve a balance between the amount of time they spend in paid labour, and the amount of time spent on child care and domestic work.

Research consistently shows that the work-family conflict that may arise from the incompatibility of pressures from the work and family spheres affects women more than men. For example, based on an analysis of Australian Bureau of Statistics Time Use Surveys carried out in 1992, 1997 and 2006, Craig et al (2010: 38-39) found that while non-mothers in couple households did around ten hours more unpaid work per week than non-fathers across the three time periods, mothers spent on average around 40 hours per week more on unpaid work (housework and child care) than fathers. This included child care that was carried out as the main or primary activity, and that which was carried out in addition to or ‘secondary’ to some other activity1.

There is renewed interest in promoting gender equality not only in the labour market, but also in the domestic sphere.

The Office for Women’s Gender Equality for Women Program aims to provide whole-of-government leadership in policy development on gender equality. The Office for Women commissioned Urbis to conduct a stocktake of national and international government policy initiatives that support men to engage in caring and unpaid domestic labour, to evaluate their success in increasing men’s engagement in caring and unpaid domestic labour. The aim was to improve the evidence base for government decision-making.

The stocktake involved a narrative literature review, primarily focusing on published and unpublished Australian and international material from 2006 to 2010.

Key findings

What is the current situation?

Research shows that:

- Women do more unpaid work in all countries, despite a modest increase in recent years in men’s involvement in caregiving and unpaid domestic labour.

- The gender wage gap persists in all countries, with the average difference in median earnings between men and women being 17.6%.

- Men and women deal differently with work-family conflict, mostly by women doing more part-time work, or working flexible hours.

- There are differences in the nature of caregiving provided by men and women, with fathers tending to spend more time in child care activities such as playing and teaching, and mothers spending more time in personal child care activities such as bathing and feeding.

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1 The authors note that including secondary activity in the measure of child care time is important because it gives a fuller account of the amount of the time parents commit to children, and of their total workload. Only secondary activity child care carried out while not simultaneously doing paid work, primary activity child care, any domestic work or sleeping is included in the measures (Craig et al, 2010: 34).
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What are some potential change mechanisms government can use?
The major drivers to increase men’s participation in caregiving and unpaid domestic labour are:

- women’s increased involvement in paid labour
- concern over women’s dual burden of labour (paid and unpaid)
- the quest for improved outcomes for children
- shifting models of fatherhood
- shifting demographic patterns, with fewer workers to support children and older people.

What factors affect men’s participation in caregiving and domestic labour?
Factors that may affect men’s participation in caregiving and domestic labour have been identified in research as including:

- having children, especially a first child, which increases the domestic workload for both mother and father, and at the same time has been found to lead to a more traditional sharing of tasks in the household
- parental attitudes about gender roles and norms – men with more gender egalitarian attitudes (which is in turn influenced by factors such as education levels) more willingly participate in unpaid domestic tasks
- time constraints on the partners, with men and women responding pragmatically to demands to undertake housework given their time availability and constraints – the assumption in this body of research is that the distribution of paid and unpaid workloads tends toward equilibrium
- the partners’ relative resources, including educational qualifications, employment and income – the assumption in this body of research is that the spouse with more resources (usually the man) has more power within the relationship, and will be able to get away with doing less housework
- workplace cultures and employer attitudes, which can often discourage men from taking leave for family reasons.

What can governments do?
The main areas which governments can influence to encourage men to participate in more caregiving and unpaid domestic labour include:

- legal protection against sex discrimination
- government campaigns to educate men about policies and systems that exist to support them to provide care for their children
- industrial relations/employment policy, including the encouragement of family-friendly workplaces
- statutory child care leave arrangements for women and men
- tax and benefit incentives.

Whole-of-government principles which support work-family reconciliation include:

- acknowledging the influence of competing values regarding childrearing and child care on policy makers at different times in different countries, and acknowledging that values are incorporated into policies (perhaps to a greater extent than in most other policy fields)
- the need to draw men and fathers more explicitly into the work-family reconciliation debate, to acknowledge that conflict between work and family is a problem for men as well as for women, and to prevent mothers especially from being seen as solely responsible for work-family balance decisions
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- promoting the view that policies operate at many levels, including the individual, the household and civil society levels, and at the broader social/collective level
- recognising that the policies that would enable genuine choice for men and women to negotiate the sharing of care and domestic labour would require action relating to time (time for paid work and time for care and unpaid domestic work), money (cash to buy care and cash for carers) and care services
- recognising that families with children with special needs require special support to balance their needs to earn an income and to meet their care obligations.

Key future directions

The report outlines a series of suggested government initiatives, arranged in a proposed order of likely effectiveness. It also suggests a program logic that can be used to inform the development of future activities in this area, which recognises that a range of strategies need to be deployed (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Program logic – Government initiatives to support men to engage in caring and unpaid domestic labour

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Simultaneous government-led initiatives</th>
<th>Coordinated whole of government focus on work-family reconciliation, including:</th>
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<td>Promotion of women’s participation in the workforce through legislation &amp; promotion, including:</td>
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<td>Anti-discrimination legislation</td>
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<td>Equality of access to jobs</td>
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- Removal of structural barriers
- Attitudinal change
- Behaviour change
- Equality of outcomes

- Structural barriers to women’s participation in workforce reduced
- Attitudinal barriers to women’s participation in workforce reduced
- Women participate more equitably in workforce
- Women’s economic outcomes improved
- Women’s status improved
- Men’s domestic/family outcomes improved
- Family reconciliation and work/life balance improved for men & women

Supporting men to engage in caring and other unpaid domestic work
The potential policy initiatives are:

- **Broadly-based promotion of gender equality in the political and economic spheres.** Studies show that empowering women economically and politically increases gender equality at all levels, including the domestic sphere. Anti-discrimination legislation and regulations that ensure equal access to quality jobs and equality in the workplace for both men and women have underpinned gender equality.

- **A co-ordinated whole-of-government focus on work-family balance.** Employment and family policies need to operate in tandem, and also include other aspects of policy such as education, health, disability, ageing, industrial relations, and housing and infrastructure.

- **Tax and family benefits that promote work-family reconciliation.** Family benefits generally take the form of a combination of cash transfers, tax breaks and services. Mechanisms within the social security system include financial assistance to families to help with the cost of raising children (including child care), paid parental leave, maternity payments and pensions.

- **Promoting flexible work arrangements.** Labour market and occupational regulation mechanisms include employees’ statutory right to request a flexible working pattern, career breaks, time credits and reducing the maximum hours of the working week. Gender equality is strongly promoted when protection is offered to part-time workers in labour law and the social protection system. Common strategies include promoting the business case for adapting flexible working arrangements.

- **Parental leave.** Parental leave policies can be a mechanism for increasing fathers’ involvement in child care if it has a non-transferrable portion reserved for the father; if the statutory portion is well paid; if it is flexibly administered; and if it is actively promoted amongst employers and employees.

- **Government campaigns to educate and influence behaviour.** International campaigns have addressed issues such as the promotion of family-friendly workplaces; the stimulation of public debate on the importance of fathers’ input to child development; and the promotion of father-inclusive practices in family and children’s services.

- **Father-inclusive services in the child care, early childhood education and care, health, educational and social services sectors.** Father-inclusive practice involves responding to the needs of fathers through the planning, development and delivery of services. Father-inclusivity could be linked to the modernisation of public services, and strategies might include the revision of service policies, hiring practices, referral pathways and staff training.

- **Legislating parenting rights and obligations.** Family law could contribute to the empowerment of women within a couple relationship (for example by increasing their relative bargaining power within the relationship), as well as promoting fathers’ involvement with non-resident children.

- **Housing and infrastructure.** Housing affordability and commuting distances impact on the opportunities parents have to spend time with children, and a government focus on improving housing affordability could contribute to the promotion of work-family balance.

- **The valuing of care work.** The promotion of, and financial support for, care work has occurred through mechanisms such as cash benefits, tax credits, pension credits and outsourcing, but societies still have some way to go to find ways to adequately reward care work.

- **A research agenda.** Gaps identified in the research include measures of the impact of government housing and infrastructure policies on work-family reconciliation; and providing further breakdowns and analyses of the specific forms of unpaid domestic tasks conducted by men versus women.
1 Introduction

The Office for Women (OfW) within the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) commissioned Urbis to conduct a stocktake of national and international government policy initiatives that support men to engage in caring and other unpaid domestic work. This is the final report on the stocktake.

1.1 Background

OfW’s Gender Equality for Women Program aims to inform government decisions relating to improving gender equality through coordinated whole of government advice and support for women’s economic security, safety and leadership.

The Gender Equality for Women Program provides funding for the implementation of strategies in priority areas to achieve gender equality. Gender equality is understood as meaning that women and men have equal opportunities to realise their individual potential, to contribute to their country’s social and economic development, and to benefit equally from their participation in society (AusAid 2008, cited in FaHCSIA nd).

The Minister for the Status of Women, the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, has identified three key priorities that inform her work:

- reducing violence against women
- improving women’s economic outcomes
- ensuring women’s equal place in society (FaHCSIA, 2009c).

To address these priorities, OfW undertakes a broad work program that focuses on issues affecting Australian women in both the domestic and international arenas. Activities include:

- initiatives that reduce violence against women and their children
- whole-of-government leadership in policy development on gender equality
- initiatives to build women’s capacity to take on leadership responsibilities
- supporting and informing women’s groups and organisations to interact effectively across government
- undertaking research into issues of relevance to women
- administration of the Support for Victims of Trafficking service strategy (which provides case management and other support to victims of people trafficking).

1.2 Aim of study

The aim of this study is to provide an evaluation of the success of national and international policies and initiatives in increasing men’s engagement in caring and unpaid domestic labour, and thus improve the evidence base for decision making regarding policies that support men to engage in unpaid work.

The key questions to be addressed are:

- What are the drivers of change?
- What factors, facilitated by policy initiatives, lead men to engage in more caring and unpaid domestic work?
- What drivers for change have government been responsible for?
- Which drivers for change can government influence?
Which interventions have worked?

1.3 Methodology

The methodology used for the study is a narrative literature review, which enables an in-depth discussion of issues related to the topic based on an analysis of published and unpublished material. In particular, it incorporates a stocktake and evaluation of government policy initiatives supporting men and women to negotiate work-family decisions. These initiatives include relevant legislation, tax and transfer arrangements, service arrangements and education campaigns from a selection of countries comparable to Australia.

The literature includes empirical studies that analyse the effects of identified variables on the gender division of labour, descriptions and analyses of specific policy initiatives within or across countries, theoretical discussion of the issues, and the construction of theoretical models. The comparative policy approach, making use of cross-country comparisons and controlling for specific variables, is the preferred research method identified within the literature.

The core of the stocktake comprises a number of studies which analyse the relationships between country-specific variables (such as labour market and family policies) and variables of interest, such as patterns of leave-taking or measures of work-family conflict. Researchers and commentators make use of their research findings and those of others to identify, describe and analyse policy initiatives within one or more countries, and the effects of the countries’ welfare arrangements and social and cultural norms on the gender division of labour.

Gaps in understanding, or areas with an apparent lack of empirical research or conflicting findings, are also identified wherever possible.

Particular weight is given to the findings and conclusions of studies which make use of rigorous research designs and methodologies, including:

- using data from large-scale studies such as the International Social Survey Program (ISSP), which have enabled standardisation of time use measures, and which employ large sample sizes
- covering a number of countries in the analyses
- testing of hypotheses, incorporating a statement of dependent and independent variables and the use of statistical tests of significance
- generation of models or theoretical explanations, especially those that have been cited by other researchers and authors.

A number of studies were found to address all or most of these criteria. These studies have been drawn upon in particular to draw conclusions about interventions that have been found to be effective.
2 Core concepts

Three concepts are commonly used in the literature in discussing government initiatives that have the goal of supporting women to participate in the labour market, and which also support men to engage in caring and other unpaid domestic labour. These are briefly described below, namely:

- the gender division of labour, including understandings of the decline of the traditional male breadwinner model, and men’s involvement in child care and unpaid domestic work
- work-family conflict
- work-family reconciliation.

2.1 The gender division of labour

Gender can be defined as a social structure which differentiates opportunities and places constraints upon an individual based on sex category. This has consequences at the individual level; during interaction, as men and women face different cultural expectations; and at the institutional level, where explicit regulations concerning resource distribution and material goods are gender-specific (Risman, 2004, cited in Gonzalez et al, 2009: 5).

The gender division of labour encompasses the decisions men and women make about participating in the labour market (paid work), care arrangements within the home, and the carrying out of unpaid domestic labour – in short ‘how men and women with family responsibilities should organise their time around paid and unpaid work’ (Leon, 2009: 206).

As noted by Himmelweit (2002: 52-53), economic life does not depend solely on paid work, but depends equally on unpaid activities carried out within a domestic sector, which contributes to individual socialisation and to the production and maintenance of human capabilities. While the labour within the domestic sphere is unpaid, it requires maintenance and investment, and needs both consumption and investment goods from the private sector, and infrastructural services from the public sector. Fursman and Callister (2009: 14) point out that paid work limits the time available to undertake unpaid care and, conversely, that undertaking care limits the time available for paid work.

2.1.1 Decline of the traditional male breadwinner model

During the 20th century, the economic and social organisation of the family underwent dramatic changes in most industrialised countries, and the so-called traditional family model, with a male breadwinner and a female homemaker, began to be displaced by the two-earner family and other ‘non-traditional’ family models (Edlund, 2007: 451).

The male breadwinner model, based as it is on a set of assumptions about male and female contributions at the household level, was reflected in many of the major institutions of modern society. Crompton (1999: 202-203) describes this as follows:

In Europe, North America and Australasia, the gender coding of caring and market work, corresponding to the breadwinner model, has been incorporated into many of the major institutions of industrial society, including welfare states, education systems, and systems of labour market and occupational regulation. It has been reflected in a range of other practices, including retail opening hours and the length of the school day...The breadwinner model depended on formal restrictions on women's choices, and the widespread institution of a breadwinner wage for adult males.

A classification of the range of breadwinner-care relationships produced by Crompton (1999) has been adopted by many researchers over the past decade (see eg Pascall & Lewis, 2004; Gregory & Milner, 2008; Craig et al, 2008: 11-12). In her work, Crompton (1999: 205) considers the transformation in gender relations that have been influenced by changes to the gender division of labour, and provides a continuum of ‘breadwinner regimes’, with the following classification of possible employment-care arrangements:
• male breadwinner/female carer (the most traditional model)
• dual earner/female part-time carer
• dual earner/State carer
• dual earner/marketised carer
• dual earner/dual carer (the least traditional model, implying equal participation by both men and women in both paid and unpaid labour).

Craig et al (2008) adapt Crompton’s classification of employment-care arrangements to the Australian context with modifications:
• male breadwinner families have a husband who is employed full-time, while the wife is not active in the labour market
• in one-and-a-half-earner families, the husband is employed full-time and the wife is employed part-time, defined as working less than 35 hours per week
• in standard full-time dual-career families, women work standard full-time hours
• in long hours full-time dual-career families, women work more than 49 hours a week
• families in which the man does not work full-time
• single mother families.

Changing cultural expectations have led to an increasing research interest in better understanding the paid and unpaid work carried out by both women and men.

2.1.2 Men’s involvement in child care

Flowing from these changes in the gender division of labour, fathers of the 21st century in many countries are encouraged by changing cultural expectations to be both emotionally involved with their children, as well as economic contributors to their welfare. Increasingly, ‘earning as caring’ is not seen as being sufficient validation for fatherhood: fathering is also seen to be about directly caring for, and being with, children (O’Brien 2005, cited in O’Brien et al, 2007: 376).

At a purely biological level, it has been argued that it is not strictly necessary for men to be involved in caring for their offspring, who ‘can survive with no paternal contribution as long as there is maternal care’ (Geary 2000; Sear & Mace 2008, cited in Nettle, 2008: 416). At many other levels, including the cultural, the interpersonal and the personal, it has been recognised that men are expected to be more actively engaged in the care of children (see Doucet 2006, cited in O’Brien et al, 2007: 376).

Contemporary researchers on fathering (following Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, & Levine 1987, cited in Gregory & Milner, 2008: 62) suggest that father involvement is multidimensional, and could be studied in terms of:
• interaction, or direct engagement, including a father’s direct contact with his child through caregiving and shared activities
• accessibility, a related concept concerning the father’s potential availability for interaction by virtue of being accessible to the child (whether or not direct interaction is occurring)
• responsibility, or the role that the father takes in ascertaining that the child is being cared for, and in arranging for resources to be available for the child.

2.1.3 Men’s involvement in unpaid domestic work

Gender equality in the home involves both child care-related tasks, as described above, and the sharing of housework (tasks such as cleaning, shopping, cooking and laundry). The expectation on men to become more involved in unpaid domestic work rests on the understanding that gender equality refers
not only to equality of opportunities in the labour market, but also to equality of outcome (encompassing a wider set of social activities), and that, ‘if gender equality stopped at the family front door, efforts to obtain gender equality in other fields might fail’ (Boje, 2007: 376).

The gender division of housework has often been explained in terms of national context, ‘typically postulating an effect of female empowerment in society on women’s relative workload at home’ (Fuwa 2004, cited in Knudsen & Waerness, 2008: 97). As noted by Gonzalez et al (2009:5):

> This means that, in explaining the gendered allocation of housework, it is important to study expectations at the cultural level (i.e. the differential expectations attached in a given society to being a mother and a father, a husband and a wife), and at the institutional level, where explicit regulations on resources distribution, organizational practices, ideology and legislation are gender-specific.

Research into the gender division of labour is discussed in greater detail in Section 3.2, but authors such as Breen and Cooke (2005: 45) point out that there is a lack of research evidence that clearly sheds light on ‘why the gendered division of domestic labour is so resistant to change as women’s labour force participation increases over time’. A brief summary of the current state of research into factors influencing men’s participation in unpaid labour, including gender culture and ideology, is provided in Sections 5 and 6 of this report.

### 2.2 Work-family conflict

Work-family conflict, also described as ‘work-life conflict’ (Crompton & Lyonette, 2006), ‘work-family time squeeze’ (Edlund, 2007), or ‘work-family strain’ (Craig et al, 2008), refers to the conflicting demands of paid and unpaid work among working couples. The main question underlying this concept is how to achieve a balance between the amount of time spent in paid labour, and the amount of time dedicated to the family and unpaid labour in the household. If role pressures from the work and family spheres are mutually incompatible, work-family conflict arises, that is, ‘participation in the work (family) role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (work) role’ (Greenhaus & Beutell 1985, cited in Allard et al, 2007).

On the basis of an analysis of data from 29 countries, Edlund (2007) suggests that couples can be classified into three groups:

- those having a work-family balance
- those having an occupational-work overload
- those having a dual work overload, experiencing too strong demands from both work and family responsibilities.

Based on a review of the literature, Lero et al (2009: 16-17) include the following as potential consequences of work-family conflict:

- lower job satisfaction and organisational commitment
- poorer physical and mental health, including stress, anxiety and depression, sleep disturbances, allergies and migraine headaches, and increased costs for medical consultations and prescription drugs
- increased tardiness, absenteeism related to dependent care, turnover intentions, and turnover
- poorer self- and supervisor-related performance.

According to the ‘work family border theory’ theory, employees can either integrate or segment the two spheres of work (paid and unpaid), and integration and segmentation can be seen as two ends of the same continuum (Desrochers et al 2005; Nippert-Eng 1996, cited in Allard et al, 2007: 478). Full integration of spheres occurs when there are no distinctions about what belongs to the home, and what belongs to work. Segmentation occurs when the work and family spheres have strict borders and are separated from each other (Clark, 2000, cited in Allard et al, 2007: 478).
2.3 Work-family reconciliation

The concepts 'work-family reconciliation' or 'work-family balance' are used when describing the easing of work-family conflict discussed above, and promoting the reconciliation of work and family life (Fox et al, 2009: 314).

Government policy initiatives to support men to engage in caring and unpaid domestic labour can be broadly understood as work-family reconciliation policies. However, within much of the literature, such policies are considered primarily from the point of view of supporting female labour force participation, and reconciling women's employment with family life. Clearly, the work-family reconciliation objectives for men and women are inseparably linked, as noted by Hobson & Fahlen (2009: 216):

*What fathers do affects what mothers do and vice versa, so that policies addressing fatherhood and men's work time and caring time for their children cannot be divorced from policies aimed at mothers' reconciliation of employment with family life. If fathers do not come into the WFB equation within the household, workplace and policy levels, the kinds of changes needed to create gender equity in WFB will be stymied.*

Lewis & Campbell (2007a: 5-6) write that work-family balance policies are not only developed to help citizens deal with work-family conflict, but also:

- to serve as a means of doing something about the challenges of an ageing society and the dependency ratio (the balance between the number of workers and the number of people requiring care in a given society), by enabling women to earn
- to address falling fertility rates, thought to be exacerbated by lack of supports for women workers
- to tackle child poverty, by encouraging and enabling mothers (especially lone mothers) to work
- to promote children’s development, particularly through high quality early childhood learning
- to promote employment and growth, and enlarging the tax base by drawing women into paid work.

2.4 Summary

The decline of the male breadwinner/female carer family model has led to the emergence of a range of 'non-traditional' family models. It has also brought into focus the strains associated with work-family conflict, when pressures from the work and family spheres become difficult for women and men to deal with, and the issues associated with work-family reconciliation.

A focus on the gender division of labour (including both paid and unpaid work) is also linked to efforts to promote gender equality. These issues are discussed in greater detail in Section 3 below.
3 Drivers of change for men’s increased participation in caregiving and unpaid domestic labour

This section identifies major factors that have been consistently identified in the literature as drivers of change for men’s increased participation in caregiving and unpaid domestic labour. The description of these drivers of change is followed by a summary of research findings which provide understandings of current trends within the gender division of labour.

3.1 Drivers of change

The drivers of change discussed below are:

- women’s increased involvement in paid labour
- concern over women’s dual burden of labour
- the quest for improved outcomes for children
- shifting models of fatherhood
- demographic drivers.

3.1.1 Women’s increased involvement in paid labour

A traditional gender division of labour has assumed the existence of a ‘male breadwinner’ family model. However, Lewis (2001: 153) notes that this model – implying regular and full male employment and stable families in which women would be provided for largely via their husbands’ earnings and social contributions – was never a ‘pure’ model because many women in many sectors of society and at different historical periods have always been involved in the paid labour market. Nevertheless, female employment rates began to rise dramatically in many countries, particularly from the 1970s, when mothers returned to work earlier after the arrival of children, compared to previous cohorts of women.

This increase in women’s labour force participation has been linked to social and economic developments that are common throughout industrialised societies, including women’s ability to control their own fertility, expansion of opportunities for women in education and employment, and an increase in demand for labour in the service sector (Haas, 2003: 89). Across industrialised nations, the economic well-being of families with children has become increasingly reliant on maternal, as well as paternal, employment (Kamerman 2000; Moss & Deven 2006, cited in O’Brien et al, 2007: 375-376).

In Australia, the labour force participation rate of women increased from 43.5% to 58.7% between February 1978 and June 2009 (OfW, 2009: 3), and the number of male breadwinner households, in which men were employed full-time and women were not in the labour force, declined from 32% of couple households in 1992 to 26% of couple households in 2006 (Blaxland et al, 2009: 5).

However, women’s labour force participation in Australia also exhibits differences from trends seen in other OECD countries. For example:

- Many Australian women work part-time: 46% are employed part-time compared with the OECD average of 25% (Brennan, 2007: 33).

- A trend in female labour force participation in Australia is that there has been an increase in mothers with a young child who are in the labour force. The proportion of all mothers with a child aged 0–4 years in the labour force rose from 46.6% in 1992 to 52.4% in 2006 (Blaxland et al, 2009: 5). Despite this increase, maternal employment rates in Australia compare unfavourably with most other OECD countries. Based on 2005-2007 data, Australia ranks amongst the bottom five OECD countries (together with Italy, Japan, Malta and Turkey) in terms of the employment rates of mothers who have a youngest child aged less than five (OECD, 2009: Chart LMF2.2).
3.1.2 Concern over women's dual burden of labour

Women's increased (paid) labour force participation has often been associated with an increase in their 'dual work overload', with time use studies in many parts of the world confirming that women's burden of labour has increased as the work that they do outside the home is added to work that they carry out domestically (Barker, 2009:2).

As Orloff (2009: 11-12) writes:

Women more than men shape their employment behaviour around the requisites of caregiving (and, to a lesser extent, domestic work). However, taking time out of the labor force to do unpaid care and cleaning work in families…imposes costs on caregivers, notably lifelong lower incomes and pension entitlements, economic dependency and vulnerability to poverty.

3.1.3 The quest for improved outcomes for children

The societal need to provide adequate care for children and other dependents is an important driver of change. As expressed by a number of researchers:

The flip side of apprehension that women will not be able to engage in market work, or will be overburdened if they try to balance work and care, is concern that if they substantially withdraw from care the welfare of children will suffer.


Himmelweit (2000, cited in Craig, 2006: 260) notes that 'if we move from a gender divided society to a more equal one, then we have to go the whole way if children are to be adequately cared for'.

Evidence suggests that promoting father involvement and investment in the early years of life is important when considering children's later emotional, cognitive and social well-being (Lamb 2004; Tamis-LeMonda & Cabrera 2002, cited in O'Brien et al, 2007: 380). Numerous studies highlight the importance of father involvement for children's cognitive and socio-emotional outcomes (Gottfried et al 2002; Hoffman & Youngblade 1999: Tamis-Lemonda & Cabrera 2002, cited in Nepomnyaschy & Waldfogel, 2007: 428-429). For example, as part of the USA National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, a nationally representative sample of adolescents was tested to measure the self-judged quality of their relationships with their fathers and mothers, and their level of depression. Over the five years of the study, the quality of the father-adolescent relationship was found to be equally predictive of an adolescent’s mental health as was the mother-adolescent relationship (Videon 2005, cited in Fletcher, 2008: 3).

Children whose fathers are involved and responsive are less likely to be anti-social, aggressive or delinquent, to get into trouble at school, to have emotional problems, or to have a negative self-image (Lees 2007, cited in Fursman & Callister, 2009: 31). Involved fathers have been identified as a key factor in protecting against juvenile criminal behaviour, reducing the frequency of behavioural problems in boys, and psychological problems in young women (Gillies, 2009: 52; Sarkadi et al 2008, cited in Fursman & Callister, 2009: 31).

One key but often overlooked aspect and benefit of men's involvement in the caregiving of children is the importance of such involvement as a way to promote gender equality among children. There is evidence from Western Europe and North America that the warmth or proximity of a child’s relationship with his or her father is correlated with non-traditional (more gender-equitable) definitions of masculinity in sons, and more progressive versions of femininity in daughters (Levine 1993; Russell & Radojevic 1992; MacCallum & Golombok 2004, cited in Barker 2009: 5).

3.1.4 Shifting models of fatherhood

A driver of change which is often identified in the literature is that of shifting models of fatherhood, linked to changes in the way masculinity as a whole is understood within the context of changing gender relations. This has led commentators such as LaRossa (1997, cited in Gregory & Milner, 2008: 62) to suggest that 'the reconstruction of fatherhood and the notion of a new father ideal have come to
the fore across the industrialized world’. Gillies (2009: 49) notes that meanings and expectations associated with fatherhood in the Western world have shifted dramatically in recent decades, and that fathers are increasingly viewed in legal and social policy terms as having a unique part to play in the meeting of children’s needs.

According to Aarseth (2009: 424-426), many commentators have identified two social developments in modern industrial societies as being important in helping to generate the image of a ‘new man’, namely:

- the feminist discourse on masculinity in the seventies, which encouraged men to move away from traditional images of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ (Chapman 1988; Connell 1995; Mort 1988, cited in Aarseth, 2009: 425)

New understandings of fatherhood have also emerged in the context of changing family forms and patterns of childbearing, particularly in terms of factors such as increases in divorce, lone parenting and repartnering (Gilles, 2009: 50).

A shift toward a new father ideal, even within late modern, highly industrialised societies, has been far from uniform. As noted by Seward & Richter (2008: 89), negotiations around fatherhood are necessary because there are a number of different norms regarding how men should be fathers, and often contrasting images of what might constitute the ‘ideal father’. Sarkadi et al (2008, cited in Fursman & Callister, 2009: 23-24) have suggested that an ideal father could be seen as a ‘moral teacher and disciplinarian’; the ‘breadwinner’; a ‘gender-role model and buddy’; or a ‘nurturing co-parent’. Within any society, there will be individuals and families who continue to favour one model over another, with a range of factors, including religious beliefs, influencing which model is supported.

3.1.5 Demographic drivers

Shifting demographic patterns are an important driver for change, particularly as regards their impact on the relative proportion of people within a given society who are of working age. Imbalances in the ratio of economically active citizens (compared to those who are not) are often closely associated in the literature with ageing populations, as well as with a long-term decline in fertility in many countries. The resulting population decline reduces the potential labour force and leads to problems in financing social security mechanisms such as pensions (Henninger et al, 2008: 288). This phenomenon has also been described as a given society’s ‘dependency ratio’ (see eg Lewis & Campbell, 2007a: 5).

Debates on low birthrates have inspired family policy reforms in various countries, based on the recognition that the challenges citizens face in achieving work-family balance have impacted on their decisions to have children (Henninger et al, 2008; Seward & Richter, 2008). In Europe, fertility is lowest in those countries where the work-family equilibrium, especially of women, ‘is not taken seriously’ (Leon, 2009: 206). These trends are particularly noticeable in Mediterranean countries such as Spain and Italy, where difficulties in combining employment with motherhood have contributed to a sharp decline in fertility rates. Women, especially in the younger generations, have been found to defer or avoid motherhood in order to become established in the labour market, and they try to remain there through participating full-time and continuously (Anxo, 2007: 244).

3.2 Research into the gender division of labour

3.2.1 Methodological issues

The measurement of unpaid work, particularly housework time, is recognised by researchers as being fraught with difficulties (see eg OECD, 2009; Bonke et al, 2007: 6; Eichler & Albanese, 2007; Monna & Gauthier, 2008). Some of the methodological issues are discussed below. Further discussion of some of the measures used in the studies is provided in Appendix A.


Primary and secondary activities

Many time use surveys classify housework activities (including child care) either as ‘main’ or ‘primary’ activities, or as ‘parallel’ or ‘secondary’ activities, where secondary activities refer to those carried out at the same time as a primary activity. This is regarded as especially important for the identification of the total time dedicated to child care, since parents often combine the provision of care with other activities by, for example, watching television with their child. Research has shown that, on average, secondary activities make up between 30% and 35% of the total time that parents spend in child care (Bianchi 2000; Budig & Folbre 2004, cited in Monna & Gauthier, 2008: 638).

At the same time, decisions about which activities would count as ‘primary’ or ‘secondary’ will vary across households and countries. Several other factors also affect data comparability across countries, including:

- differences in sample composition
- while primary activities may be comprehensively tracked, the recording of secondary activities is more prone to error because these activities are often omitted by respondents
- the comparability of estimates on secondary activities is limited because some activities only take a few minutes, so that they are not reported consistently enough to produce reliable estimates
- because of the omission of secondary activities, the amount of time devoted to specific tasks that may be performed simultaneously with other tasks is typically under-reported among primary activities.

(OECD, 2009: 9-10)

In Australia, the ABS 2006 Time Use Survey (see also Appendix A2) measures the daily activity patterns of people by focusing on primary activities only, and these are classified into four types:

- necessary time – activities which are performed for personal survival, such as sleeping and eating
- contracted time – activities such as paid work and regular education, where there are explicit contracts which control the periods of time in which the activities are performed
- committed time – activities to which a person has committed him/herself because of previous social or community interactions, such as establishing a household or volunteering, including the consequent housework, other household management activities, child care, shopping or provision of help to others
- free time – the amount of time left when the previous three types of time have been taken out of a person’s day.

(ABS, 2008: 1)

Questionnaires and time use diaries

Some measures rely on questionnaire data ie records of who participates in, or contributes to, each task. Other measures rely on time diary data, based on asking individuals to record all the activities they carry out during particular 24 hour periods. Problems identified with questionnaires include:

- one individual’s reported time use may not be comparable with another’s due to individual differences in the reporting of events that have occurred in the past (Bonke et al 2007: 6)
- respondents tend to provide answers that present them in the best light – in the case of parental time, a tendency to overestimate the time actually devoted to children (Monna & Gauthier, 2008: 637)
- inaccuracy due to respondents’ difficulty in recalling their use of time over a long period of time (Monna & Gauthier, 2008: 637)
- responses can differ systematically by the gender of the respondent, and researchers have generally relied more heavily on questionnaire reports provided by women, as there is some

**Definitions of housework**

Researchers provide varying definitions of ‘housework’. For example, in a study comparing the division of household labour in ten countries, Geist (2005) regards ‘doing the laundry’, ‘shopping for groceries’ and ‘deciding what’s for dinner’ as constituting the best index for the household division of labour. In doing so, she excludes measures of ‘who does repairs around the house’ and ‘who cares for sick family members’, arguing that ‘it is crucial to only look at activities that need to be performed on a fairly regular basis’ (Geist, 2005: 27).

On the other hand, Hook (2006) does not distinguish between ‘regular’ or ‘core’ housework, and ‘non-routine’ or ‘non-regular’ housework in her measures of men’s contribution to housework in 20 countries, for the following reasons:

*I…use an inclusive measure of household labor. Theoretically, men’s total contributions are consequential. In bargaining, for example, men’s contributions to all tasks are part of the exchange. Focusing on only a few tasks may lead to misleading conclusions. A broad measure is also the most conservative approach to studying temporal and cross-national variation because there is more variation in subtypes of unpaid work than in the total.*

(Hook, 2006: 646)

Similarly, Cooke (2007a) considers four dependent variables to describe men’s hours in, and share of, household tasks and child care:

- errands (including shopping and citizen’s duties)
- housework (washing, cooking, cleaning)
- child care
- repairs on or around the house, including car repairs and garden work.

In a longitudinal study, this researcher calculates men’s hours in household tasks as respondents’ reported time spent in all of these activities, arguing that ‘all are necessary to successful home production and must be negotiated’ (Cooke, 2007a: 937).

Eichler and Albanese (2007: 229-232) critique four implicit assumptions underlying empirical studies of housework, namely that it:

- is performed exclusively by couples within their own homes
- consists primarily of a set of repetitive physical tasks
- includes child care, but not care of adults
- remains largely stable over the life course.

These authors encourage researchers to include a more comprehensive, multidimensional account of what housework entails, and put forward the following recommended definition of household work:

*Household work consists of the sum of all physical, mental, emotional and spiritual tasks that are performed for one’s own or someone else’s household and that maintain the daily life of those one has responsibility for.*

(Eichler & Albanese, 2007: 248)

**Summary**

In summary, there is considerable variation in how unpaid work is defined and measured, and for this reason, descriptions are provided wherever possible of the specific definitions and measures used by researchers in the literature that is surveyed for the stocktake.
3.2.2 Women do more unpaid work in all countries

While women’s labour force participation continues to rise across countries, the increase in men’s share of domestic work and child care has been modest, remaining about one third of the time contribution of women. A consistent finding in time use research is that mothers spend more time with their children than fathers regardless of the employment status of the mother (Breen & Cooke, 2005; Baxter, 2009).

Based on an analysis of ABS Time Use Surveys carried out in 1992, 1997 and 2006, Craig et al (2010) established the time men and women spent in paid and unpaid work in couple households with and without children over a 15-year time span. Findings from their study include:

- Non-mothers in couple households did around ten hours more unpaid work per week than non-fathers across all three time periods.
- Mothers spent around 40 hours more per week on unpaid work (housework and child care) than fathers across all three time periods. This measure includes child care that is carried out as the main or primary activity, and that which is carried out in addition to or as ‘secondary’ to some other activity (see also discussion in Section 3.2.1 above). The authors note that including secondary activity in the measure of child care time is important because it gives a fuller account of amount of the time parents commit to children and of their total workload. Only secondary activity child care carried out while not simultaneously doing paid work, primary activity child care, any domestic work or sleeping is included in this measure (Craig et al, 2010: 34).
- The unpaid work gap measured in 2006 was almost the same as the gap measured in 1992.

Some studies (Boje 1996; Baxter 2002; Bianchi 2004; Himmelweit 2002, cited in Craig, 2006: 260) have indicated that, on average, men’s and women’s contribution to housework has become more equal, but this may be due to women doing less than they did in the past, not because men are doing much more. This suggests that work that was previously done by women in the unpaid sector of the economy may have moved into the paid sector, or may be left undone. The findings also suggest that changes in the sphere of paid work have been more radical than changes in the home. Delegating the care of children is more potentially problematic than outsourcing other domestic tasks, and research suggests that women may be less willing to reduce their time with children than to reduce their time in other household duties (Craig, 2006: 260).

3.2.3 Modest increase in men’s involvement in caregiving and unpaid domestic labour

International trends

Using time use studies conducted in 20 countries between 1965 and 2003 for individuals aged 20 to 50 (N = 93,033), Hook (2006) finds that there is an increase in men’s unpaid work over time. Her study makes use of the Multinational Time Use Study (see Appendix A2), encompassing the following time-use categories:

- core housework eg cleaning, cooking and laundry
- non-routine housework eg everyday purchasing and errands, home and car maintenance, care of adults and pets, and gardening
- child care, including direct care and supervision, helping and playing.

The researcher uses an inclusive measure of household labour, focusing on men’s contributions to all of these tasks (see also discussion in Section 3.2.1 above), but the measures do not include domestic-related travel, such as transporting children, because of data limitations (Hook, 2006: 646).

She finds that, among married, employed fathers the mean time spent on unpaid work increased nearly six hours per week from 1965 to 2003. Older men do more housework, with each additional year increasing men’s unpaid work time by 0.7 minutes per day, a difference of 27 minutes per day between 20 and 59 year old men. She also finds that when men are not employed, they do 19 minutes less of unpaid work per day than do employed men (Hook, 2006: 651).
Longitudinal studies carried out in the United States, Netherlands and Canada have pointed to an increase in involvement by men in parenting over the last decades (Pleck & Masciadrelli 2004, cited in Barker, 2009: 3). In Canada, the time devoted to child care by employed fathers reached approximately 75% of that reported by employed mothers in 1998, compared to 60% in 1986 (Zuzanek 2001, cited in Monna & Gauthier, 2008: 639).

It should be noted that research also suggests that this increase in father involvement does not imply a decrease in mother involvement. Compared to 30 or 40 years ago, parents on the whole are devoting more time to their children, linked to factors such as increased parental education, altered social norms about parental involvement, heightened perception of crime, and the disconnection of community bonds (Gauthier et al 2004; Sayer et al 2004, cited in Monna & Gauthier, 2008: 648).

**Australian trends**

In Australia, according to the 2006 ABS Time Use Survey, the average time per day spent on total domestic activities as a primary activity (see Section 3.2.1) by men has shown only slight changes since 1992. In 2006:

- Men (fathers and non-fathers) spent 43 minutes a day on average doing basic housework, which is up from 37 minutes in 1992. Basic housework includes food and drink preparation and clean up, laundry and clothes care, and house cleaning).
- Men (fathers and non-fathers) spent an average of 45 minutes on other household work (including grounds and animal care, home maintenance and household management), down from 54 minutes in 1992.
- Men spent on average 22 minutes a day on child care activities, up from 14 minutes in 1992. (ABS, 2008: 4)

Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Childhood Education and Care Survey (ABS, 2008), indicate that more Australian men are making use of flexible working hours in order to care for their children, as can be seen from Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexible working hours</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time work</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shiftwork</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work at home</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job sharing</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families where a male parent used work arrangements for child care</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families where a male parent did not use work arrangements</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS Childhood and Education Survey, 2008

Table 1 shows that the number of Australian families where a male parent used work arrangements for child care purposes increased from 26% in 1996 to 41% in 2008. The most commonly used work arrangement by employed fathers in 2008 was ‘flexible work hours’.
3.2.4 Persistence of the gender wage gap

One consequence of continued differences in the division of paid and unpaid work between men and women is an ongoing gender pay inequity, described in the literature as the ‘gender wage gap’. While gender wage gaps have decreased over time in most OECD countries, with an especially steep decline observed in the USA between 1980 and 1995, the median earnings of men are higher than those of women in all countries. The average difference in median earnings in 2006 was 17.6%, and the gap is larger for high earners. Australia and the Netherlands are close to the OECD average, while in New Zealand, gender differences are below 10% (OECD, 2010: 13).

In Sweden, where the difference in the proportion of men and women in employment is lower than in most countries, the gender wage gap is also evident. Haas & Hwang (2008: 90) write that, despite over four decades of policies and practices explicitly designed to achieve equality between men and women, gender equality in the Swedish labour market has not been achieved. In 2002, women workers’ pay averaged 83% of men’s, partly due to the fact that women hold only 24% of management positions.

Between 1990 and 2009, Australia experienced a persistent gender wage gap in the range of 15.5% to 17.5%, implying that women receive around 83 to 85% of the average man’s wage. There was a sharp rise in the gender wage gap in the period from February 2005 to February 2009 ‘leaving the gap slightly above the level it was almost twenty years earlier’ (Cassells et al, 2009: 2-4). Potential drivers of the gender wage gap in Australia include:

- discrimination
- differing motivations and preferences between men and women
- the ways in which discrimination may be intertwined with issues such as the decisions that women and men make around study, career, family and labour market participation
- returns on education for women being generally lower than those for men, despite women’s somewhat higher levels of educational attainment
- the effects of interruptions and alterations to women’s labour market experience (eg not working, or working part-time) due to caring duties
- occupational segregation, defined as the extent to which women and men are disproportionately distributed across occupations in comparison to their overall share of employment – as a contributor to the gender wage gap, this is often regarded as an indicator of the undervaluing of traditionally ‘female’ jobs (Watts 2003, cited in Cassells et al, 2009: 9)
- women getting paid less than men within the same occupational groups, which has been found in Australia to be a greater contributing factor to the gender wage gap than occupational segregation (Cobb-Clark & Tan 2009, cited in Cassells et al, 2009: 10)
- the effect of segmentation of industries along gender lines.

(Cassells et al, 2009: 4-12)

3.2.5 Gender differences in work-family conflict and reconciliation

As the proportion of dual-earner families has grown, the combined working time of couples with dependent children has increased (O’Brien, 2007: 376). In a study focusing on the conflicting demands of paid and unpaid work among working couples in 29 countries, Edlund (2007: 459) finds that work-family conflict is more prevalent amongst women than men in all of the countries. The disadvantage for women in richer countries is mainly a higher risk of occupational overload (where the demands of paid work tend to interfere with family life and household duties), whereas in poorer countries there is a higher risk of being in a dual work-overload situation. Dual work-overload occurs when individuals ‘have difficulty functioning properly at work because of demands from the domestic sphere, and they experience problems managing family duties and household work because of demands from the sphere of production’ (Edlund, 2007: 456-457).
Studies of dual-earner families have found that employed men and women deal differently with work-family conflict—which is particularly evident in the differential uptake of part-time work, and use of more flexible forms of employment (Lewis & Giullari, 2005: 82). These findings support the contention that men favour ‘segmentation’ of the work and family spheres, while women are more likely to favour ‘integration’ (see brief discussion of these concepts in Section 2.2 above) as a means of achieving work-family reconciliation. In Australia, for example, Craig et al (2008: 51-55) find:

- The division of domestic labour follows household type, but it is women who adjust their workforce participation over their life course, with men’s behaviour being comparatively unchanging.
- Men in one-and-a-half-earner family households do not appear to suffer less work-family strain than those in dual-career households, whereas women in these households do almost as much unpaid work as homemaker mothers.
- Non-parental care is not entirely effective as a moderator of work-family strain, being associated with little objective reduction in time pressure, and rather with an increase in subjective time pressure for mothers. The use of non-parental child care has been found in research to have a negligible impact upon men’s time in unpaid work, total work, parental child care or subjective time pressure. This issue is discussed in greater detail in Section 8.7 of this report.
- Since most family care falls to women, research suggests that not having a spouse makes very little difference to work-family strain for women.

Gender differences are also expressed in Australia in the patterns of leave use following the birth of a child. Most mothers take three months of leave or more, whereas nearly all fathers take less than six weeks of leave. Mothers tend to use unpaid leave, or to combine paid, unpaid and other leave arrangements, whereas most of the leave taken by fathers is paid (Blaxland et al, 2009: 28).

3.2.6 Differences in the nature of caregiving provided by men and women

Research has also focused on the nature of caregiving itself, which has been described as ‘a complicated mixture of work and love, in which the relationship itself is of great importance’ (Folbre 2001, cited in Craig, 2006: 260). On the basis of a review of international academic research that focuses on the various forms of parental time with children, Monna & Gauthier (2008: 639) find that:

- even as fathers have increased their involvement with their children, the types of activities they engage in remain different to those of mothers
- fathers tend to spend more time in more rewarding child care activities such as playing and teaching, while mothers spend more time in personal child care activities such as bathing and feeding
- mothers also spend almost twice as much time alone with their children, and are more likely to experience high intensity overlaps ie caring for more than one child at a time
- fathers are more likely to spend time with their children at the same time mothers do, rather than by themselves.

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2 In a more detailed discussion of this point, the authors note the following:

*Not having a spouse makes very little difference to either objective or subjective time pressure. When groups of women with similar demographic profiles are compared, sole and couple mothers’ objective time pressure was pretty much the same. Nor, when they had the same work force status, was there a difference in perceived time pressure for sole and for couple mothers. Similarly, non-parental care appeared to have no different effect upon the time pressure of sole as opposed to couple mothers. However, it must be acknowledged that sole mothers are less likely than married mothers to be employed and to have tertiary education, and more likely to use non-parental care. The findings show only that marital status is in itself not a predictor of more or less work-family strain upon women* (Craig et al, 2008: 55).
These international data are supported by data from Australia:

*Studies have found that women spend a greater proportion of their total care time in physical care activities than men do; fathers are more likely to engage in play, talking, educational, and recreational activities than in other forms of care. This means that even in relative terms, the time women spend caring may be more demanding than the time men spend caring.*

(Craig, 2006: 262)

### 3.3 Summary

This section has identified factors that function as drivers of change for men’s increased participation in child care and unpaid domestic labour. It makes reference to studies that provide evidence of the relevance of the factors and their links to the gender division of labour, work-family conflict, and work-family reconciliation.

Various studies draw upon data from more than one country, and there is much consistency in the way researchers engage in cross-country comparisons, often using features of the welfare state regime, women’s empowerment, economic factors, demographic factors and specific policies as variables for comparison.

The research into the current status of the gender division of labour suggests that:

- women carry out a greater share of unpaid labour in all countries despite the increase in men’s participation in caregiving and unpaid domestic labour which has been measured over the past few decades
- gender pay inequities persist, even in countries that have low gender employment gaps
- women are more likely than men to experience work-family conflict
- men and women have characteristically different ways of striving for work-family balance
- men and women differ in the nature of the care they provide to their children.

These findings all lend weight to the importance of searching for ways to support men to engage in caregiving and unpaid domestic labour, while also supporting women to be more equally engaged in paid labour. An overview of government initiatives that have been undertaken in selected countries in order to meet these objectives is provided in Section 4 below.
4 Social policies in selected countries

4.1 Introduction

This section summarises developments that have occurred in Australia and nine other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. In doing so, it follows the convention of policy description and comparative analysis that is a feature of the literature. Cross-national empirical research on welfare state policies, or comparative social policy analysis, has been an important method for studying the issues involved in supporting men’s participation in caring and unpaid domestic labour, and the linked issue of women’s participation in the paid labour force.

A feature of the literature in this area is its portrayal of the policies in all countries as being in a constant state of flux, influenced especially by changes of government, and by changes in local and global economic conditions.

The following material is covered in this section:

- the classification of policies and welfare state systems within countries according to a typology, adopted in much of the literature, which distinguishes the major industrialised, western countries as having liberal, conservative or social democratic welfare state regimes
- recently available time-based data on men’s and women’s participation in both paid and unpaid labour in the selected countries
- discussion of policy developments in the selected countries, with a focus on recent initiatives.

4.2 Typology of welfare state systems

Many of the studies which investigate the influence of the institutional or macro context on the individual choices made by couples within the domestic sphere use a typology of welfare regimes. The explicit assumption is that the behaviours of individuals are ‘influenced by different types of welfare states with different features and characteristics that more or less exclude one another’ (Van der Lippe et al, 2010: 3).

A widely-used typology (see eg Gornick & Meyers, 2005; Geist, 2005; Van der Lippe et al, 2010; Smyth, 2010: 117-118) is that of Esping-Andersen, who argued that differences between welfare regimes emerge from differences in the ‘basic principles on which welfare state policies are founded: for example, differing ideas in relation to solidarity, equality and the role of the welfare state versus the market’ (Esping-Andersen 1990, 1999, cited in Pfau-Effinger, 2005: 3).

On the basis of these variables, Esping-Andersen classified the major welfare states of the industrialised west into three clusters, representing ‘liberal’, ‘conservative’ and ‘social democratic’ models, each described in greater detail below and used as a means to structure the discussions on individual countries. Other welfare regimes, such as the ‘Mediterranean regime’ and the ‘post-communist regime’, are also identified in the literature (eg Anxo et al, 2007; Van der Lippe et al, 2010) but are not included in the discussion here.

Commentators such as Knijn & Smit (2009: 513) also caution, on the basis of a study of work-family reconciliation policies in all of the European Union countries, that welfare regime differences are slowly fading when countries are faced with new social risks. The discussion below therefore takes into account the dynamic nature of the systems and policies that are being described.

Pfau-Effinger (2005: 8-9) considers the following as the key distinguishing elements of which the welfare state systems:

- values regarding waged work and the labour market, and ideas about the ways in which social security and employment should be connected
• ideas about social inclusion and social exclusion, and the nature of citizenship (including its impacts on migration policies)

• the notion of what is ‘just’ in relation to the way redistribution in the tax and social security systems takes place

• understandings of poverty, and the ethical and normative issues discussed in connection with poverty

• differing ideas about the State-market relationship and the degree to which State intervention in the market is appropriate

• ideas about social services and the way they should be provided, especially the extent to which the State, the family or the market are regarded as the key areas of service provision.

Particular reference is made in the discussion below to descriptions within the literature as to how the welfare regimes have addressed ‘whether or not the issue of work-family balance is principally understood within national discourse as a private matter that has to be solved by the family or as a collective problem in need of political solutions’ (Edlund, 2007: 452).

4.3 Statistical data

In order to provide a basis for comparing the countries, the tables below provide the most recently available time-based data on men’s and women’s involvement in paid and unpaid labour.
Table 2 – Usual working hours per week in paid employment by gender in selected OECD countries, 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country (Gender)</th>
<th>Percentage of total working population employed in hour bandwidths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia (M)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia (F)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK (M)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK (F)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA (M)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA (F)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada (M)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada (F)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand (M)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand (F)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France (M)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France (F)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany (M)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany (F)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands (M)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands (F)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden (M)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden (F)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway (M)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway (F)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: edited version of OECD Chart LMF7.1 Usual working hours per week by gender, 2007; M=men; F=women
Table 2 above shows:

- The incidence of working hours in most countries is concentrated in the 35-39 and 40-44 hour-bands, although Australia, the United Kingdom (UK), the Netherlands and New Zealand have a relatively dispersed distribution of working hours.

- 41% of men in New Zealand and the Netherlands work 45 hours or more per week, and 37% of men in Australia and the UK work 45 hours or more per week.

- Women in all of the countries included in Table 2 are more likely than men to be working part-time ie 34 hours per week or less.

- 43% of Australian women worked part-time in 2007, compared to 11% of Australian men.

Table 3 below considers the average percentage of time spent by men and women (aged 15 and over) in six primary activity categories over a 24 hour period. The data are collected in OECD countries by means of time-use surveys, which record information on how people allocate their time over one or several representative days for a given period (OECD, 2009).

Table 3 – Time allocated to daily activities by men and women aged 15 and over in selected OECD countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country (Gender)</th>
<th>Average Percentage of Time Spent in Each Activity Over 24 Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paid Work or Study¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia (M)</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia (F)</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK (M)</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK (F)</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA (M)</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA (F)</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada (M)</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada (F)</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand (M)</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand (F)</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France (M)</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France (F)</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany (M)</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany (F)</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands (M)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands (F)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Average Percentage of Time Spent in Each Activity Over 24 Hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country (Gender)</th>
<th>Paid Work or Study</th>
<th>Unpaid Work</th>
<th>Care Work</th>
<th>Personal Care</th>
<th>Leisure</th>
<th>Unspecified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweden (M)</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden (F)</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway (M)</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway (F)</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average for all 18 OECD countries (M)</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average for all 18 OECD countries (F)</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: edited version of OECD Table LMF11.1: Time allocated in main activities, by gender; measures were taken between 1999 and 2006 in the different countries. Australian data are from 2006; M=men; F=women

1 Includes time spent on jobs at full or part-time and/or studying, or the time spent looking for work. Breaks in the workplace, as well as the time spent on commuting to work, school or university, are also included.

2 Includes domestic activities (except time exclusively spent to care for a child or another person), including chores, cleaning, washing, repair work, or caring for pets, and non-home activities such as volunteer work and shopping.

3 Time spent to care for a child or another adult, including the supervision and education of a child, reading and talking with children, and transporting children.

4 Eating, drinking, sleeping and other household, medical and personal services, such as visits to the doctor or hairdresser.

5 Includes indoor and outdoor activities, such as sports and cultural activities, socialising with friends and family, watching television and using computers.

6 All activities not covered elsewhere, such as religious and spiritual activities, sexual activities, and the use of government services.

As can be seen from Table 3:

- Women in all the listed countries spend more time on care work than men (an OECD average of 4.6% of time for women, compared to an average of 1.8% of time for men).
- Women also spend on average more time on unpaid work, averaging 15.8% in a 24-hour period in all OECD countries, compared to an average of 8% for men.
- Australian women spend more time on care work (5.3% of total time in an average 24-hour period) than women from the other listed countries.
- The amount of time spent by Australian, Canadian and American men on care work is very similar (2.1% to 2.4%), and is higher than the OECD average for men (1.8%)
- Australian men spend a greater proportion of time in unpaid work (including chores, cleaning, washing, repair work, or caring for pets and non-home activities such as volunteer work and shopping, as described above) than the OECD average for men (10.5% compared to 8.0%).

Table 4 below provides the employment rates for women in the selected countries, as well as the gender gaps in total employment rates. The gender employment gap refers to the measured difference in the proportion of men and women aged 25 to 64 years who are in employment. The data are from 2008, except for Australia, Canada and New Zealand, where the data are from 2006. Data for the USA were not provided in the OECD tables.
Table 4 – Female employment rates and gender employment gaps in selected countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Employment Rate for Women (aged 25-64) as a Percentage of the population (aged 25-64)</th>
<th>Gender Gap in Employment for People aged 25 to 64 Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>-17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>-13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>-10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>-16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>-10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>-12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>71.6</td>
<td>-14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>-6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>79.4</td>
<td>-6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD average</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>-17.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: OECD family database Table LMF6.1

As can be seen from the data presented in Table 4:

- The rate of female employment in the OECD countries is on average 64.7%.
- The average gender gap in employment in the OECD countries is -17.9.
- The gender employment gap in Australia, at -17.5, is close to the OECD average and also higher than for all the other countries listed.
- The gender employment gap is lowest in Sweden (-6.2) and Norway (-6.6).

4.4 Noteworthy policy features of selected countries

The table below provides a summary of policy trends in the countries under consideration.
### Table 5 – Features of work-family reconciliation policies in selected countries (2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Welfare state regime</th>
<th>Family payments</th>
<th>Child care leaves</th>
<th>Workplace flexibility                                                                еш</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>liberal</td>
<td>The tax and wage system is generally preferred over direct transfers as a means to financially support parents</td>
<td>Currently 52 weeks unpaid parental leave are available for parents. From January 2011 there will be a government-funded Paid Parental Leave scheme as a legal entitlement for a maximum of 18 weeks paid at the Federal Minimum Wage any time within 12 months of a child’s birth or adoption</td>
<td>The conditions of employees are traditionally detailed in industry awards; new National Employment Standards provide both parents with the statutory right to request a flexible working pattern, periods of up to 12 months unpaid parental leave, and additional days of personal/carer’s leave</td>
<td>Focus on market forces and private provision; the Child Care Benefit and Child Care Tax Rebate are used as mechanisms to assist parents to address costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>liberal, with influences from EU policies</td>
<td>Reforming of the tax and family benefit system to encourage parents with lower incomes to engage in paid work; Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC) as an income supplement to poorly paid earners with dependent children</td>
<td>Statutory maternity leave for 52 weeks, of which 33 weeks are paid out of social security insurance; two weeks paternity leave paid at a flat rate; 13 weeks unpaid parental leave per parent per child up to the child’s fifth birthday; parents of children with disability receive 18 weeks leave</td>
<td>Statutory right to request a flexible working pattern; campaigns to encourage employers to adopt best practice</td>
<td>Primarily local government and private providers; the Childcare Tax Credit pays up to 70% of the costs of registered child care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>liberal, with strong role for market mechanisms</td>
<td>The tax and wage system is preferred over direct transfers as a means to financially support parents</td>
<td>Under the Family and Medical Leave Act 1993, employers with 50 or more workers offer a job-protected, unpaid leave of up to 12 weeks to qualifying employees who need to be absent from work for family or medical reasons</td>
<td>In the absence of public policies, workplaces play the major role in facilitating or impeding access to flexible work arrangements</td>
<td>Extensive child care market to deliver services on a for-profit and not-for-profit basis, with parents responsible for payments; child care and early childhood education are mainly motivated by anti-poverty goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Welfare state regime</td>
<td>Family payments</td>
<td>Child care leaves</td>
<td>Workplace flexibility</td>
<td>Child care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>liberal</td>
<td>Family cash benefits favoured as means to financially support parents; the Choice in Child Care Allowance is available for each child under six</td>
<td>Federal government provides maternity and parental leave benefits; Provinces and Territories administer the program; Quebec uniquely has a portion of parental leave reserved for fathers</td>
<td>Workplace flexibility strongly influenced by organisational size, unionisation rate, proportion of women in the organisation and the type of workforce</td>
<td>State subsidised child care for poorer families, generally low public spending on child care; employers are encouraged through tax credits to provide on-site child care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>liberal</td>
<td>Family cash benefits favoured as means to financially support parents</td>
<td>Parental leave of 14 weeks is available under certain conditions, able to be split between parents; payment is through Inland Revenue</td>
<td>Tendency to promote work-family balance practices, rather than legislating for them; there is a statutory right to request a flexible working pattern</td>
<td>Strong focus on private provision, but government subsidised; State-funded child care for families in need; employers are encouraged to provide services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>conservative, with influences from EU policies</td>
<td>French Family Allowance Fund; means-tested family payments, which take into account the number of children in a family</td>
<td>16 weeks paid maternity leave and 11 working days paid paternity leave; parental leave can be extended if a child is ill or has disability</td>
<td>35 hours maximum working week; family-friendly initiatives are deductible from company taxes through a family tax credit</td>
<td>Strong focus on State provision of child care, including system of outsourcing care (CESU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>conservative, with influences from EU policies</td>
<td>Universal social rights; tax incentives favoured as means to financially support parents; tax and benefit system has tended to promote the male breadwinner model and the family as a ‘unit’</td>
<td>Shift in parental leave policy in 2007; earnings-replacement benefit of 12 months, including two months for fathers; six-month unpaid leave entitlement for people with dependant relatives</td>
<td>Strong gender differences in the requesting and uptake of flexible work arrangements, with male breadwinner model prominent</td>
<td>Public child care provision is the responsibility of local governments; funded through a mix of local and central public monies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>conservative, moving towards liberal; influences from EU policies</td>
<td>Universal social rights; tax incentives favoured as means to financially support parents and to maximise individual choices; Life Course Savings Scheme with tax benefits</td>
<td>16 weeks paid maternity leave and 2 days paid paternity leave; short-term leave of maximum 10 days a year can be taken to care for a sick child, partner or parent</td>
<td>All employees have the statutory right to request flexible working hours; employees may deviate from statutory entitlements by collective labour agreement</td>
<td>Subsidies for providers of child care; co-financing of child care by employers in return for tax reductions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Welfare state regime</td>
<td>Family payments</td>
<td>Child care leaves</td>
<td>Workplace flexibility</td>
<td>Child care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>social democratic</td>
<td>Universal social protection and benefits, with generous entitlements linked to universal social rights</td>
<td>16 months parental leave with mother’s and father’s quota; leave is flexible and can be used full-time, half-time, quarter-time and one-eighth time until child’s eighth birthday; government campaigns to encourage fathers to take parental leave</td>
<td>Various forms of workplace flexibility available to parents until their children are 12</td>
<td>High quality and affordable child care services universally available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>social democratic</td>
<td>Universal benefits with generous entitlements linked to universal social rights; Cash for Care scheme, for parents of children aged 1 to 3, which does not affect earnings from other benefits</td>
<td>13 months paid parental leave with 4 weeks father’s only quota</td>
<td>Strong support for workplace flexibility, including wage compensation and cultural support for gender-equal reforms</td>
<td>Provision of State child care services boosted in the 1990s, with the aim of achieving universal coverage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4.1 Summary

All modern industrialised countries have policies that impact upon work-family reconciliation, but they differ with regard to the policy mechanisms they prioritise, and the motivations provided for pursuing any specific initiative. All the countries promote gender equality in various forms, including through legislation, but they differ according to the extent to which gender equality goals are explicitly pursued within their work-family reconciliation policies. It is also important to note that, while cross-country comparisons are a common method of researching work-family reconciliation policies, valid and reliable comparisons of policy initiatives are compromised if the historical and cultural contexts of those initiatives are not taken into account.

4.5 Liberal welfare states

Liberal welfare state regimes are traditionally found in English-speaking countries such as the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Major features of these systems include (Smyth, 2010: 117):

- most entitlements derive from need based on limited resources
- payments and services are means tested
- the welfare state ‘clientele’ is mostly comprised of low-income earners
- strict entitlement rules create a social stigma for recipients
- governments encourage private provision, sometimes with State subsidies, as the ideal.

Liberal welfare states are often loathe to be construed as over-involved in the private lives of individuals, and there is greater support for more individual responsibility for the maintenance of human capital. This leads to support for mechanisms such as private savings schemes, self-insurance against human capital risks, and a residual welfare state offering public compensation to the poor (Knijn & Smit, 2009: 487-492).

The market-oriented approach of this model tends to assume that gender relations are largely shaped by market forces, with the family being responsible for finding solutions whenever demands occur. (Edlund, 2007: 462). At the same time, there is an egalitarian ideology underlying the liberal tradition which supports the ideal of the equality of men and women (Geist, 2005).

4.5.1 Australia

Australia was a pioneer in terms of women’s political empowerment, being one of the first countries to provide female suffrage. Smyth (2010: 120) notes that ‘at the beginning of the twentieth century, Australia was internationally regarded as something of a laboratory for progressive social policy experimentation’. He adds that until the 1960s and 1970s, Australian social policy was identified closely with the British tradition, but that the influence of the USA has increased in importance since that time (Smyth, 2010: 120).

Commentators (such as Castles 1989, Castles & Mitchells 1992, Roe 1993, cited in Smyth, 2010: 120-121) have noted that Australia’s social policy regime has developed along quite different lines from those in Europe, with the wage system, not the tax-transfer system, as the primary means of achieving social policy goals. As such, it has been dubbed ‘welfare by other means’, the ‘Australian Way’ or a ‘radically redistributive model’.

According to Brennan (2007: 32), three policy domains are at the core of Australia’s work/family agenda, namely family payments (including child benefits and the tax treatment of second earners), maternity/parental leave, and child care, each of which is discussed in greater detail below. Brennan (2007: 32) also comments that policy changes in these areas are situated within the context of the government’s broader strategies regarding deregulation of the labour market, tax reform, and boosting the birthrate.
Craig & Mullan (2010: 6) argue that Australian family and workplace policies have not promoted father involvement or gender equality in care provision. At the same time, they do appear to have supported women’s participation in the labour market. In 2006, the most common couple household type was the ‘one and a half earner’ or ‘male full-time earner and a female part-time earner’ household. This household type had increased as a proportion of total households from around 33% in 1992 and 1997 to 41% in 2006 (Blaxland et al, 2009: 5), and ‘recent Australian census figures show that more than half of the mothers in two-parent families are employed by the time their youngest child is one or two’ (Craig, 2007: 70).

*Family payments*

Since the introduction of the *Widows’ Pensions Act* in Australia in 1942, there have been different priorities regarding income support policies for low-income parents. Support for sole parents currently takes the form of the Parenting Payment Single pension, available to sole parents with a child aged less than eight years, and which is tied to employment-oriented activity requirements (Blaxland et al, 2009: 20). Support for partnered parents is provided through the Parenting Payment Partnered allowance, available to parents whose youngest child is aged six years or less (Blaxland et al, 2009: 21).

The Australian Government provides assistance to families to help with the cost of raising children, and the Family Tax Benefit Part A and Family Tax Benefit Part B replaced 12 other family assistance payments and tax rebates in 2000. Part A is means-tested on the joint family income (with a maximum rate of approximately $150 per fortnight for a child aged less than 13 years in mid-2008); and Part B is not means-tested for the primary earner’s income, only the ‘secondary’ earner’s income (Blaxland et al, 2009: 17-19).

Since 2004, mothers in Australia have received a maternity payment, known colloquially as the ‘baby bonus’ (O’Neill 2004; Hill 2007, cited Blaxland et al, 2009: 28). This reflects the continuation of an Australian Government approach to maternity leave entitlements adopted since the mid 1990s ‘which did not tie eligibility for payments to mothers’ employment’ (Blaxland et al, 2009: 28).

*Maternity, paternity and parental leave*

The conditions of employees have traditionally been detailed in awards, which are usually occupational or industry based prescriptive documents determined by industrial tribunals (Alexander et al, 2008: 122). This reflects the trend within Australia for employment rights to be determined through the industrial relations system, rather than being delivered by government as a right of citizenship irrespective of employment status (Whitehouse 2004, cited in Blaxland et al 2009: 27).

The *Maternity Leave Act 1973* introduced 12 weeks of paid maternity leave and 40 weeks of unpaid maternity leave for Commonwealth public servants. The first formal provisions at a national level came into force through an industrial tribunal test case in 1990, when the 52-week unpaid maternity leave provision which had been won through a similar process in 1979 became ‘parental leave’. Parental leave was able to be shared by fathers taking on a ‘primary carer’ role for the child. With the exception of one week at the time of the birth (termed ‘short paternity leave’), fathers cannot take leave at the same time as their partners, and any paternity leave they do take has to be counted against the 52-week entitlement per family (Whitehouse et al, 2007: 389-390). A major benefit of the 12 months unpaid leave is the right to return to the same employer, an issue that is not relevant for the self-employed (Alexander et al, 2008: 124-125; Productivity Commission, 2008: 20).

The Australian Government has announced that it will introduce a government-funded Paid Parental Leave scheme starting on 1 January 2011 (FaHCSIA, 2010a). Paid Parental Leave will be a legal entitlement for working parents, including seasonal, casual, self-employed and part-time workers, and they will receive taxable leave at the National Minimum Wage for a maximum of 18 weeks. Paid Parental Leave will be able to be paid any time within 12 months of a child’s birth or adoption. The Baby Bonus and Family Tax Benefit will still be available for families not eligible for, and for those who choose not to participate in, the Paid Parental Leave scheme. It is estimated that 148,000 new parents will be eligible for Parental Leave pay each year.
Child care
The development of child care arrangements in Australia over the past few decades provides a good example of the emphasis placed by liberal welfare states on market forces and private provision. The number of child care places grew substantially in the 1990s, based on the directing of government resources away from community child care, towards supporting for-profit providers. From 1991 to 1996, places in community child care increased from 42,000 to 46,300, while places in for-profit centres increased from 32,000 to 121,600 (Brennan 1998, cited in Blaxland et al 2009: 11).

To reduce the cost of child care to families, governments use ‘fee relief’ rather than direct funding to services, and to increase the availability of places, governments prefer market mechanisms rather than government planning processes to determine where child care centres would be built (Blaxland et al, 2009: 1).

The Child Support Agency (CSA) is responsible for administering Australia’s Child Support Scheme. The Scheme supports separated parents to transfer payments for the benefits of their children, based on recognition of the contribution each parent makes towards the cost of raising the children (Child Support Agency, 2010).

Most recent developments
The National Employment Standards, which commenced on 1 January 2010 as part of the Fair Work Act 2009, include a range of minimum employment conditions to promote women’s participation in the workforce (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009):

▪ The National Employment Standards provide a new legislated entitlement for parents of a child under school age to request flexible working arrangements to assist with the care of the child under school age, or a child under 18 with a disability. An employer can only refuse this request on reasonable business grounds, and must provide the employee with a written response which includes details of the reasons for the refusal, so that the employee clearly understands why his or her request is being rejected.

▪ The National Employment Standards and Modern Awards provide both parents with the right to separate periods of up to 12 months unpaid parental leave. Alternatively, one parent has the right to request an additional 12 months of leave, which employers will only be able to refuse on reasonable business grounds. This builds on the previous entitlement under the Workplace Relations Act 1996 of 12 months unpaid leave, shared between parents. The National Employment Standards also extend parental leave entitlements to same-sex couples for the first time.

▪ Employees (other than casuals) have access to ten days paid personal/carer’s leave for each year of service, and all employees, including casuals, have access to two days of unpaid carer’s leave for each permissible occasion.

4.5.2 The United Kingdom
In the UK, there has until fairly recently been a lack of official family policy, and instead an ‘individualist approach’ towards the provision of child care, with the care of dependents treated as a private, family issue (Gregory & Milner, 2008: 72; Lewis & Campbell, 2007a: 4-5).

Lewis, Knijn et al (2008: 270) have described the situation as follows:

The UK has had the least by way of a track record in the work and family policy arena. While limited childcare services had been available for ‘at risk’ children, it is not inappropriate to think of policies in all the main work/family policy areas as being initiated at the end of the 1990s, after the election of the New Labour Government in 1997.

The policies that have come into effect since 1997 in the UK have developed along a number of dimensions (Lewis and Campbell 2007b; Gregory & Milner, 2008), including:

▪ introducing new forms of leave and extending existing ones

▪ investing in child care
addressing working hours in the form of a statutory ‘right to request’ a flexible working pattern

campaigns to get employers to adopt best practice

reforming the tax and family benefit system to encourage parents with lower incomes to engage in paid work.

In commenting on the changes that have occurred in the UK since 1997, Lewis & Campbell (2007b: 367), suggest that they have been based on the government’s thinking about the role of social policy and the restructuring of the welfare state more generally. They have included a rethinking of the work/welfare relationship, with employment in a flexible labour market considered as the key link between improved welfare, and economic competitiveness and growth. This is in keeping with developments in the European Union as a whole, which will be discussed in greater detail in section 4.5 below.

Gillies (2009: 53) comments on these changes that recent ‘fathering policy’ in the United Kingdom has included ensuring that men are able to access help and advice that will assist them to become more involved with their children, including spending quality time with them. The government has also attached great importance to the ‘modernisation’ of public services, especially in its emphasis on the importance of promoting consumer choice.

**Child care leaves**

Statutory maternity leave is available for 52 weeks, and a woman can start to take her leave from the beginning of the eleventh week before her baby is due. For six weeks she receives 90% of her average earnings (with no ceiling), and in addition receives a flat-rate weekly payment for 33 weeks. Statutory paternity leave can be taken for two weeks during the first eight weeks of the child’s life, but fathers receive only the flat-rate weekly payment during this time (O’Brien & Moss, 2008: 346-347). The paid portion of statutory maternity and paternity leave is paid out of social security insurance. It is possible for the mother to transfer the last six months of maternity leave to the father if she returns to work. This is known as Additional Paternity Leave, some of which can be paid if the mother has some of her entitlement to maternity pay remaining at the time of her return to work (Lewis, Knijn et al, 2008: 271; O’Brien & Moss, 2008: 350).

Unpaid parental leave is available for 13 weeks per parent per child, with a maximum of four weeks to be taken in any one calendar year, and the leave may be taken up to the child’s fifth birthday. Parents of children with disability are entitled to 18 weeks leave, which may be taken until the child reaches 18 years of age (O’Brien & Moss, 2008: 346-348).

**Child care**

Child care services are mainly run by local governments and private providers. Lewis and Campbell (2007b: 13) note that the cost of child care services is high, and that the organisation of care remains difficult for parents (usually the mother), which in turn has impacted on the choices they make to enter the labour market. The historical focus on market provision of child care means that it has been more highly educated women who pay for child care and develop continuous careers, while women with fewer educational qualifications have tended to return to low paid part-time jobs (Pascall & Lewis, 2004: 384).

In 1999, the government introduced the Working Families’ Tax Credit (WFTC) to provide an income supplement to the families of poorly paid earners with dependent children. If they receive the WFTC, single parents and couples who are both employed for more than 16 hours per week are also eligible for a Childcare Tax Credit, which pays up to 70% of the costs of registered child care (Himmelweit, 2002: 62). These measures have sought to extend the affordability and quality of child care, and have also aimed to reduce lone parent poverty and child deprivation (Knijn & Smit, 2009: 503).

**The right to request flexible work and the duty to consider**

Since 2003, the UK has had a statutory provision within its industrial relations policy known as the ‘right to request flexible work and the duty to consider’ (in short, the ‘right to request’). The provision means that parents with children under six (or under 18, if the child has disability) may request a flexible working pattern from their employers, limited to one request per year. The employer has to seriously
consider the request. By 2004, 24% of employees (37% of women and 10% of men) had made such requests, and 86% of the requests had been granted (Palmer 2004, cited in Lewis & Campbell, 2007b: 19-20). Research also demonstrates that many parents are not aware of their rights in this regard (Gauthier 2004, cited in Fox et al, 2009: 318).

Changes in family law

The British legal framework has changed, inspired by a combination of a desire to give equal parenting rights to fathers following divorce or separation, as well as to ensure financial support for the increasing numbers of children living separately from the natural father (Gregory & Milner, 2008: 69-70). From the promulgation of the 1989 Children’s Act, through the 1996 Family Law Act, to the 2002 Adoption and Children’s Act, the law has sought to reinforce joint parenting and the maintenance of contact between the father and his children if the parents divorce, and to give unmarried fathers the opportunity to obtain parental authority over their child.

Gregory & Milner (2008: 70) observe that the legal frameworks in the UK have supported a move towards greater father involvement in parenting but ‘when it comes to determining the place of residence and care of the children of divorced parents, judicial decisions continue to be made on the basis of societal norms relating to maternal competence in the care of (especially young) children’.

4.5.3 The United States

In the USA, work-family reconciliation and the raising of children have been seen as private issues outside the responsibility of the State: ‘As a liberal welfare regime the United States encourages market participation but also relies on the market to supply any support for maternal employment’ (Cooke, 2006: 122). Orloff (2009, cited in Craig & Mullan, 2010: 6) has noted that options about how to manage work and care in the USA depend on private resources more than other countries, and that almost all non-parental care is purchased through the market.

Workplace flexibility

In the absence of public policies, workplaces in the USA play a major role in facilitating or impeding access to the resources needed to balance competing work and family roles, including being providers of paid and unpaid leave, child care services, and time off work when a family member is ill (Lero et al, 2009: 23). The 2008 National Survey of Employers found that 79% of employers allow at least some employees to ‘periodically flex their arrival and departure time’ and 47% of employers allow at least some employees to shift from full-time to part-time work and back again while remaining in their same position (Lero et al, 2009: 22).

Child care

The USA has developed an extensive child care market to deliver services on both a for-profit and not-for-profit basis. Parents, not the State, are largely responsible for payments of these services (White, 2009: 386). In her analysis of child care policy development in the USA, White (2009: 393) writes:

A lesser need for women’s labor market participation meant policy makers and other actors, such as trade unions and business leaders, strongly resisted policies to help reconcile work and family life. Instead, they accepted a two-fold approach: a strong male-breadwinner norm governing white middle- and upper-class households to discourage women in those households from working outside the home; and an expectation, if not imperative… for poor, visible-minority, and immigrant women to work.

One outcome of this approach is that child care ‘has become entrenched as an anti-poverty policy, with the use of child care to help poor (and mainly single) women get off and stay off welfare and achieve the “dignity of work”’ (White, 2009: 399). Policy developments are occurring mainly at the State level through a reframing of child care as ‘pre-school or ‘early childhood education’, but government support for these pre-school programs is not universal. Early childhood education in the USA thus appears to be developing in the same way child care has, namely as an anti-poverty program (White, 2009: 399).
Maternity/paternity leave

The USA had no national maternity or paternity leave law until the passage of the *Family and Medical Leave Act* in 1993. This Act requires employers with 50 or more workers to offer a job-protected leave of up to 12 weeks to qualifying employees who need to be absent from work for family or medical reasons. The leave is unpaid, but employers who offer health insurance must continue to do so during the leave period. Less than 50% of private sector workers are eligible for leave under this Act (Nepomanyaschy & Waldfogel, 2007: 428). Since a majority of employed women work full-time, maternal workforce participation is low when children are young (Milkie et al 2009, cited in Craig & Mullan, 2010: 6).

Legislation

Partly as a consequence of the rapid rise in divorce rates and out-of-wedlock births during the 1960s and 1970s, leading to an increase in public expenditure on welfare benefits, the *Child Support Enforcement Act* was passed by Congress in 1974, requiring all States to establish comparable State offices, and authorising federal funding for child support enforcement. Amendments brought about in 1984 required States to adopt child support guidelines to determine obligation levels, and withhold child support obligations from the wages and other income of non-resident parents who were in arrears. Further legislation in 1996 aimed to ensure that child support collection became coordinated across State lines, and required States to develop punitive procedures for ‘delinquent obligors’ (Cooke, 2007b: 245).

Active debate on fathering

Although there is no national policy aimed at involving men in father care in intact families, there is an ‘active social discourse about the importance of father’s input to child development’ (Amato & Rivera 1999; Flouri 2005, cited in Craig & Mullan, 2010: 6). Longitudinal analysis of time use diaries shows increases in fathers caring for children in two-parent households in the USA since 1965, promoted by factors such as some reduction in their working hours (Bianchi et al 2006, cited in O’Brien et al, 2007: 376).

4.5.4 Canada

Promotion of workplace flexibility

Workplace flexibility in Canada is strongly influenced by organisational size, unionisation rate, the proportion of women in the organisation, and the type of workforce (Lero, 2009: 20-22). In large companies, some employees have access to flexible work hours, paid work performed at home for at least some of the regular scheduled hours, and employer support for child or elder care. Virtually all small and medium enterprises have adopted flexible work practices as a means of supporting employees’ work-life balance (Lero, 2009: 21).

Parental leave

Canada’s parental leave and benefits system is strongly influenced by the federal nature of the Canadian State. The federal government provides maternity and parental leave benefits through the Employment Insurance Programme, which must be used in the child’s first year. Provinces and Territories administer the program, and thereby modify some of the details (Doucet & Tremblay, 2008: 154). Fifteen weeks of the leave period are defined as maternity leave, for which only biological mothers are eligible. The remaining 35 weeks are characterised as parental leave and may be taken by the mother or father (biological or adopted), or shared by both. The value of the benefits is income-contingent, calculated at a rate of 55% of the recipient’s earnings, but there is a maximum benefit amount.

Based on figures provided by the Canada Employment Insurance Commission in 2003 (cited in Kershaw, 2006: 359):

- fathers represent just 11% of benefit recipients
- men stay on parental leave for a much shorter period than women
• the median claim period for men in 2001-2002 was 15 weeks, compared to 30 weeks for women.

Of all the provinces, it is Quebec which has developed the most distinctive parental leave and benefit system, which it launched in 2006. Under this program, fathers are entitled to up to five weeks leave at 70% of earnings, or three weeks at 75% of earnings. This is ‘a period of leave reserved for the father that cannot be transferred to the mother, which is an innovation in Canada and even in North America’ (Doucet & Tremblay, 2008: 158-159). Parents can then share either 55 weeks of parental leave paid at 70% of income up to a ceiling for 25 weeks (and paid at 55% for the remaining 30 weeks), or take a total of 40 weeks paid at 75% of income. In comparison with the federal parental leave program, the Quebec Plan increases the maximum insurable income, and abolishes the 14-day waiting period stipulated under the federal program for accessing the insurance (Doucet & Tremblay, 2008: 159).

**Child care**

Education and child care fall primarily under Provincial jurisdiction, but since the late 1990s a dialogue initiated between the Federal government and the Provinces and Territories (except for Quebec) ‘led to the creation of the National Children’s Agenda, a framework and vision for working together to improve the well-being of children’ (Cool, 2007: 2). Measures that have been developed in keeping with the National Children’s Agenda include:

• The National Child Benefit, which aims to help families make the transition from social assistance to paid employment and to increase benefits and services, including child care services for children in low-income families

• The Early Childhood Development Initiative, including investments in healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy, parenting and family supports, and early childhood development, learning and care

• A move towards direct payments to families for child care, including the Choice in Child Care Allowance (providing $1,200 per year for each child under six), and the Community Child Care Investment Program, which provides tax credits to employers to create new child care spaces for their employees, or for the wider community.

(Cool, 2007: 2-8)

**4.5.5 New Zealand**

In the early 2000s, the New Zealand government identified six key areas to improve the status of women:

• the gender pay gap

• women’s unremunerated work

• Maori women and girls

• better data collection

• mainstreaming the gender perspective

• enhancing women’s role in decision making (Curtin & Devere, 2006: 201-202).

Women’s labour force participation in New Zealand has been growing over the past decades and, as can be seen in Table 4 above, is higher than the OECD average (71.8%, compared to the OECD average of 64.7%). Nevertheless, women have higher rates of participation than men in all categories of unpaid work, both within and outside the household. In particular, Maori women have the highest rates of participation in each type of unpaid work outside the household, and in looking after children within the household (Statistics New Zealand 2005, cited in Curtin & Devere, 2006: 197).

In New Zealand, supports for men’s greater participation in caring and unpaid domestic labour have focused on initiatives related to flexible working arrangements, and leave policies that provide time off to care for children (Fursman & Callister, 2009: 65).
Flexible working practices
There has been a tendency in New Zealand to promote work-family balance practices by educating employers, employees and the general public, rather than legislating for them (Lero, 2009: 31). Nevertheless, similar to the UK, described above, New Zealand has enacted ‘right to request’ policies that support employees in the process of requesting alternative ways of structuring work, and place an obligation on employers to consider such requests (Fursman & Callister, 2009: 66).

Parental leave
Parental leave lasting 14 weeks is available to individuals who have worked for the same employer for six months, but with additional conditions related to hours of work. It can be split between parents. The parent is entitled to a gross weekly rate of pay close to 90% of the average weekly wage and salary income, which is paid through Inland Revenue (Productivity Commission, 2008: 29).

Child care
Child care in New Zealand is mainly privately provided, but it has been subsidised to enable women to participate more equally in the workforce. Steps have been taken to target State-funded child care to families in need, and to encourage employers to take responsibility for service provision for employees with children on a user-pays basis (Curtin & Devere, 2006: 203).

4.6 Conservative welfare states
Conservative welfare state regimes are found in European continental countries such as France, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands, but the grouping also includes Japan (Smyth, 2010: 117). Key features of this model include:

- universal social rights, unlike the liberal model
- preserved status differences to which rights attach
- benefits favouring the preservation of traditional family type
- services provided as a right, but delivered through non-State organisations where possible.

(Smyth, 2010: 117)

In these countries, social policies stress the primacy of family and community in providing dependent care and other social supports. The market-replicating principles underlying social policies, typically tied to earnings and occupation, are often embedded in socially conservative ideas about family and gender roles. Consequently, conservative regimes have often actively supported traditional gender roles, and their policies have been targeted toward supporting the family as a unit (Gornick & Meyers, 2005: 10; Geist, 2005: 26).

4.6.1 France
In line with the Republican tradition in France, according to which ‘people are treated as neutral citizens belonging only to the French State and not to any intermediary interest groups, the state does not undertake to treat men and women differently’ (Windebank, 2007: 268). Full-time working for both men and women is a predominant, respected norm in a majority of households. At the same time, the post World War II assumption that a more egalitarian division of domestic labour and child care between men and women would follow women’s integration into the workplace has been proved wrong. The result is that ‘the gender division of caring and domestic work in the country remains highly unequal…[and]…it is women who still shoulder the major share of the practical, organizational, managerial and emotional aspects of these activities’ (Windebank, 2007: 257).

State provision of child care, and State encouragement for the outsourcing of domestic labour (discussed in greater detail below), have been prominent mechanisms through which the country has attempted to help women deal with work-family conflict. However Crompton and Lyonette (2006: 388) find that levels of work-life conflict for women in France are comparable to those in countries which do...
not offer similar levels of State support for families, and suggest that ‘in the case of France the domestic
division of labour is a particularly important factor contributing to work-life conflict’. The authors locate
explanations for gender traditionalism in France as being based in Republican concepts concerning
‘difference’ and ‘equality’:

*Any claim to special treatment by particular groups* [for example affirmative action to redress
previous gender imbalances in the labour market] *is seen as a claim for unequal (ie. more
advantaged) consideration* ...[and]... *the topic of ‘equal opportunities’ has not had a particularly high
profile in France. Perhaps as a consequence, attitudes to the gendered division of labour are rather
conventional in France.*

**Child care and early childhood education**

France has a long tradition, beginning in the late 1700s, of providing early childhood education through
pre-schools, as well as the provision of child care services. The country’s child care and family policies
are regarded as having made a significant contribution to the facilitation of both men’s and women’s full-
time paid labor market participation. Child care centres are usually open every working day for 11
hours, and families bear only about one-quarter of the costs, depending on their income, and on the
number of dependent children they have (White, 2009: 386). The centres remain open long enough to
support parents’ labour market participation, and the result is that French women enjoy one of the

**Unemployment and fertility concerns**

The development of family policies in France has been linked to concerns about high unemployment in
the country (Gregory & Milner, 2008: 70), and a consistent goal in French policy has been to boost the
fertility rate. As a result, some supports become more generous the more children a family has. For
example, there is 16 weeks maternity leave for the birth of each of the first two children (paid at 100% of
earnings, to a ceiling), whereas 26 weeks is available for the third and subsequent children (Bettio &
Plantenga 2004, cited in Craig & Mullan, 2010: 6). Means-tested payments are made to families with
more than one child until the youngest child reaches the age of three. For one-child families, the
payment is made until six months after the maternity leave expires. Pre-school is universally available
for three to five year olds (with nearly 100% attendance), and it is publicly-funded (Fagnani & Boyer

**Length of working week**

In 1998 and 2000, legislation was passed to bring about a universal reduction in working time, leading
to a maximum legal working week of 35 hours for all companies, although the limit was subsequently
relaxed for small companies. Companies were encouraged to support these measures by being granted
generous incentives in return for the creation of new posts. This reduction in working time was therefore
another means used by the State to deal with an ongoing unemployment problem, but it also had the
direct effect of leading to a decrease in the number of hours worked per employee over the year,
potentially increasing the amount of time available to both mothers and fathers to engage in unpaid
domestic work (Gregory & Milner, 2008: 74).

**Outsourcing child care and domestic work**

One of the ways in which the State has attempted to deal with work-family conflict is the introduction of
a universal policy tool with which the State subsidises and supports the use of paid domestic services
by households. The CESU (Chèque Emploi-Service Universel) also developed out of the interest of the
French State in neighbourhood and domestic services, and out of its continuing interest in dealing with
high unemployment rates. A series of policy developments since the early 1990s led to the introduction
of the CESU scheme in 2006, essentially a tool that contributes to the outsourcing of domestic labour
(Windebank, 2007: 259-261). Although studies have pointed to the advantages for some French
women of this scheme, Windebank is critical of it especially in the sense that it has a negative impact,
‘both symbolically and practically, in terms of encouraging men to become more involved in domestic
labour’ (Windebank, 2007: 269).
Maternity, paternity and parental leave

All employed and self-employed women are entitled to 16 weeks of maternity leave, during which they receive 100% of earnings up to a ceiling. All employed and self-employed men are entitled to 11 working days paternity leave at full payment, and it must be taken within the four months following the birth of their child. Parental leave is an individual entitlement that is available until the child reaches three years, and where a child is seriously ill or has a disability, parental leave can be extended by a year. A range of payment mechanisms is provided through the French Family Allowance Fund (Fagnani & Boyer, 2008: 200-201).

There is evidence that many men in France are involved in child care only when ‘forced’ to do so by their partner’s work schedules, and that even then they rely heavily on the mother’s primary care role within the household (Fagnani & Letablier 2003; Boyer & Nicolas, 2006, cited in Gregory & Milner, 2008: 74). While one out of two or three women utilise the parental provisions for which they are eligible, only one out of every one hundred men do so (Fagnani & Letablier 2005, cited in Lero et al, 2009: 27). The factors that have been identified as helping to explain why fathers are so reluctant to claim parental leave include:

- the unequal gender distribution of domestic and child-raising tasks within the family still persisting in France
- traditional value systems
- the man earning more than the woman in most couples
- a workplace culture in the private sector that makes it difficult for a man, in particular at management level, to take parental leave (Fine-Davis et al 2004, cited in Fagnani & Boyer, 2008: 204).

Family tax credit

A family tax credit was introduced in 2004, which provides financial incentives to companies to encourage them to develop family-friendly initiatives for their employees. According to this initiative, 25% of related expenses are deductible from taxes paid by the company up to a ceiling (Fagnani & Boyer, 2008: 202).

In summary, with a social policy system in which State intervention in family affairs is socially legitimised, and child-raising is regarded as a shared social responsibility, France has been described as having a ‘collective care’ policy model (Shaver 2002, cited in Craig & Mullan, 2010: 6). The entrenched gender division of domestic labour briefly referred to above suggests that this policy model has been less successful in supporting men to engage in caregiving and unpaid domestic labour, than it has been in supporting maternal employment.

4.6.2 Germany

Two policy regimes

From the end of the Second World War until 1990, the social policies in West Germany and East Germany pursued different goals and had different outcomes.

In comparative welfare state research, West Germany was traditionally regarded as a prime example of a conservative welfare state in that it relied heavily on the unpaid care work of women in the private realm of the family, and it had policies such as tax penalties for dual-earner couples, gender discrimination in the labour market, and a lack of child care institutions (Hennig, et al, 2008: 287-288). In this model, men were expected to support themselves and their families by means of their earned income and, so as to be able to comply with this work obligation, were largely released from family duties (Henniger et al, 2008: 290). The country introduced ‘a long and relatively generous parental leave’ in 1986 which, ‘together with generous financial support for children, was designed to support child-rearing by mothers at home’ (Lewis, Knijn et al, 2008: 268).

On the other hand, East Germany adopted a constitution in 1949 that enforced women’s obligation to work. The government passed the Mother and Child Care and Women’s Rights Acts in 1950, which
established a network of public child care centres, kindergartens and facilities for free school meals, maternity leave, and days off to care for sick children. The 1965 Family Law Code ‘emphasised the equality of spouses and demanded a new male consciousness in child care and child-rearing, but no policies were implemented to support the rhetoric’ (Budde 1999; Zimmerman 1993, cited in Cooke, 2006: 121-122).

West and East Germany were reunified in 1990, but with the West German policy structure applied to East Germany. This led to, amongst others, the closing of many child care centres in the former East Germany (Cooke, 2007a: 936). At the time of German reunification, over 90% of married women in the former East Germany were employed (almost 70% full-time) as compared with just 44% of married women in the west, only half of whom were employed full-time (Ostner 1993, cited in Cooke, 2006: 122).

**Child care**

Provision of public child care in the united Germany is the responsibility of local governments. Payment for child care services is through a mix of local and central public funding to daycare centres and childminders, rather than as cash subsidies to voluntary and/or private sector providers, or to parents (Lewis, Knijn et al, 2008: 269).

**Parental leave**

Parental leave policy in Germany is the responsibility of the central government. An important shift occurred with regard to parental leave policy in January 2007, in order to counter the inherent gender inequality effects of Germany’s traditional leave scheme, which had done little to entice fathers to take up leave, and had led to comparatively long labour market exits of women (Erler & Erler, 2008: 210). In accordance with the concept of ‘sustainable family policy’, the parenting benefit was converted from a transfer payment into an earnings-replacement benefit, the duration of the receipt of this benefit was restricted from 24 to 12 months, and there was the introduction of two additional months of parental leave for fathers, described as ‘partner months’ (Henninger et al, 2008: 295).

Henninger et al (2008: 295-296) describe the new policy instrument as having three objectives:

- to support parents without welfare benefits (social policy goal)
- to promote the employment of mothers and the participation of fathers in care work (gender policy)
- to raise the birth rate (demographic objective).

In the period after these policy changes were brought about, fathers’ utilisation of parental leave increased from 5% to 10.5% in 2007, yet more than half of these fathers (61.1%) limited their receipt of the benefit to the two partner months. Only one-fifth of all men (1.9% of all recipients), compared to more than four-fifths of all women (78.1% of recipients), took the maximum of 12 months parenting time (Henninger et al, 2008: 300).

These authors note that attitudinal factors in German men continue to play a key role in explaining these differences in the uptake of parental leave. Studies have found that the majority of men believe that income losses for the family are generally smaller if the mother stays at home, and that they feared occupational disadvantage if they were to take parental leave. ‘Thus, what is important for an increase in the use of parental leave by fathers is a change of attitudes – not only among men, but also among employers’ (Henninger et al, 2008: 302).

**Non-child care leaves**

Another recent innovation in Germany was the introduction of a six-month unpaid leave entitlement for people with dependant relatives requiring care, implemented in July 2008 (Erler & Erler, 2008: 211).

### 4.6.3 The Netherlands

**One-and-a-half earner family model**

Although traditionally classed as having a conservative welfare state regime, ‘the Netherlands is exceptional in that it has effected a radical change in regime type…[The country has]…drifted away
from socialized approaches by embracing a privatized and individualized risk-taking approach that many associate with the liberal regimes’ (Knijn & Smit, 2009: 510). In the process, the country has been developing a ‘one-and-a-half-earner’ family model as the outcome of an agreement between partners in government and civil society (Lewis, Knijn et al, 2008: 272). It is also known as the ‘Combination Scenario’, since it is a model of intervention for gender equality at the household level that aims to bring men into unpaid work, as well as bringing women into paid work (Pascall & Lewis, 2004: 378).

**Child care**

The Netherlands started to develop formal child care provision at the end of the 1980s via subsidies to providers of child care. A relatively large number of employers co-finance child care for their employees in return for a 30% tax reduction per child care place (Lewis, Knijn et al, 2008: 272).

**Flexible work arrangements**

In keeping with provisions in the *Working Hours Adjustment Act*, promulgated in 2000, all employees who have completed one year’s continuous employment with their present employer have the right to increase or decrease their working hours, but the law does not apply to employers with less than ten employees. This includes the ability to request either a reduction to part-time hours, or an increase to full-time hours (Groenendijk & Keuzenkamp, 2008: 259).

**Maternity, paternity and parental leave**

All female employees are entitled to 16 weeks maternity leave (six weeks before the birth and ten weeks after the birth) during which time they receive 100% of earnings up to a ceiling equivalent to the maximum daily payment for sickness benefit. Fathers have two working days paternity leave at the birth of a child, in which they receive 100% of earnings (no upper ceiling) paid by the employer. All employees who have completed one year’s continuous employment with their present employer are entitled to parental leave, calculated at 13 times the number of working hours per week per parent per child, to be taken up the child’s eighth birthday.

Employers are permitted to deviate from the statutory entitlements by collective labour agreement, and employees may be offered less or more than the statutory entitlement. Partial payment of parental leave also differs greatly, depending on the nature of the collective agreements made (Groenendijk & Keuzenkamp, 2008: 256-258). The State offers paid parental leave at 75% compensation to its own employees.

Short-term leave up to a maximum of ten days per year can be taken by employees to care for a sick child living at home, or a sick partner or parent. During this time, the employer is expected to pay 70% of the employee’s earnings. (Groenendijk & Keuzenkamp, 2008: 258).

**Savings scheme with tax incentive**

Since 2006, a new savings scheme with a tax incentive element, the voluntary Life Course Savings Scheme (LCSS), was introduced to support work-family reconciliation by enabling workers to cope better with stressful periods (Groenendijk & Keuzenkamp, 2008: 259). Lewis, Knijn et al (2008: 273) describe the LCSS as a consolidation of the approach adopted in the country toward ‘favoring cash over services and thereby seeking to maximize the choice of the individual worker/consumer’. On the basis of the LCSS, male and female workers can save 12% of their wages per year up to 210% of their last earned salary in order to take time out of the labour market. The money is treated as deferred income and is only taxed on withdrawal.

There has been a low uptake of participation in the LCSS, and in 2009, the country ‘retreated from its previous policy of putting the risks of care-giving on the shoulders of the parents themselves. Unpaid parental leave is now compensated by tax deductions, independent of participation in the LCSS’ (Knijn & Smit, 2009).

**Legal protection for part-time workers**

In keeping with its promotion of a ‘maternal part-time work model’, but underpinned by a strong commitment to female equality and non-discrimination on the basis of gender, Anxo et al (2007: 245) write:
The Dutch model delivers a better quality and more integrated form of part-time work in terms of the occupational profile and hourly earnings relative to that of full-time jobs, and the protection afforded to part-timers within labour law and the social protection system.

This includes legislation that prohibits discrimination between employees based on working hours. These measures promote the overall quality and status of part-time work (which is predominantly carried out by women).

Changes to the country’s employment rates suggest that the policies briefly described above have by and large achieved their desired outcomes. Women’s employment increased by 12 percentage points between 1996 and 2006, the largest growth in all of the EU countries (Lewis, Knijn et al, 2008: 264). When comparing employment patterns among couple families with children aged 0 – 14 in all OECD countries, the 2007 data show that the Netherlands has the largest proportion of one-and-a-half earner households, and that this is by far its most dominant family model in the country (OECD, 2010: 11). The Netherlands also has the largest proportion of women working fewer than 20 hours (Lewis, Knijn et al, 2008: 264).

4.7 Social democratic welfare states

The social democratic welfare regime model is essentially found in the Nordic countries – Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland and Iceland. In these regimes, the State is not perceived as an entity that exists separate from society; instead, ‘the ideas of the state and society interlock’ (Sainsbury 1996, cited in Geist, 2005: 26). Social policies in these countries are characterised by generous entitlements linked to universal social rights. This model aims to achieve the following ideals:

- universal, rather than selective benefits
- social services designed to offer an equality of the highest standard
- a socialisation of the costs of family, encouraging men and women equally in work.

(Thorpe, 2010: 211)

‘Equality, solidarity and universalism are values that explicitly underpin the Nordic model’s commitment to the principle of inclusionary and equal citizenship – even if that principle is not fully achieved and is under some strain in the face of growing immigration and also a growing preoccupation with choice in welfare’ (Ellingsaeter & Leira 2006, cited in Lister, 2009: 246). Although equal participation of men and women in both earning and caring has yet to be achieved in any of the Nordic countries, their social policies ‘go some way towards the achievement of...a society in which men and women engage symmetrically in employment and care-giving, and where gender equality, paid work, and caregiving are all valued’ (Gornick & Meyers 2006, cited in Lister, 2009: 249).

The four Nordic countries of Finland, Norway, Iceland and Sweden hold the top four places in the World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index, with Denmark in seventh place (Lister, 2009: 251), and, as can be seen in Table 4, the gender employment gap in Sweden (at -6.2) and Norway (at -6.6) is well below the OECD average (at -17.9).

4.7.1 Sweden

Strong gender equality agenda for decades

The idea of a mutual process where women enter the traditional realms of men, and men the traditional realms of women, ‘has been the ideological foundation of Swedish family and equal status policy for the last 40 years. Sometimes this policy has been described in terms of the ‘dual-earner, dual-carer family’...From the beginning of the 1970s, almost unanimous political attention has been paid to this basic vision’ (Klinth, 2008: 20). Alongside Sweden’s goal of gender equality is ‘the value placed on children as a precious resource’ (Haas, 2003: 106).
Whole-of-government approach

Haas (2003: 106-108) provides a summary of the policy developments that have occurred in Sweden in order to achieve the ideological goals of gender equality:

- the establishment in the early 1970s of an individualised taxation system, so that women’s income earnings do not drive household tax rates higher
- equal employment opportunity legislation in the 1980s, which supported women’s entry into non-traditional occupations and ensured equal pay for comparable work
- the increase in the supply of heavily subsidised, high-quality public child care
- the introduction of mandated parental leave for both mothers and fathers.

Child care services in particular are marked by the provision of high quality and affordable services (Knijn & Smit, 2009: 503).

Parental leave with father’s quota

Following the establishment of an Advisory Council for Equality between Men and Women in 1972, Sweden introduced a gender-neutral parental leave scheme in 1974, granting the right to six months’ paid leave after the birth of a child. The leave was prolonged to 15 months in 1989, and to 16 months in 2002 (Klinth, 2008: 22; Haas & Hwang, 2008: 88-90; Duvander et al, 2010: 46). The income replacement levels have changed over the years, and since 1998 have been 80% of previous earnings up to a ceiling. Leave can be taken full-time, or at different degrees of part-time until the child turns eight years.

From 2007, Swedish parents have been entitled to 16 months (480 days) parental leave, and, in a crucial development, the leave for fathers and mothers has been separately allocated (Klinth, 2008: 22). Sixty days are earmarked for the mother (the ‘mother’s quota’) and 60 days for the father (the ‘father’s quota’). The remaining 360 days are formally divided (50/50) between the parents but can easily be transferred from one parent to the other. The leave is highly flexible. Parents can use it full-time, half-time, quarter-time and one-eighth time until the child’s eighth birthday.

Employees can take between three and 12 months leave from work, during which time they receive a benefit payment, and the employee taking leave must be replaced by an unemployed person. Temporary parental leave is available at 120 days per child per year for children under the age of 12, paid at 80% of earnings. In general, until a child reaches the age of eight years or completes the first grade of school, parents have the right to reduce their normal working time by up to 25 per cent, but there is no payment for working reduced hours (Haas et al, 2008: 336; Duvander et al, 2010: 47).

4.7.2 Norway

Parental leave with father’s quota

Norway introduced a gender-neutral parental leave scheme in 1978, giving working parents the right to 18 weeks of paid leave around the birth of a child. This was extended to 12 months in 1993, and to 13 months in 2009 (Duvander et al, 2010: 46-47).

Until 1993, this parental leave could be shared on voluntary basis by either parent, but fathers on average used less than 5% of the time. In order to encourage fathers to take parental leave, Norway introduced a father’s quota of one month in 1993, when the law was changed to say that father had to use four weeks of this leave or the family would lose it altogether. The father’s quota is not transferable to the mother, except in certain circumstances, such as if the father is ill or if the mother and father do not live together. The father’s quota may not be taken in the first six weeks of the parental leave period, but otherwise fathers are free to choose at what time to use it, and whether to split the quota or use it in one block. Splitting requires agreement with the employer (Brandth & Kvande, 2008: 272).

Research into the use of the father’s quota (Brandth & Kvande, 2008: 275) shows that the fathers least likely to use it are those with long working hours, those in managerial positions, or those with a wife who works part-time. The sharing of parental leave ‘also depends on their own relationship to their work.’
Fathers must often negotiate with their employers when they want to take more leave than the father’s quota, and the view that parental leave is really maternity leave is to be found among some employers’.

**Child care**

The provision of State child care services developed later in Norway compared to other Nordic countries, but then increased rapidly during the 1990s, with the aim of achieving universal coverage (Leira 2002, cited in Crompton & Lyonette, 2006: 381).

**Cash for care scheme**

The country introduced a ‘cash-for-care scheme’ in 1998. Under this scheme, parents with children from one to three years of age may receive public benefits, provided they are not using a full-time place in a public day care centre. The scheme is not dependent on whether parents are working or not. It is not considered as a form of wages, and thus does not affect earnings from other social and/or welfare benefits (Brandth & Kvande, 2006: 152). Parental money may either be taken for a shorter period at 100% of earnings, or for a longer period at 80% of earnings, up to a ceiling of six times the basic national insurance benefit payment. Non-employed women receive a flat payment (Brandth & Kvande, 2008: 272).

Due to the early introduction of a fathers’ quota in parental leave schemes in both Sweden and Norway, studies on the effects of this innovation in the two countries feature prominently in the discussion in Sections 7 and 8 below.

### 4.8 Developments within the European Union

The past few decades have seen the development of a range of European Union (EU) policies to address a wide range of challenges facing western welfare states, and these are briefly summarised in acknowledgement of the fact that EU member States are represented in each of the welfare regimes described above. Developments within the EU also provide a good example of the trend for work-family policies to be explicitly directed towards macro-economic ends within an increasingly globalised economy.

From the beginning, the goal of the EU (and its predecessor, the European Economic Community) was ‘the creation of a common market achieved by increasing the mobility of goods, labor, capital and services across national lines without harming member states’ economic competitiveness’ (Ostner 2000, cited in Haas, 2003: 92).

Work-family reconciliation policies have been developing throughout member States since the publication of the **1992 EU Council Recommendation on Childcare**. This encouraged all member States to promote initiatives relating to the sharing of occupational, family and child care responsibilities between women and men, but many commentators have argued that the social policy goals are subordinate to the goals of economic integration policy, that is, to competitiveness and macro-economic stability (Fox et al, 2009: 314; Lewis & Giulia, 2005: 80).


> Particular attention has been focussed on women’s employment as a result of the 2000 Lisbon Council’s target of 60 per cent for female labor market participation rates in Member States by 2010… To this core goal has been joined the need to tackle a number of other pressing issues: population ageing; falling fertility rates; child poverty; children’s development; and managing increasingly diverse and pluralist workforces.

Work-family reconciliation policies across EU member States have been designed to permit the combination of paid and unpaid work through three major means (Lewis, Knijn et al, 2008: 263):

- more attention to stimulating the provision of child care services
- the promotion of flexible working hours, which can be linked to the modernisation of work cultures
- substantial reform of child care leaves.
Underlying these developments is the treating of all adults, both men and women, as though they are fully individualised, economically autonomous workers, representing a shift away from policy assumptions based on the existence of a male breadwinner/female carer family model, and toward the promotion of an adult worker family model. The assumption is that all adults will be 'individualised' in the narrow economic sense, and this can be seen as part of the broader shift to employment-led social policy (Lewis 2001, cited in Lewis, Knijn et al 2008: 262).

A key mechanism for achieving this has been the Parental Leave Directive (PLD) agreed to by member States in 1996, which ensures that workers may not be dismissed for exercising their right to parental leave. However, it also contains 'non-binding recommendations, including not specifying whether leaves have to be paid or unpaid, and not addressing the balance of responsibilities between men and women' (Leon, 2009: 205).

4.9 Summary

The overview of policy developments in this section highlights the interconnection between social and economic policies, labour market regulation, and cultural debates on the status and role of men and women in society in the OECD countries. While all countries have adapted to the modern challenges facing their citizens in terms of employment and domestic arrangements, they have done so in ways that are in keeping with their historical approaches to balancing the relationships among the family, the State and the market, connecting waged work with social security, and dealing with poverty.

Countries such as Sweden have clear policies to support dual earner-dual carer families, while others, such as the Netherlands, have opted to pursue the one-and-a-half earner model, while at the same time strengthening the economic security of part-timers (of whom there are more women than men) by elevating the quality of part-time work. Countries such as the USA, Canada and the UK, with which Australia shares many commonalities, have explored various ways to encourage market provision of services and supports to families, and have also developed strong legislative supports for parenting rights and obligations. Table 5 (Features of work-family reconciliation policies in selected countries, 2010) provides a summary of policy developments in the countries under consideration.
5  Factors influencing men’s participation in caregiving and unpaid domestic labour

In this section, factors that can both facilitate, and serve as barriers to, men’s participation in caregiving and domestic labour are briefly described. These factors, listed below, are also discussed within the literature as influences on the decisions that men and women make with regard to their domestic division of labour:

- having children, especially a first child
- being in a two-parent family
- attitudes about gender roles and norms
- parental attitudes about men’s engagement in child care
- time constraints
- the partners’ relative resources
- workplace culture
- ability to outsource care and domestic labour
- government policies
- attitudes and skills of professional services
- economic factors, including housing affordability.

5.1  Having children, especially a first child

Having a child increases the domestic workload for both mother and father, and at the same time increases the gender gap in the division of labour between the partners, often leading to a more traditional sharing of tasks in the household (Craig et al 2010: 28). The arrival of a first child has been found to reduce the actual sharing of housework in cohabiting couples (Bianchi et al 2000, cited in Bernhardt et al, 2008: 286).

Research by Craig et al (2008: 51) shows that the biggest step up in workload and in perceived time pressure is that between households with no resident children, and households with one child. That is, it is the difference between one child and no children that has the most pronounced effect. Mothers have been found to contribute about four-fifths of the time impost associated with a first child (Craig & Bittman 2005, cited in Craig, 2007: 70). Based on research in Australia, Craig et al (2010: 39) conclude:

> There is an exacerbation of the gender division of labour in households with children compared to those without. The extra work of fathers is comprised solely of childcare. In contrast, women adjust all three types of work. Mothers are doing less paid work, and more of the unpaid work of childcare and of the extra tidying, shopping, cleaning and laundry that the presence of children creates.

5.2  Being married

Being married has a negative effect on women’s participation in paid labour, whereas with men it leads to a larger contribution. Both married men and women spend more time on housework duties than single men and women (Van der Lippe et al, 2010: 9). Some research shows that single or divorced parents spend less time with their children than two-parent families (Baydor et al 1999; Zuzanek 2001, cited in Monna & Gauthier, 2008: 640-641), whereas, drawing on the ABS Time Use Survey 1997 (see Appendix A2 for description of this survey), Craig (2005) finds that sole mothers provide their children with very similar care to that available to children in couple families.
5.3 Attitudes about gender roles and norms

A substantial body of research has been carried out into the effect of gender attitudes or ‘gender ideology’ on the gender division of labour. Based on the general argument that behaviour is affected by attitudes, many researchers have suggested that gender role attitudes are the most important predictor of performance of domestic labour, and that the more both spouses have internalised traditional gender role expectations, the more likely they will be to show a traditional division of labour (Coltrane 2000; Hiller 1984, cited in Geist, 2005: 25). Similarly, the gender ideology perspective suggests that men and women who hold more egalitarian gender attitudes will distribute household labour more equitably (Hook, 2006: 641).

Some researchers regard socialisation as having a major influence on the development of gender attitudes:

Gender ideology can be defined as the beliefs or attitudes that a person has about gender roles. From childhood onwards, women and men acquire gender role attitudes through the socialisation process, including preferences for how women and men should behave… When reaching adulthood, most women and men will act in line with the gender ideology they have been exposed to.

Nordenmark (2004: 234)

A contrasting approach to the understanding of determinants of the gender division of housework focuses on the adoption of behaviours by men and women that establish themselves as ‘male’ or ‘female’ in the eyes of others. Therefore women may perform housework in order to symbolically enact their femininity, while men avoid it for symbolic reasons relating to masculinity (West & Zimmerman 1987; Butler 1990, cited in Campbell & Carroll, 2007: 492). This approach, often referred to as ‘doing gender’, has been used to explain findings contrary to economic-based assumptions, such as why economically dependent men do less housework than other men, and why economically independent women do more housework than other women (Bittman et al, 2003; Hook, 2006: 642).

Couples in which the man has a high education level are significantly more likely to hold egalitarian ideals (Bernhardt et al, 2008: 284). A woman’s increased level of education enhances gender equality not only in employment and earnings, but also in the domestic sphere. However, further research is needed to explore whether it is the content of education that promotes greater equity (such as when women obtain degrees in traditionally male-dominated fields such as engineering), or if its power derives solely from attainment levels (Cooke, 2007b: 256).

Some studies focus on the role of religion on the sharing of domestic work. For example, Voicu et al (2009) examined this issue using a comparative study of 24 European countries, which controlled for other factors, such as individual resources, time availability, gender ideology and welfare regime. They found that religion plays a role in the pattern of housework sharing, with the household’s subjective assessment of ‘religiousness’ having a significant impact – a higher level of religiosity determines a less equal sharing of the domestic work. Similarly Bernhardt et al (2008: 284) find a link between ‘religiosity’ within a household and the decreased likelihood of partners in that household holding egalitarian ideals.

Research on gender culture and ideology is discussed in greater detail in Section 6 of this report.

5.4 Parental attitudes about men’s engagement in child care

Parental childrearing attitudes have been identified in the literature as encompassing a range of factors which may have an influence on men’s engagement in caregiving. Specific factors that have been identified as leading to qualitative differences in father-child interaction include:

- thoughts about paternal competency
- thoughts about the value and function of paternal involvement
- styles of childrearing, such as ‘authoritarian’, ‘child-centred’ and ‘protective’ (Gaertner et al, 2007).
An aspect of parental attitudes which has been a focus of research is described as ‘maternal protective attitudes’ or ‘maternal gatekeeping’ (see eg Allen & Hawkins 1999; Beitel & Parke 1998; Fagan & Barnett 2003, cited in Gaertner et al, 2007; Schoppe-Sullivan et al, 2008). Maternal gatekeeping is defined as ‘a collection of beliefs and behaviours that may inhibit a collaborative effort between men and women in family work’ (Allen & Hawkins 1999, cited Schoppe-Sullivan et al, 2008: 389). This pattern may reflect beliefs about the primacy of the maternal role, or mothers may view themselves as more competent parents than fathers. They also may be more inclined to criticise or supersede their partner’s parenting, leading to fathers withdrawing from active involvement (Gaertner et al, 2007: 965).

5.5 Time constraints

The time constraints perspective proposes ‘that individuals pragmatically respond to demands to do housework given their availability to respond, and that partners distribute workloads toward equilibrium’ (Hook, 2006: 641). The assumption held by theorists is that the amount of time people spend on domestic labour depends on how much time they have available for other activities, and that time in the labour market, and the subsequent time available for doing housework, are the key determinants of the household labour arrangement (Geist, 2005: 24).

5.6 The partners’ relative resources

On the assumption that spouses bargain over the distribution of time and resources within the marriage, the relative resource perspective holds that both partners make use of whatever valued resources they can, to protect her or his self-interest. This implies that the spouse with more resources will be able to get away with doing less housework (Knudsen & Waerness, 2008: 98; Hook, 2006: 641). The underlying assumption of the relative resources perspective is that ‘if being single would make one partner worse off than the other, the one with better non-marital alternatives has more power within the marriage...The fewer the exit possibilities, the weaker the voice’ (Hobson 1990, cited in Cooke, 2007b: 241).

Resources that offer relative advantage to choose alternatives to the relationship are identified in the literature as including formal educational qualifications, employment and income (Hook, 2006: 641; Blair & Lichter 1991; Shelton & John 1996, cited in Cooke, 2007b: 240-241).

The relative resources perspective is supported by research which shows that, while both mothers and fathers spend less time with their children when mothers earn a larger proportion of the family income (Young & Stafford 2005, cited in Monna & Gauthier, 2008: 643), it is women who are frequently financially dependent on their husbands:

Women who are financially dependent on their husbands may agree to unequal domestic arrangements because they see no possibility for exiting the relationship or fear a disruption of the relationship if they resist the unequal arrangement. It has been shown that the smaller the gap in earnings of both spouses, the more equal is the division of labour at home.


5.7 Workplace culture

Workplace culture and employer attitudes are cited internationally as barriers to taking up entitlements that aim to encourage men’s greater participation in care. Inhibiting workplace cultures and values include:

- notions of the ‘ideal worker unencumbered by care responsibilities’
- lack of managerial support
- the view that taking parental leave indicates a weaker career orientation
FACTORS INFLUENCING MEN’S PARTICIPATION IN CAREGIVING AND UNPAID DOMESTIC LABOUR

- the novelty of men’s utilisation of family-friendly conditions
- doubts about the legitimacy of men’s claims to family responsibilities
- feelings of discomfort in fathers about discussing their family commitments in the workplace with supervisors, managers, colleagues and co-workers. (Bittman et al, 2004; Fursman & Callister, 2009: 44-46; Lero et al, 2009)

Based on research in Australia, Whitehouse et al (2007: 402) describe the workplace pressures that discourage using leave for family reasons, even in comparatively advantageous circumstances. These include:

- Fathers’ use of extended leave significantly reduces the amount of leave available to their partners. This is a particular problem in Australia, where maternity and paternity leave are not separate entitlements.
- Labour market divisions, particularly between permanent and non-permanent employees, are unlikely to decrease under increasing competitive pressures both internationally and domestically. Therefore the proportion of fathers able to utilise current or improved leave entitlements is unlikely to increase without active intervention.
- At the higher end of the labour market, the management of workload pressures in competitive occupations and organisations exerts considerable pressure on fathers’ use of leave for parental purposes.

5.8 Ability to outsource care and domestic labour

Various components of both caregiving and domestic labour can be contracted out or ‘outsourced’, so this therefore has a potential influence on men’s and women’s total and relative contribution to domestic labour. A number of studies consider outsourcing, and in so doing also focus on:

- The availability of inexpensive domestic service, often linked to the globalisation (through migration) of care services between richer and poorer countries. As noted by Benaria (2007: 2):
  
  *Women’s migration from the South to the North in large numbers, including mothers leaving their families behind, has been meeting the demand for care labor in Northern countries. This process has affected the ways in which migrant families in the South organize themselves, including the formation of transnational families who have to solve their own care needs*.

- The existence of government policies that promote the replacement of unpaid domestic production with market, State-subsidised or State-provided substitutes. (Benaria, 2007; Windebank, 2007; Fursman & Callister, 2009: 28-29)

Limitations of the effect of outsourcing have been summarised by Windebank (2007: 269):

*There are strong financial and cultural limits to the extent to which the domestic work normally undertaken on an unpaid basis by women in the household can be replaced by paid services. In financial terms, only a very small proportion of households will be rich enough…In cultural terms, there are difficulties because a third party is being invited in to the most private of all contemporary social institutions, the nuclear family.*

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3 Benaria also points to a growing body of research on what has been termed the ‘globalisation of care and social reproduction’. Growing inequalities between countries provide an economic incentive to migrate, and immigrant women often find jobs more easily than men. This export of women’s labour generates a depletion of care resources, the dislocation of families and communities, and psychological costs that are difficult to measure (Garcia-Linera 1999; Herrera 2005; Bakker and Gill eds 2003, cited in Benaria, 2007: 4-9).
5.9 Government policies

Government policies, including those relating to work regulations, child care, and parental leave have been identified in the literature as exerting a clear influence on men’s participation in caring and unpaid domestic work by altering the terms of bargaining between partners and affecting their ease in adhering to gender ideologies or norms (Hook, 2006: 643-644).

As discussed in Section 4 of this report, these policies have been developing over the past decades in the context of broadly-based policy reform occurring as a consequence of the shift from a welfare state designed on the principle of a breadwinner-caregiver model, to one in which a range of breadwinner regimes coexist.

An expanded discussion of these policies is provided in Section 7 below, where they are considered as drivers of change for which governments are responsible.

5.10 Attitudes and skills of professional services

It is more likely to be women who access child care, early childhood education and care, health and other social services. Such services could be seen as ‘female spaces’ or as foreign to men. International literature on health and welfare services suggests that professionals are often not prepared either ideologically or organisationally to encourage paternal involvement in the family, or to take account of the possibly gender-specific features of fathers’ approaches to family services (Fursman & Callister, 2009: 58; Fletcher, 2008). In Canada, for example, ‘mother-centred programs’ of support for parenting, child care, education and health have been identified as barriers to men’s participation, and particularly so in the case of Indigenous fathers (Ball & George, 2006: 5).

Consequently, if staff and policy makers wish to increase men’s involvement in the provision of care, it would be beneficial to make health and other social services more male-friendly (Barker, 2009: 8).

Measures that can be taken to address the attitudes and skills of service providers are discussed in greater detail in Section 7 of this report.

5.11 Economic factors

A range of economic factors are identified in the literature as having an influence on the division of domestic labour, including the economic circumstances of individual households, and macro-economic circumstances such as the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita. Findings from these studies include:

- In States of the USA with lower poverty rates, men do a greater share of domestic tasks (Cooke, 2007a: 256).
- Based on a comparative study of 17 countries, Van der Lippe et al (2010: 14) find that a country’s stage of economic development is important in explaining the time spent on paid work, and that in countries with highly developed economies, men tend only to work less when they have young children.
- Based on a comparative study of working couples in 29 countries, Edlund (2007) finds that the probability of working couples having a balanced work-family situation is much higher in the wealthy industrialised democracies with advanced social protection, than in the poor countries with little or no social protection.
- Gonzalez et al (2009: 24-25) find evidence, on the basis of an analysis of men’s participation in housework in 26 countries, that post-industrial contexts, with a high proportion of people working in service occupations, are more conducive to the emergence of ‘co-operative men’ ie men who are willing to share domestic labour with women on a more equal basis.
5.11.1 Housing affordability

A macro-economic factor that may have relevance for the gender division of labour is housing affordability. In Australia, it has been estimated that 15% of all households experience ‘housing stress’, often defined as a household spending more than 30% of its gross income on housing, and 5% are in housing crisis, paying 50% or more of household income for housing (Pocock & Masterman-Smith, 2006: 6-7).

Housing costs, together with the often linked issue of the cost and time commuting to work, have an impact on household welfare. Flood & Barbato (2005, cited in Pocock & Masterman-Smith, 2006: 9) calculated that the average commute in Australia in 2002 was just over three and a half hours a week. They note that, due to the rise in dual earner households, increasing numbers of households have both parents with these time constraints, leading to 10% of parents in paid employment in 2002 spending more time commuting than they did with their children.

5.12 Summary

The literature identifies a wide range of factors that can both facilitate, and serve as barriers to, men’s participation in caregiving and domestic labour. Generally these can be categorised as micro-level factors (individual or household dimensions, such as attitudes towards parenting), and macro-level factors, such as government policies in a given national context. The literature is clear that many of these factors are influenced by ‘culture’ in its broadest sense, and this point is taken up in greater detail in Section 6.
6 Research on gender culture and ideology

A number of the texts reviewed focus on the impact of gender culture and ideology on the domestic division of labour. Some of the key research findings of this body of literature are presented below, namely:

- impacts of culture on State policies
- differing patterns of gender ideology among men and women
- the growth of egalitarian attitudes towards parenting
- the impact of gender ideology on the domestic division of labour
- the interdependence between economic and policy conditions, and gender culture.

6.1 Impacts of culture on State policies

Pfau-Effinger (2004: 4) defines culture as ‘the system of collective constructions of meaning by which humans define reality and which includes stocks of knowledge, values and ideals’. In a discussion on the impacts of culture on State policies, she writes:

- legal regulations and policies are embedded in cultural values and models, with which they are justified and legitimised
- political elites are dependent on basing their policies on values shared by the majority of the population if they wish to continue to be elected
- power relations play an important role in determining what cultural values and models will predominate in political practice
- divergent or even contradictory values and ideals may exist at one time in one national context
- since political measures reflect cultural values and ideals, the same type of social policy can have different effects in different societies.

Nordenmark (2004: 234) writes that social policies represent culturally-derived gender ideologies on a structural level, which may affect and maintain the gender ideology among individuals.

6.2 Differing patterns of gender ideology among men and women

Breen and Cooke (2005) used data from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) survey (see Appendix A1) to analyse gender ideology among men and women, and its impact on the domestic division of labour in 22 countries. They calculated the percentage distribution of men and women holding traditional or non-traditional gender ideologies in married or cohabiting individuals aged 18 to 65 in those countries. Their study showed that women in all countries, on average, report more non-traditional gender attitudes than men. The mean percentage of women holding non-traditional gender attitudes in the 22 countries was 25%, and the mean percentage of men holding non-traditional gender attitudes was 17%.

Drawing upon their analysis, the table below provides percentages of women and men in the selected countries holding gender egalitarian attitudes.
Table 6 – Percentage of married or cohabiting individuals aged 18-65 holding gender egalitarian attitudes in selected countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals who had lived in the former East Germany</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals who had lived in the former West Germany</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Breen & Cooke, 2005: 52; modified by Urbis

Table 6 shows:

- Couples in Sweden, Canada and Norway hold the most non-traditional gender attitudes
- A wide difference in attitudes was measured in the former East Germany, and the former West Germany (see discussion of policies in these countries in Section 4.6.2)
- Gender attitudes among men and women in Australia and the USA are very similar.

The researchers found that men holding gender egalitarian ideology participate more willingly in unpaid domestic tasks, and they conclude that 'until we see greater gender material equality for the majority of women in a society and an evolution in men's gender ideology, the gendered division of domestic labour will persist' (Breen & Cooke, 2005: 43).

6.3 Growth of egalitarian attitudes towards parenting

Research findings suggest that increasing proportions of both men and women are expressing egalitarian attitudes toward parenting. In comparison with previous measures, more men are reporting that they want to spend more of their time with their children (Casper and Bianchi 2002; Gerson 2002; cited in Craig, 2006: 260-261). More than three-quarters of respondents to a 2004 survey of 5,688 men across 15 EU States believed that child rearing should be carried out by both the mother and the father. At the same time, there was evidence of significant differences between countries regarding attitudes on the sharing of child-rearing (Fox et al, 2009: 316).

6.4 Impact of gender ideology

Numbers of studies (see eg Nordenmark, 2004; Bernhardt et al 2008; Crompton & Lyonette, 2006) investigate the impact of gender ideology on men’s participation and find that although there is greater support for gender egalitarianism and shifting models of fatherhood in modern industrialised countries (as discussed in Section 3.1.4), cultural factors continue to contribute to the persistence of the gender division of domestic labour.
The Listening Tour, started in November 2007 by the Sex Discrimination Commissioner throughout Australia (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2008: 13), found:

Entrenched ideas about the role of women as carers, as well as financial factors, continue to influence everyday decisions about who does what. There remains an ‘unspoken expectation’ that women will take responsibility for most of the unpaid work...Some men said they wanted to take on a greater share of caring responsibilities but felt impeded by their workplace culture and social norms.

Nordenmark (2004: 241), who specifically tested for gender ideology in explaining differences among ten countries regarding the involvement of women and men in paid and unpaid work, found:

- men and women living in countries classified as conservative welfare states (such as Germany and Japan) in general have a more traditional gender ideology and division of paid and unpaid labour, compared with liberal (e.g. the USA and UK) and social democratic (Sweden and Norway) states
- men with an egalitarian gender ideology are more involved in household labour than men with a more traditional gender ideology
- men are strongly involved in paid work independent of their gender ideology.

On the basis of an exploration into national variations in reported levels of work-life conflict and work-life balance in selected European countries, drawing upon data in the 2002 ISSP (see Appendix A1), Crompton & Lyonette (2006: 390) conclude:

The increase in women’s claims to equality, as well as in the level of women’s (particularly mothers’) employment, is a universal trend as far as Western-influenced countries are concerned. Thus the proportion of dual-earner households is increasing. Nevertheless... the consequences of these trends for work-life conflict are shaped not only by state policies, but also by the variable persistence of embedded, and gendered, norms relating to the division of labour between men and women.

6.5 Interdependence between policy structures and gender culture

The literature suggests that there is interdependence between policy conditions in a given country and gender culture. In a study of 17 countries, this relationship was found to be most visible in relation to paid work; whereas ‘household chores take place within the private sphere of family life, which policies are less able to influence’ (Van der Lippe et al, 2010: 14).

In a comparative multilevel analysis of 13 industrialised countries, Sjöberg (2004: 119) finds that socio-economic factors, such as education, account for individual-level variation in gender role attitudes, but that these factors’ impacts are modified by specific institutional contexts. Family policy institutions, including institutionalised religion, affect the possible ways in which individuals can pursue their private lives and how they look upon the ‘proper’ role of both women and men in society. The results of the study also strongly suggest the need to treat attitudes as a multifaceted concept, especially when they are considered in a comparative perspective.

6.6 Summary

Social policies are embedded in country-specific gender role values. Therefore they can be described as representing gender ideologies at the structural level, which in turn have an impact on the gender ideologies held by individuals. Current research suggests that embedded and gendered norms relating to the division of labour persist in all countries, even those with the greatest proportion of men sharing caregiving and domestic labour with women. The interdependence between policy structures and gender culture is more visible in relation to paid work than in relation to the unpaid child care and housework carried out within the domestic sphere.
7 Government policy initiatives

7.1 Introduction

This section draws on the literature in order to identify and describe drivers for change which governments are responsible for, and drivers for change which government can influence. The following initiatives are described:

- legal protection against gender discrimination
- child care and early childhood education and care
- industrial relations and employment policies
- statutory maternity, paternity and parental leave
- tax and benefit incentives for working families
- the valuing of care work
- legislating parenting rights and obligations
- health and social services
- housing and infrastructure
- government campaigns to educate and influence behaviour
- encouraging family-friendly workplaces
- promoting father-inclusive practices in family and children’s services.

Before describing discrete policy initiatives, the views of commentators and researchers who have considered policies from a whole-of-government perspective are discussed. These views enable the identification of whole-of-government principles to support work-family reconciliation.

7.2 Whole-of-government principles to support work-family reconciliation

Some literature has considered government initiatives that support men to engage in caregiving and other unpaid domestic labour from a whole-of-government perspective, sometimes in the course of investigating the effectiveness of distinct factors. By considering the mutual impacts of policy areas such as employment and workforce participation, child and family, health, social services, housing and infrastructure, all operating within a national context (such as described in selected countries in Section 4 of this report), these whole-of-government initiatives suggest that work-family reconciliation could be based upon principles that include:

- acknowledging the influence of competing values and the incorporation of values into policies
- the need to draw men and fathers more explicitly into the work-family reconciliation debate
- promotion of the view that policies operate at many levels, from the household to civil society
- recognition that time, money and services all have an impact on the private domestic sphere
- recognition that families with children with special needs require more intensive institutional support to deal with work-family conflict.

Each principle is briefly described below.
7.2.1 Competing values and the incorporation of values into policies

Commentators have noted that competing values and ideals regarding childrearing and child care have a powerful influence on policy makers at different times in different countries. Possibly to a greater extent than in other policy fields, family policies are often about competition between competing values and the incorporation of values into policies (Strohmeir 2002, cited in Lewis & Campbell, 2007: 7). These include competing ideologies about child-rearing, different values placed on forms of child care (such as professional care, surrogate mothering or parental sharing) at different times in different countries, and the kind of family model or models promoted within a given national context.

7.2.2 Men need to be drawn explicitly into the work-family reconciliation debate

O'Brien et al (2007: 376) note that as the proportion of dual-earner families has grown, there is 'a growing acknowledgment of the limitations of work-family policies that concentrate purely on women or mothers...Inevitably fathers have been drawn into the dialogue about work-family policy'. Fox et al (2009: 323) write that reconciling conflicts between work and family for men is a relatively new area of policy, and that many of the specific government initiatives, discussed in Section 7.3 below, have been undertaken with the more explicit goal of supporting women's entry into paid work and helping them to better deal with work-family conflict. However, conflict between work and family needs to be seen as a problem for men as well as for women to prevent mothers from being seen as solely responsible for reconciliation, and thereby disadvantaged.

7.2.3 Policies operate at many levels

Pascall and Lewis (2004) describe the policy interventions that are adopted by countries to promote gender equality as occurring at the following levels:

- at the level of the individual, including the 'equal opportunities machinery' that focuses on issues such as sex discrimination, equal opportunity to earn and equal value for part-time work
- at the level of the household, including tax and benefit incentives
- at the civil society level, including the promotion of voluntary sector care and the development of social movements
- at the social/collective level, including holiday and after school services and a shorter working week.

In analysing the effects of these policies, Pascall and Lewis (2004: 381) argue that 'the most important division is between policies which rely on households to produce gender equality, and those that acknowledge the importance of the wider society, particularly at the collective level'.

7.2.4 Issues of time, money and care services all have an impact on the domestic sphere

Based on a wide-ranging review of policies within the European Union, Lewis & Giulioni (2005: 97) describe the ‘policy grid’ that would enable genuine choice for men and women to negotiate the sharing of care and domestic labour as requiring action relating to:

- time – working time and time to care
- money – cash to buy care, cash for carers
- care services.
7.2.5 Families with children with special needs require special support

Pascall and Lewis (2004: 386) observe that policies to address the quantity of working time and its distribution between men and women and between households, and providing autonomy for individuals to control their working time in the interests of care or leisure, are ‘particularly undeveloped’ with regard to caring for children and adults with disability.

The Project on Global Working Families has put forward a list of policies included in a ‘Work, Family and Equity Index’, intended as a guide to help countries promote equality and address social inequalities (Project on Global Working Families, 2008). The Index contains the following statements which highlight that work-family reconciliation policies need to take into account that families with children with special needs require special support:

- adequate paid leave is available to all working adults when they need to attend to a child’s educational, developmental or health needs
- health care and developmental assistance for children with special needs is available, accessible and affordable
- policies and programs (regarding employment, community participation and health supports) exist to protect adults with disabilities
- working adults have available time in which to provide routine care for older and disabled family members.

7.3 Drivers for change for which governments have been responsible

7.3.1 Legal protection against gender discrimination

Offering legal protection to women from gender discrimination has often been one of the first drivers for change for which governments have taken responsibility. As noted by Pascall & Lewis, 2004: 381; emphasis in original):

> Legislation to outlaw sex discrimination, to give women, as individuals, equal access to jobs, backed by the courts, has played a role in bringing women into the labour market on more equal terms with men in some countries… It has been important to women’s independence within relationships and survival outside.

In the USA, for example, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 made discrimination on the basis of gender illegal within the areas of employment, training, and education (Cooke, 2006: 122).

Legislation such as the Equal Pay Act 1970, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Equality Act 2006 protects women’s right to equality in the UK, and there are also a number of regulations that have been developed to aid the implementation of the legislation (OfW, 2009b: 22).

In Australia:

- The Sex Discrimination Act was passed in 1984 and since then a number of amendments have been made which extended the reach of the Act. This has ensured greater protection from discrimination on the grounds of sex (Blaxland et al, 2009: 8). The Sex Discrimination Act 1984 is currently being reviewed, with proposed changes including (OfW, 2009a):
  - Broadening discrimination on the grounds of family responsibilities to include indirect discrimination and discrimination in all areas of employment
  - Imposing a positive duty on employers to reasonably accommodate requests by employees for flexible working arrangements
  - Protecting employees from sexual harassment from clients, customers and other persons with whom they come into contact in connection with their employment.
The Office for the Status of Women was established in the same year as the Act was passed, and located in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. In 2004, it was renamed OfW, and transferred to the then Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, now FaHCSIA (Blaxland et al, 2009: 8-9).

The *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999* applies to organisations with 100 or more employees. The Act is intended to promote the principle that employment for women should be dealt with on the basis of merit, promote the elimination of both direct and indirect discrimination, and foster workplace consultation between employers on issues concerning equal opportunity for women in relation to employment (OfW, 2009b: 7). This Act has recently been reviewed in order ‘to ensure that the Australian Government’s equal employment opportunity policies remain appropriate for current economic and social conditions’, and to ensure that the legislation fits into other legislative reforms, such as the *Fair Work Act 2009*, discussed in Section 4.5.1 of this report, and the review of the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, discussed above (OfW, 2009b: 1).

7.3.2 Child care and early childhood education and care (ECEC)

Publicly provided or publicly subsidised child care for children under three, and early childhood education and care (ECEC) for children from three years to school age are considered by many commentators to have a strong impact on encouraging maternal employment, while having less of an effect on men’s participation in unpaid domestic labour (see Lambert, 2008; White, 2009).

Countries have pursued child care and ECEC policies for a number of reasons, including allowing all women (including mothers with young children) to participate in the labour market equally with men, as a contribution to child development, and as an anti-poverty measure (White, 2009: 399-400).

Public spending on child care and pre-school services in OECD countries is on average 0.6% of GDP, higher in the Nordic countries and France, and lowest in Canada and Greece (OECD, 2010: 19). As discussed in Section 4 of this report, France is recognised as a country that has for many years pursued policies in favour of subsidising child care and ECEC, and this has contributed to French women enjoying a high rate of economic activity, with a gender employment gap of -10.3, compared to the OECD average of -17.9 (see Table 4). However, whether publicly subsidised child care and ECEC has had a positive impact on the rate of men’s participation in unpaid work in that country is open to question (Windebank, 2007).

Blaxland et al (2009: 10-11) describe the types of formal care most commonly provided in Australia as:

- long day care centres for children aged 0-5 years; the number of government-supported child care places rose from 100,000 in 1992 to 260,000 in 2006
- family day care in the home of an approved carer
- occasional care provided by centres for children usually aged between 0-5 years
- preschool for children in the year or two before they start primary school
- outside school hours care, which is generally provided for children aged 5-12 years old.

Governments have used both fee transfers and tax rebates to assist parents to address the costs of child care. The Child Care Benefit was introduced on 1 July 2000 as a means-tested payment which tapers out as family income increases. The Child Care Tax Rebate was introduced in July 2006. It reimburses families for 30% of their out-of-pocket child care expenses (Blaxland et al, 2009: 15-16).

Since the mid-1990s, the cost of child care in Australia has increased at a higher rate than that for all goods and services (Brennan et al 2009, cited in Blaxland et al, 2009: 13). Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) analyses have also shown that long day care became less affordable between 1991 and 1998, and despite an improvement in affordability in 2000 when the Child Care Benefit was introduced, overall the cost of child care as a proportion of disposable income has since increased for all family types except those with the highest incomes (AIHW, 2005, cited in Blaxland et al, 2009: 14).

According to the 2009 Annual Child Care and Workforce Participation Survey (Care for Kids, 2009), the cost of child care to families is still on the increase (22% of parents paying over $80 per day – before
benefits and rebate – compared to 15% in 2008), but the changes to the tax rebate and child care benefits are having a positive impact on the affordability of child care, so that affordability appears to be increasing as well.

7.3.3 Industrial relations/employment policy

Governments are responsible for the labour market and industrial relations regulations, policies and legislation that might promote equality of labour market attachment for men and women, and which have a direct impact on the involvement of men (and women) in caregiving and unpaid domestic labour (Blaxland et al, 2009: 23-24). These may include:

- flexibility of working arrangements (including shift work and working at home)
- reduced work hours and job sharing
- minimum wages
- leave arrangements (including unpaid parental leave)
- maximum ordinary work hours per week
- employer-sponsored child care (including on-site child care centres) and elder care practices.

(Lero et al, 2009: 19)

One example of these policies is the introduction in France of a statutory 35 hour week for all workers (discussed in Section 4.6.1). This legislation has been shown to have had a positive impact on family organisation for a majority of parents with school-age children. The effect has been found to be less pronounced for parents who work non-standard hours and who have little control over these non-standard hours (Fagnani & Letablier 2004; Le Bihan & Martin 2005, cited in Lewis et al, 2008: 267).

In contrast to this approach, changes to industrial relations policy in Australia in the 1990s and 2000s have ‘followed a trajectory towards labour market deregulation which first gained momentum in the mid-1980s’ (Briggs & Buchanan 2000, cited in Blaxland et al, 2009: 23).

7.3.4 Statutory maternity, paternity and parental leave

While maternity or paternity leave refers to the time granted to mothers and fathers respectively around the time of the birth of a child, parental leave is often used within the literature to describe employment-protected leave for parents that is supplementary to specific maternity and paternity leave periods.

Researchers such as Hook (2006) and Estes (2007) consider parental leave to be located at the intersection of work (employment) and family (or ‘child and family’) policies:

From the company viewpoint, work-family assistance prevents family problems from interfering with employees’ productivity… From the family perspective, policies ease the work-family conflict faced by employed parents by enhancing (time and/or psychological) availability for housework.

(Glass & Estes 1997, cited in Estes et al, 2007: 528)

Key issues discussed in the literature with regard to parental leave include:

- whether it is paid or unpaid
- if paid, how much is paid, and what length of paid leave is provided
- who is eligible
- who funds it
- if it is unpaid, what this implies for the employer/employee relationship.
A range of studies have considered parental leave by comparing the policies of different countries, the changes in these policies over time, and their impact on men’s involvement in caregiving and/or unpaid domestic labour (see e.g. Haas & Hwang, 2008; Klinth, 2008; O’Brien et al, 2007; Moss, 2009).

On average OECD countries provide 18 weeks of maternity leave, of which 13 weeks are on average paid at 100% of the recipient’s last salary. Legal entitlements for paternity leave exist in just over half of the OECD countries (OECD, 2010: 22). According to Heyman et al (2008: 2), 66 countries out of 173 surveyed in 2006 ensure that fathers either receive paid paternity leave or have a right to paid parental leave, and 31 of these countries offer 14 or more weeks of paid leave.

In an overview of parental policies throughout the world that have aimed to increase fathers’ use of parental leave, Moss (2008: 80-81) concludes that ‘the evidence on take-up of leave by fathers is very clear’, namely that:

- they use high paid ‘father’s only’ leave
- they do not use low paid or unpaid parental leave
- even if high paid, they do not use a ‘family entitlement’ to leave if there is also a ‘father’s only’ entitlement
- they make only limited use of ‘family entitlement’ to leave if there is no ‘father’s only’ entitlement.

Key examples of non-transferable quotas for fathers are found in the Nordic countries, not only in Sweden and Norway (which have been described in Section 4 of this report), but also in Denmark and Iceland. Iceland’s model, described as a ‘three-times-three model’, is unique in that it consists of three months for mothers, three for fathers, and three for parents to share between them (Fox et al, 2009: 315).

7.3.5 Tax and benefit incentives

Based on 2005 figures, OECD countries spend on average 2.3% of their GDP on family benefits, which take the form of cash, tax breaks towards the family, and services. The majority of countries spend a higher proportion of this in cash than on either services or tax incentives, although spending on services is higher in France, and tax incentives are more important in Germany, the Netherlands and the USA (OECD, 2010: 18).

According to McClelland & Scutella (2010: 251-255), there are three main objectives of taxation policy:

- **Adequacy** – raising sufficient revenue to fund necessary government expenditure, including welfare state expenditures.
- **Equity** – the need to levy taxation according to some notion of fairness (individuals with greater economic resources and ability to pay should pay more tax than individuals with fewer resources). In this respect, taxation also has a redistributive function, which includes taking into account how the combined impact of taxes and benefits helps people deal with their changing circumstances over the lifespan.
- **Efficiency** – the need for taxes not to unnecessarily reduce productive economic activity and the level of economic and employment growth, and to recognise that complexities in the tax system may make it harder for people to understand their obligations and entitlements.

One of the ways in which the taxation system has been structured in many countries to support gender equality and children’s well-being is to make it ‘individualised’, that is, to ensure that women’s income earnings do not drive household tax rates higher (Haas, 2003: 106).

As discussed in respect of selected countries in Section 4 of this report, mechanisms used by governments to enhance work-family reconciliation within the social security (transfer) system include financial assistance to families to help with the cost of raising children and for child care, paid parental leave, maternity payments and pensions. There are noteworthy differences between countries in the ‘liberal’ welfare state cluster and ‘social democratic’ cluster, especially in respect of the universality of
rights and benefits. Payments and services in the liberal countries are often means tested, whereas access to payments and services in social democratic countries, and also many of the conservative countries, is based on a concept of universal social rights. Benefit entitlements can be based on either individual income, which encourages dual earners, or on household income, ‘which tends to reinforce a male breadwinner model’ (Cooke, 2007a: 933).

Recent developments in the Netherlands (see Section 4.6.3) provide a good example of a government relying less on its transfer system, and more on its taxation system in order to achieve its work-family reconciliation goals, thereby hoping also to increase parental choice (Knijn & Smit, 2009; Lewis et al, 2008: 273).

Policies to bring equal rights to pension and benefit incomes in households could contribute to gender equality, but Pascall and Lewis (2004: 382) note that social insurance systems would need to be radically changed for care work to be recognised as a civic duty that attracts contributory benefits on an equal par with paid employment. Kershaw (2006: 343) suggests that participation in maternity and parental leave programs could be linked to public pension entitlement, which would ‘make explicit that informal care provision is a social responsibility just as much as paid work’.

7.3.6 The valuing of care work

Linked to the point made in the preceding paragraph, it has been argued that work in a given society can best be understood as the ‘total social division of labour’, that is, all the activities (paid work, unpaid work and care) which are needed for the survival of a given society, as well as essential for social integration of members of the households in the community (Glucksman 1995, cited in Boje, 2007: 385-386). Care work is, however, not valued or financially rewarded to the same extent as many other forms of work, and since the 1990s, a number of commentators have argued for an inclusion of the right to receive care and the right to time for care into the definition of social citizenship (Knijn & Kremer 1997; Lister 1997; Fraser 1997, cited in Boje, 2007).

Policies to bring income to carers have included:

- cash benefits
- tax credits
- pension credits.

Pfau-Effinger (2004: 383) notes that compensating care through basic income or through mechanisms such as ‘participation incomes’ have been problematic because of the difficulties to fund such care work sufficiently to provide a worthwhile income.

One of the ways in which governments have dealt with the issue of financially rewarding care is to outsource it, to provide paid non-parental child care, or to subsidise parents’ use of non-parental care. This has occurred notably in France as a State-subsidised program (see Section 4.6.1). Private provision of care, often with State subsidies, is a feature of the child care systems in the liberal welfare states such as Australia, the USA and the UK. This has been referred to in some of the literature, often critically, as the ‘commodification of care’, but, as Lewis and Giullari (2005: 87) write, there are limits to this:

…because it [caregiving] is passive as well as active, because it is emotional and relational, because the pressure for women to care to care is stronger than it is for men and is part of gendered identity formation, and because the fragmentation that has resulted from welfare state restructuring has increased the need for family and informal care.

In considering the status of family and informal care provision, the available literature deals less with concrete initiatives and the measuring of their impacts, and moves more into statements of value.

Fraser (1997, cited in Pascall & Lewis, 2004: 378) argued for a ‘universal caregiver’ approach in civil society, in which all employees would be assumed to have care responsibilities. Many other writers have written about the ‘universal caregiver’ ideal, including Orloff (2005: 46), who noted that it would necessitate changing workplaces to accommodate caregiving, and would call upon social security
systems to ensure that people can take time to care and have access to care services. Kershaw (2006: 343) observes:

Before men will choose en masse to care more, norms about masculinity, fatherhood, mothering, and employment must evolve to endorse male caregiving as a valuable practice on par with other citizenry pursuits that enjoy more social status for men.

7.3.7 Legislating parenting rights and obligations

Another area of policy development has been in connection with family law, including legislation concerning the registration and financial support of children. In particular, this includes policies that have sought to hold men responsible for the financial support of especially non-residential children, and to formally acknowledge paternity. Some of the legislative changes that have been occurring in the countries under consideration have been described in Section 4 of this report.

Even in countries where such legislation exists, enforcement is still an issue, and mothers in many cases may not want to register the father. Nonetheless, there have been advances reported as a result of these policies, especially when accompanied by awareness-raising campaigns (Barker, 2009: 6).

7.3.8 Health and social services

Health and social services form a key part of the overall welfare state apparatus in each country. As noted in Section 4, different welfare state regimes have differing ideas about the extent to which the State, the family, for-profit organisations, or not-for-profit organisations are seen to be key service providers, and this is certainly true of the health and social services to be found in any given country. Irrespective of this service mix, access to, and utilisation of, services by parents (particularly with very young children) has a recognised impact on work-family conflict.

The key assumption made here is that it is more likely to be women who access such services and that health and other social services could be seen as ‘female spaces’ or as foreign to men. Consequently, if staff and policy makers wish to increase men’s involvement in the provision of care, it would be beneficial to make health and other social services more male-friendly (Barker, 2009: 8).

Studies have found that greater positive involvement by men in child health, prenatal care and childbirth is mutually beneficial to children, women and men themselves, and that interventions to engage men in prenatal care have been shown to have positive results in terms of improved birth outcomes (Barker, Ricardo & Nascimento 2007, cited in Barker, 2009: 7). Garfield et al (2006) include the following as potential strategies for expanding the scope of men’s involvement in the health of their children:

- including father status, involvement and stressors as part of the information gathered in clinical encounters
- recognising that children may affect fathers’ health outcomes
- recognising that fatherhood is developmental, and that the needs, stresses and potential benefits of men who become fathers when they are young may be different to those who become fathers when they are older
- recognising that children may affect their fathers differently at different ages - fathers of infants and fathers of adolescents will, for example, have different benefits and stressors.

7.3.9 Housing and infrastructure

The impacts of housing affordability and commuting distances on time to engage in child care have been briefly discussed in Section 5.11.1 as one of the economic factors that may have relevance for the gender division of labour. Recent research confirms that ‘living affordability appears to have declined in many parts of Australia’s major cities over the past decade because a growing number of households are experiencing financial stress related to rising housing and living costs’ (Miranti and Nepal 2008, cited in Infrastructure Australia, 2010: 100).
Infrastructure Australia (2010: 100-109) identifies the financial stresses as relating to:

- Affordable housing, with house prices having increased by over 50% in real terms since 2000 and rental prices also having increased by 17% since 2000, with a steep increase in the past two years as rental vacancy rates have declined.
- Operating costs of housing, including the cost of energy and water consumption.
- Locational costs, depending on the relationship between where a home is located, and where jobs, facilities and services are located, which generates transport demand.
- The time spent commuting, which takes away from time spent with family and community activities, with a trend towards increased distances between residential areas and locations of employment. The level of car dependency has increased the vehicle kilometres travelled at a rate faster than population growth.
- High vulnerability for mortgage, fuel and inflation risks and expenses, which is increasing rather than decreasing in Australia’s major cities, especially in their outer areas.

Housing affordability in Australia is being advanced through initiatives such as:

- the Housing Affordability Fund, which aims to improve the supply of new housing and make housing more affordable for home buyers entering the market
- the National Affordable Housing Agreement, which is an agreement by the Council of Australian Governments that commenced on 1 January 2009, initiating a whole-of-government approach to tackling the problem of housing affordability
- the National Partnership Agreement on Social Housing, which facilitates the Social Housing Growth Fund, and under which the States and Territories will increase the supply of social housing
- the National Rental Affordability Scheme, which aims to increase the supply of affordable rental dwellings, reduce rental costs for low to moderate income households, and encourage large scale investment and innovative delivery of affordable housing.

(FaHCSIA, 2010b)

There is a gap in the research literature in terms of studies that explicitly investigate government housing and infrastructure policies, and their impacts on enhancing or inhibiting men’s participation in caregiving and unpaid domestic labour. This would be a fruitful area for further research.

7.3.10 Government campaigns to educate and influence behaviour

Another driver for change for which governments are responsible is engaging in public education campaigns in order to educate men about policies and systems that are in place to support them to provide care and to undertake unpaid domestic labour. Studies have shown that government campaigns in countries such as Sweden to encourage fathers’ involvement in caregiving have been as important as financial compensation as a means of increasing fathers’ take-up rate of flexible work arrangements (Dermott 2001, cited in Vanderweyer & Glorieux, 2008: 275).

It is proposed that a social marketing approach may be a usefully adopted in public education campaigns. Social marketing has been described as follows:

_Social marketing is the application of commercial marketing technologies to the analysis, planning, execution, and evaluation of programs designed to influence the voluntary behavior of target audiences in order to improve their personal welfare and that of their society._

(Andreasen, 1995: 7)

Key principles and practices of social marketing include:

- a consumer orientation, emphasising that the target audience, rather than the needs of the organisation, is the central focus of planning, strategy formulation and material development
- the application of exchange theory, which recognises that an individual will only be likely to take up whatever the campaign is offering or promoting if there is a perception that the costs (psychological, social, financial) are justified or exceeded by the benefits being promised

- assessments of internal and external environments, including a thorough definition of the problem to be addressed, an examination of external factors potentially influencing the problem being addressed, and an examination of the internal structural and resource issues relevant to planning and implementation of the intervention

- channel analysis, which is an examination of potential ways to reach and effectively engage and communicate with the target audiences

- market segmentation and audience analysis, which requires breaking down the mass market into smaller sub-groups or segments, in order to identify the most appropriate target audience for components of the intervention

- process tracking and outcome evaluation, measuring both the effectiveness of implementation of the social marketing strategy, and the achievement of desired outcomes

- an integrated strategic planning and management system, to ensure all elements of the strategy (eg policy, communication, educational and other initiatives) work together effectively to achieve the desired outcomes.

(Donovan & Henley, 2003: 21-32)

When applied in the marketing process model, these principles could provide a means of translating complex educational messages and behaviour change techniques into communication concepts and promotional strategies to effectively communicate with large segments of the population, in concert with other policy, education and other marketing initiatives.

In the early 1990s, an Australian Government campaign directly encouraged men to increase their contribution to domestic labour. It included a media campaign which was undertaken by the then Office for the Status of Women (Bryson 2001, cited in Blaxland et al, 2009: 31). A core component of the campaign was a resource kit titled Working Families, Sharing the Load: Resource Material for Parent Educators and Families. It was designed to be used by family educators, such as those who teach pre-marriage, childbirth and parenting classes.

### 7.4 Drivers for change which government can influence

A key issue raised in some of the comparative studies is that, while governments are responsible for policy formation and some aspects of funding and service provision, it is important for there to be simultaneously changes in the broader ‘ideas and discourses’ in order to increase men’s participation in unpaid caring and domestic work (see eg Henninger et al, 2008). The drivers for change which governments can influence are seen in this section as relating specifically to government impacts on the ideas and discourses that may occur in workplaces, in the domestic sphere, and within communities.

#### 7.4.1 Encouraging family-friendly workplaces

Especially in a ‘market-oriented care model’ (such as Australia), governments have adopted the strategy of encouraging employers to become more actively involved in helping employees combine work and family roles. A key impact that governments have in this respect is to encourage employers to establish family-friendly employment policies in an attempt to help their citizens deal better with potential work-family conflict (Haas, 2003: 102).

Many commentators have suggested that the introduction of family-friendly employment policies in the workplace has primarily been encouraged for economic reasons and the need to improve productivity and competitiveness. These economic reasons include:

- stress levels among employees
• absenteeism
• job turnover
• the cost of losing a highly trained workforce with family responsibilities
• the need to maintain a flexible workforce that can respond to fluctuating demands.


Workplace flexibility is frequently seen as a major instrument that can be used to reduce labour costs, boost employment, and increase productivity. Boje (2007: 381) describes four types of flexibility in employment:

• contract flexibility, impacting on the type of employment contract
• workplace flexibility eg through subcontracting
• work time flexibility, including overtime and irregular hours
• work organisation flexibility, including job rotation and multitasking.

In considering ‘work time flexibility’ specifically, the OECD uses the following definitions of ‘flexi-time at work’ (OECD, 2010: 27):

• possibility to vary the start and end of daily work, but no accumulation of hours
• possibility to accumulate hours, but no accumulation of full day off
• possibility to use accumulated hours for full days off
• possibility to use accumulated hours for longer periods of leave.

A form of workplace family-friendliness which is gaining traction especially in countries such as Canada and the USA (see Sections 4.5.3 and 4.5.4) is the provision of on-site child care centres. Canada has a federally-funded Community Child Care Investment Program, which provides tax credits for employers to create new child care spaces for their employees or for the wider community (Lero, 2009).

Consideration of workplace flexibility needs to take into account changes that have been occurring the world of work as a whole. The broad, and increasingly globalised, restructuring of the labour market has had clear repercussions for employment in Australia. Since 1992 the number of full-time employees with leave entitlements has increased by less than 10%, whereas the majority of growth has been in non-standard employment, including part-time employees with leave entitlements, the self-employed, or employees without leave entitlements (Van Wanrooy et al, 2009: 44).

As discussed in Section 4 of this report, countries such as the UK, New Zealand, the Netherlands and now Australia have enacted right-to-request policies that support employees in the process of requesting alternative ways of structuring work, and place an obligation on employers to consider such requests. Kilkey (2006, cited in Fursman & Callister, 2009: 66-67) notes that ‘consent from and negotiation with an employer’ is different from ‘an automatic non-negotiable right’, and that this difference contributes to the different take-up rates of these arrangements by men and women, since fathers are less likely than mothers to perceive that there is scope for negotiating more flexible working arrangements with their employers.

At the same time, some authors are pointing to the benefits to employers of workplace flexibility, in terms of issues such as personal growth in men who have taken parental leave:

Fathers’ routine absence from work while on parental leave has required companies to rethink the way work is organized, often to the benefit of the company eg in encouraging cross-training, telecommuting and helping parents keep in touch with work while on leave. As more fathers take leave, some companies have begun to recognize the ‘business case’ for father taking leave... Fathers who return from leave...are better able to handle stress, balance multiple responsibilities, develop interpersonal skills, and meet important new challenges

Based on an international literature review on the costs and benefits to employers of work-life balance practices (including maternity, paternity and parental leave, child care and elder care supports, and options to work at home with more flexible schedules to accommodate work and care), Lero et al (2009) find evidence for a Return on Investment (ROI) for companies based on the availability and use of work-life balance programs and practices. The ROI effects identified in the literature include:

- reduced costs due to reduced absenteeism
- reduced costs as a result of reduced turnover rates, incorporating recruitment and replacement costs
- prevention of the loss of institutional or firm-specific knowledge
- the enhancement of the organisation’s image in the job marketplace, contributing to an expansion of the talent pool from which applicants can be drawn
- enhanced productivity as a result of reduced stress and less work-life conflict, and as a result of employees having more control over their workloads and work schedules
- healthier employees and reduced accidents and injuries.

(Lero et al, 2009: 48-56)

7.4.2 Promoting father-inclusive practices in family and children’s services

Perceptions held by service providers and professionals have been studied as factors that may influence fathers’ engagement with those services. There is a growing understanding that gender differences in the way that males and females might perceive help-seeking suggests the need to take into account the gender-specific features of fathers’ approaches to family services (Draper 2002; Broadhurst 2003, cited in Fletcher, 2008: 5-6).

The concept ‘father-inclusive practice’ has become a familiar way of describing these changes, which include:

- revamping service policies
- changing hiring practices, including having more male staff
- a focus on the physical environment
- referral pathways
- staff training
- fatherhood preparation
- educational campaigns focusing on men’s roles in the lives of children.

(Raikes et al 2005, cited in Fletcher, 2008: 4; Barker, 2008: 9)

Many family and children’s services are offered by non-government providers, but governments have a role in promoting father-inclusive practices in these services. Father-inclusive practice has been defined in the Australian context as follows:

*Father-inclusive practice occurs when the needs of fathers (biological and social) are responded to through the planning, development and delivery of services. It recognises families as a system, and acknowledges a balance between the needs of fathers and the family as a whole. Many family-based services have evolved to respond primarily to the needs of mothers and children, and therefore father-inclusive practice may require a process of planned change and managed learning. This involves building sustainable relationships between staff, family members and the community.*

(FaHCSIA, 2009:13)
The Australian Government has undertaken explicit steps in this direction and, based on a pilot project amongst service providers engaged in a mentoring relationship to enhance father-inclusive practice, published a *Father-inclusive Practice Guide* that can be used by many different types of organisations (FaHCSIA, 2009).

Moss (2008: 83) notes that in addition to promoting leave policy as a way to encourage more equal sharing of care and upbringing by fathers, other measures might include:

- addressing the needs of fathers after the early childhood period of their children, for example by supporting greater participation by fathers in their children’s schools and other services.
- sustained programs to increase men’s employment in children’s services, especially ECEC services and schools.

### 7.5 Summary

Section 7 has drawn on the literature to identify and briefly describe drivers for change which governments are responsible for, and drivers for change which governments can influence. The discussion points to government initiatives focusing action on four fronts:

- ensuring men have *time* to work, provide care, and carry out unpaid domestic labour
- ensuring that parents have *cash* or other financial incentives for care work
- ensuring that *services* are available, and that those services are father-friendly
- ensuring that educational and promotional campaigns are undertaken to *encourage* decision-making and behaviour change that would promote gender equality in the domestic and workplace spheres.
8 Effectiveness of interventions

This section draws on the empirical research described in the literature to provide a summary of government interventions that have been demonstrated as being effective in supporting men to engage in caring and unpaid domestic labour.

As noted in Section 1, the majority of studies in this area rely on cross-country comparisons in order to test for the effectiveness of interventions. Limitations of such studies include that they are often based on cross-sectional and not longitudinal data. This means that they do not take into account the reality that time in paid and unpaid labour varies across the marital life course and across union status (cohabiting, married, divorced).

Statistical techniques do not differentiate between policy and cultural effects (Cooke, 2007a: 930-931). It is only in rare situations such as that of Germany (see Section 4.6.2) that a 'natural experiment' situation is presented that allows a researcher to differentiate...between cultural and policy effects because they [the two parts of Germany] are comprised of people who shared a common cultural past but were non-democratically subjected to radically different policies after World War II...[permitting]...an important extension to our understanding of how the state shapes, rather than simply reflects, societal gender relations.

Taking into account the limitations in the research, the following are the interventions that are discussed below:

- broadly-based efforts to promote gender equality
- providing the legislative basis for greater equality
- statutory parental leave with a non-transferable fathers’ only entitlement
- the promotion of flexibility in work arrangements
- the welfare state regime as a whole
- ensuring that employment and family policies operate in tandem to promote work-family reconciliation.

Child care and ECEC services are also included, together with a discussion on how these services could be modified to support men’s participation in child care, while continuing to promote maternal employment.

8.1 Broadly-based efforts to promote gender equality

On the basis of comparative studies at the national level, perhaps of all the interventions that have been shown to have the greatest impact on men’s participation in the long term, the most important are those that promote gender equality across the board, but particularly within the political arena and within the labour market.

Based on a comparative study of 20 OECD countries from the mid-1980s, Lambert (2008: 334) finds that, more than other variables such as the nature of the political party in power, union density, fertility rate or per capita GDP, it was the proportion of parliamentarians who were women in a given country that was a key factor shaping the degree to which maternal employment was encouraged. On the basis of her research, Lambert suggests that this effect is due to women parliamentarians, who are often mothers themselves, being more receptive to issues relating to women’s employment and empowerment, and being more likely to push for these issues than their male counterparts. This view is shared by Lister (2009: 251-252), who writes:

Women’s political representation is important not just as a marker of women’s political citizenship, but also because of its potential implications for policy...Female politicians do not necessarily
promote ‘women-friendly’ policies. However, many do, and they are more likely to make a difference if women represent a critical mass in the political arena, which they do in the Nordic countries.

In an often cited study (also referred to in previous sections of this report), Hook (2006) used 44 time use surveys (see Appendix A2) from 20 countries spanning 1965 to 2003 to place an analysis of men’s unpaid work within the country and time period in which they are embedded. She found that men overall (married and single) spend more time on unpaid work in contexts where married women’s employment is more common. For each percentage increase in national levels of married women’s employment, men’s unpaid work time increases by 0.5 minutes. Comparing the country with the lowest rate of women’s employment in a given year to the highest, the difference in men’s unpaid work time is 30 minutes per day, or 3.5 hours per week (Hook, 2006: 651).

On the basis of this study, she concludes that ‘because levels of women’s employment affect all men, there is clear evidence that the influence of women’s employment goes beyond the individual negotiations of husbands and wives’ (Hook, 2006: 652).

Based on a longitudinal study of married couples in the former eastern and western regions of Germany (N = 348 couples), Cooke (2007a: 946) finds that, after accounting for various individual and regional effects, husbands in the east spend over four hours more per week in household tasks than those in the west, and their share of unpaid work (relative to their partners) is over 13 percentage points greater than men in the west5. Cooke (2007a: 944-945) concludes:

East German policies after World War II enhanced women’s relative resources, whereas West German policies reinforced a woman’s economic dependence on a male breadwinner...In the decades following reunification, convergence in the two regions did not materialize...Policy effects on the gendered division of paid labor fundamentally alter gender relations in the home.

As noted in Section 4.6.2, East Germany had provided a legislative basis for female employment, while West German policies had promoted the male breadwinner model.

Using data from the 2004 European Social Survey for 26 European countries (N = 11,915), Gonzalez et al (2009: 24-25) find evidence that the best societal predictors for the emergence of ‘cooperative men’, that is men who show a willingness to share domestic work on an equal basis with women, all relate to broadly-based gender equality:

- women’s empowerment through institutions that facilitate their participation in politics and employment on relatively equal terms
- non-traditional gender values
- a high prevalence of consensual unions.

Sweden provides a good example of this effect, having high employment levels and less-pronounced gender disparity in labour market integration across the life course than in most countries (Anxo et al, 2007: 251). By 2004, 79% of women aged 20 to 64 were in the paid labour force, compared to 84% of men, and the proportion of women who work full-time had increased to 67%, compared to 91% of men (Statistics Sweden 2004, cited in Haas & Hwang, 2008: 90).

Based on a survey (N = 2,838) of couples in Sweden and Norway, Bernhardt et al (2008) explored attitudinal factors amongst men and women that could influence their ideals and their actual behaviour

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4 In this study, the dependent variable is men’s unpaid work time measured in minutes per day. The measure encompasses Multinational Time Use Study (MTUS) time use categories (see also Appendix A2) including: time spent on core housework (eg cleaning, cooking, laundry); non-routine housework (eg everyday purchasing and errands, home and car maintenance, care of adults and pets, gardening); and child care (eg direct care and supervision, helping and playing). The measure does not include domestic-related travel, such as transporting children, because of data limitations (see also Section 3.2.3).

5 In this study, four dependent variables cover men’s hours in, and share of, household tasks and child care: errands (including shopping and citizen’s duties); housework (washing, cooking, cleaning); child care; and repairs on or around the house (including car repairs and garden work). A man’s hours in household tasks are calculated as his reported time spent in all of these activities, because, according to Cooke (2007a: 937), ‘all are necessary to successful home production and must be negotiated’.
EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERVENTIONS

around shared housework. Their study showed that Norwegians are significantly less likely to hold egalitarian ideals. They trace the differences to the stronger and longer history of institutionalised gender equality in Sweden compared to Norway, and the longer tradition in Sweden of public debate on, and public policies explicitly encouraging, gender equality. They conclude:

This underlines the importance of having policies favouring gender equality in place for some time in order to shape both prevailing ideals and actual practices of gender equality in the home.

(Bernhardt et al 2008: 287)

A widely used measure of gender equality is the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) of the United Nations Development Program, with recent cross-national studies describing the GEM ‘as arguably the most valid indicator of macro-level gender equality’ (Fuwa 2004, cited in Knudsen & Waerness, 2008: 102). The GEM index is constructed from the combination of the following indicators (Knudsen & Waerness, 2008: 102):

- the percentage of parliamentary seats held by women
- the proportion of female administrators and managers
- the percentage of professional and technical workers who are women
- women’s share of earned income as compared with that of men.

The scores for selected countries as measured for the three years preceding 2002 are provided in the table below, with the score fitting within the range from 0 and 1, with 1 representing the maximum comparative level of women’s empowerment.

Table 7 – Gender equality in selected countries as measured through the Gender Empowerment Measure (2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>United Nations Development Program’s Gender Empowerment Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 In this study, couples were asked ‘How do you and your partner share housework?’, to which there were three possible responses, namely: ‘I do the most’, ‘We share equally’, or ‘My partner does the most’. ‘Housework’ was not further sub-divided into specific activities.
As can be seen in Table 7 above:

- Norway, Sweden and Finland (countries with social democratic welfare regimes) score highest on this measure of women’s empowerment
- the scores for Australia, New Zealand and the USA (countries with liberal welfare regimes) are very similar
- the measures in all of these countries are much higher than in countries such as Japan, Brazil and Russia.

Using this measure of gender equality for 34 countries, and testing for its effect on the division of housework within those countries, Knudsen & Waerness (2008: 107-108) find that the estimated difference between low- and high-GEM countries amounts to around 11.5 hours of housework per week\(^7\). This suggests that women in the most gender-unequal nations perform an average of around 26.5 of housework a week, while those in the less unequal nations perform around 15 hours.

Cooke (2007a: 944) summarises the understandings generated by research which might explain why the division of housework is more egalitarian in countries where political and labour market relations are more gender egalitarian:

- women’s increasing access to economic resources (main effect)
- increase in the effect of an individual woman’s relative resources (interaction effect)
- when women as a group are more economically autonomous, this eventually alters men’s beliefs about the desirability of evolving away from separate spheres (contextual effects).

### 8.2 Providing the legislative basis for greater equality

As discussed in sections 4 and 7 of this report, the countries included in this stocktake have established legal frameworks which seek to protect the human rights of women, including divorce laws and child support enforcement. This legislation has ensured that issues such as such as sex discrimination, equal opportunity to earn and equal value for part-time work have become part of the legal framework for most industrialised countries, and increasingly so in most parts of the world (Pascall and Lewis, 2004: 377-381).

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\(^7\) The division of housework variable in this study is constructed from responses to questions posed in the ISSP 2002 (see Appendix A1) about four tasks: laundry, grocery shopping, caring for sick family members and meal preparation. The researchers focused specifically on these activities because they “tend to be more time consuming, less pleasant, more routine, and they give less discretion when completed” (Knudsen & Waerness, 2008: 100-101).
There is evidence in the literature that such legislation contributes to women’s empowerment and enhances their relative gender power within a relationship, also through its ability to strengthen the relative resources they have within the relationship (see brief discussion of the relative resources perspective in Section 5.6). For example, Cooke (2007b) investigated the effects of divorce laws within the overall national context of the USA, including interstate policy variation, and finds that more effective child support enforcement encourages gender equity within a marriage relationship, leading to increases of more than ten percentage points in men’s share of domestic tasks. She explains this as the effect of family law on women’s relative bargaining power within the relationship.

8.3 The welfare state regime as a whole

Welfare state regimes have been discussed in some detail in Section 4 and, in keeping with consistent use of the terminology in the literature, have emerged in discussions in much of this report. The composite range of initiatives carried out within a given welfare state clearly have a role in supporting men to engage in caregiving and unpaid domestic labour. As noted by Sainsbury (1995, cited in Esquivel, 2008: 4):

Through a myriad of laws, regulations, public provision of care services, and omission, and lack of coverage, states define who receives care, who provides it and who bears the costs of care provision (both paid and unpaid). In doing so, states shape and reproduce gender relations by allocating tasks and obligations to the two sexes.

Some studies have specifically considered welfare state legislation, policies and services as a ‘package’, and have compared different welfare state regimes for their impacts on the gender division of labour. Put differently, they have investigated, ‘how policy structures shape interactions between men and women in intimate relationships’ (Geist, 2005: 38). The findings of key studies accessed in the literature search are briefly summarised.

Crompton & Lyonette (2006) examined national variations in reported levels of work-life conflict in Britain, France, Finland, Norway and Portugal, and controlled for the effects of working hours, sex, the presence or absence of children, social class, age and the domestic division of labour. Their analysis showed (Crompton & Lyonette, 2006: 389):

In Finland and Norway there is evidence of a ‘societal’ effect in operation. Although in many ways these two countries are very different, they both have ‘encompassing’ welfare states in which governments have developed and implemented policies designed not only to facilitate dual-earner families and thus work-life balance, but also to encourage men to assume a larger share of caring and domestic work. Reported levels of work-life conflict are lower in these countries, and the domestic division of labour is less traditional.

Gornick & Meyers (2005: 20-22) point to a large body of empirical research assessing the impact of family leave policies, working time regulation and early childhood education and care on a range of parent and child outcomes. The studies show that social democratic countries are more successful at supporting fathers’ caregiving and having better ratios of fathers’ to mothers’ time spent in unpaid work.

Based on a comparative study of ten countries\(^8\), using data from the 1994 International Social Survey Program (see Appendix A1), Geist (2005) finds:

- more time at work is associated with lower levels of egalitarian division of domestic labour for men in social democratic regimes, but that this is the case to a much smaller extent than in the other two welfare regimes

- even for men with more time-demanding jobs, there are higher levels of equal sharing in the social democratic countries

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\(^8\) The measure for the domestic division of labour in this study (see also discussion in Section 3.2.1) was constructed from questions regarding the following tasks: ‘doing the laundry’, ‘shopping for groceries’ and ‘deciding what’s for dinner’. The measure excluded information on ‘who does repairs around the house’ and ‘who cares for sick family members’.

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countries with conservative welfare states may have overall lower levels of equal sharing between men and women in the domestic sphere, but women in these countries are able to reduce their housework more for each additional hour of work than their counterparts in the other regimes, indicating that a way to increase their chances of equal sharing of domestic labour is to reduce their availability around the house.

the situation in the liberal welfare regime is more heterogeneous. The dominant pattern is sole female responsibility for housework, but the dimensions of ‘gender ideology’, ‘time availability’ and ‘income ratio between the partners’ possibly play a more important role in impacting on the domestic division of labour than in the other two welfare state regimes.

Edlund (2007) compared the conflicting demands of paid and unpaid work among working couples in 29 countries, and, following the conventions of other researchers, clustered the USA, Australia and the UK together as ‘market-oriented countries’. He finds that gender differences are rather small in Australia and the UK, and that the extent of the work-family conflict is not very different from that observed in Sweden, Norway and Denmark. His research suggests, however, that the situation for mothers in full-time employment seems considerably worse in the market-oriented family regimes, and he notes that ‘the USA, the archetypal market-oriented regime, tops the list of countries in terms of work-family balance gender inequality’ (Edlund, 2007: 472).

In summary, welfare states and their policy structures as a whole have a clear effect on the sharing of paid/unpaid labour within couples. This points to the importance of considering the whole-of-government approach to achieving desired changes in the gender division of labour. The areas of policy-making and service-provision that could play a role in contributing to work-family reconciliation include:

- gender equality and the status of women
- taxation policy
- child care and early childhood education and care (ECEC)
- education
- health, including mental health
- disability
- ageing
- industrial relations, including regulations relating to parental leave and flexible working time
- workforce participation
- housing and infrastructure
- social security, particularly family support mechanisms.

In considering this whole-of-government perspective for Australia, two factors are likely to influence the processes and outcomes of a work-family reconciliation agenda, namely:

- the country’s federal system, with a division of responsibilities between the Commonwealth and State/Territory governments
- the country’s historical mix of service-provision, incorporating government, non-government not-for-profit and for-profit providers.

9 The work-family time squeeze is measured in this study with four items from the ISSP (discussed in greater detail in Appendix A1).
8.4 Ensuring that employment and family policies operate in tandem to promote work-family reconciliation

Linked to the issues raised in Section 8.3 regarding the consideration of government policies from a whole-of-government perspective, it is particularly important for governments to ensure that the objectives of employment/labour market and family policies do not contradict each other, but rather that they operate in tandem.

Estes et al (2007: 530) write that work-family policies have been categorised into two general types, namely work support policies which recognise the caregiving needs of employed parents, but do not necessarily reduce the actual work hours of employees; and family support policies, which do allow employees to reduce their work hours either in the short or long term in response to family responsibilities.

Developments in many of the countries (as well as the EU as a whole) discussed in Section 4, show that the introduction of family-friendly employment policies in the workplace has primarily been encouraged for economic reasons and the need to improve productivity and competitiveness (see eg Vanderweyer & Glorieux, 2008: 273).

Based on an investigation into work-family reconciliation in the EU, Knijn and Smit (2009: 488) find that countries differ in the way they define the problem, what the main policy goals are, and the preferred instruments to be used. Three ‘paradigms’ appear to be operating:

- a social investment approach, which focuses on social investments in the coming generation, education and liberating women form family obligations by outsourcing care
- a focus on labour market flexibility and the enabling of transitions between work and care
- the advocating of a change from collective to individual arrangements, guaranteeing efficient transitions to and from employment over the life course.

The authors conclude that the gender equality agenda in work-family reconciliation policies has been subordinated to the emphasis on creating competitive knowledge based economies, and that this has led to a lack of coherence in the policy agendas.

In order to address work-family conflict and achieve higher levels of work-family balance, the literature suggests the importance of viewing employment and family policies as working in tandem. As stated by Lewis & Pascall (2004: 389):

*There is no single magic policy for gender equality. Rather, the gender assumptions underpinning economic and social policies need to be examined very widely and the interconnections of paid and unpaid work, income, time and voice acknowledged...Gender equality in the labour market alone is unattainable, because of systemic connections to inequalities in families, politics and civil society.*

The principles behind this have been put forward by Himmelweit (2002: 64-65; cited in other literature as well eg Esquivel, 2008: 7), who suggested the following as principles that can be used in evaluating ‘the gender impact of economic policy’:

- Policy makers should assess the effects of their policies on both paid and unpaid caring economies. When the effect is to encourage movement into the paid economy, the social consequences of any reduction in the output of care from the unpaid economy and/or increase in total working time for those continuing to work in the unpaid economy must be assessed.
- The distribution between men and women of the effects on both economies must be assessed, including taking into account the extent to which policies reinforce or break down gender inequalities in the division of time between paid and unpaid work, and the extent to which policies promote sharing of unpaid work between men and women.
- Gender equality should be assessed both between households and within them, and it is important to know whether changes would reinforce or help to break down existing gender inequalities in money, work and power within households.
8.5 The promotion of flexibility in work arrangements

While a more extensive discussion was provided of forms of workplace flexibility in Section 7.4.1 of this report, the focus here is on drawing on research which has investigated whether flexibility in work arrangements has had a measured effect on increasing men's participation in caregiving and unpaid domestic labour. It should be noted that countries differ in the extent to which they legislate for such changes to occur, or whether they provide regulatory frameworks in which employers in the private and public sectors are able to make their own agreements with employees. Most of the countries focused on in this stocktake, Australia included, have a history of combining both approaches.

Researchers have found that regulations that decrease standard work time - such as legislation and collective agreements stipulating regular and maximum working hours, hours of operation, overtime compensation, and vacation time - are able to increase the income earners' time available for unpaid work (Gornick & Meyers 2003; Jacobs & Gerson 2004, cited in Hook, 2006: 643).

Lewis, Campbell & Huerta (2008: 29) analysed time use data from 13 European countries and found that employees are expected to show greater flexibility in terms of when they work, which may or may not benefit family life, depending on the amount of control that is permitted the worker. Many parents are expected to work 'atypical working hours' including:

- frequent evening/nights, several times a week or every day
- frequent overtime at short notice
- frequent weekends several times a month or every weekend.

They find that more fathers than mothers engage in one or more forms of atypical working. However, when atypical working hours conditions do not prevail, fathers are no more likely to increase their share of paid work.

A study by Strazdins et al (2006) amongst Canadian families (N = 4,306) found that non-standard work schedules were associated with less effective parenting and that, for some families, working in the '24 hours economy' strains the well-being of parents and children.

These studies point to the limitations of flexible work hours where the flexibility is determined less by the wellbeing of the family, and more by the requirements of the workplace.

Statutory 'right to request' flexible work arrangements have been shown to impact on men and women's uptake of such arrangements in order to engage in unpaid domestic work, including child care. For example, a year after the introduction of this statutory right, 10% of male employees in the UK had made the request and 86% of the requests had been granted (Palmer 2004, cited in Lewis & Campbell, 2007b: 19-20). The right to request flexible working arrangements has recently been introduced into Australia in accordance with the National Employment Standards of the Fair Work Act 2009 (see Section 4.5.1). The measure is yet to be evaluated in terms of ascertaining the numbers of men and women who have lodged requests, for what purpose, and how many of the requests had been granted.

As described in Section 4, working hours have been reduced to 35 hours per week in France. Based on research conducted in France after the introduction of reduced work hours, a majority of working parents (around 60%) reported that working time reduction had made it easier to combine work and family life. This was found to be true of men as well as women (Fagnani & Letablier 2003; Meda & Orain 2002, cited in Gregory & Milner, 2008: 74). Gregory & Milner (2008: 74) conclude that France's universal working time reduction has appeared to offer a more egalitarian division of paid and unpaid employment between men and women, but they also note that, in surveys, it is professional women who have shown the highest levels of support for working time reduction. At the same time, 'in a depressed economic climate, there has been considerable pressure to increase working time and intensify the pace of work' (Jacquot & Setti 2006, cited in Gregory & Milner, 2008: 74).

The implication is that legislating for a maximum limit on working hours has been a mechanism with limited potential effectiveness in increasing men's time in unpaid work in France, and is likely to face even more hurdles in Australia, where, according to 2007 figures (see Table 2 of this report), 37% of working men are employed for 45 hours or more per week.
A study of the use of flexible working time has been carried out in Belgium (Vanderweyer & Glorieux, 2008). The researchers interviewed 607 men and 629 women who have taken advantage of a Belgian system known as the ‘career break’. This system of work flexibility, linked to a time credit system, implies the right to interrupt employment altogether for a specific period, during which a State allowance is paid to cover part of the loss of earnings. The system is linked to job security, and to the stipulation that an unemployed person should take on the employee’s position during the career break. By comparing differences between male part-time and full-time career-breakers, the researchers found:

- on average, non-working full-time male career breakers spend 43% of the freed-up working time on domestic work and child care; one-fifth of freed-up time is spent on social and leisure activities and one-fifth to study
- part-time male career-breakers use time that has been freed up primarily for domestic work and child care, with 80% of this time devoted to family tasks; the combination of a part-time job and family-based tasks ensures that the total workload is not lower than for full-time male workers and that time pressures are just as high.

The authors conclude (Vanderweyer & Glorieux, 2008: 290):

*Part-time male career-breakers present a strong image as caring fathers. They use career leave and time credit schemes effectively to achieve a better balance between work and family life. This demonstrates that when men are presented with an opportunity to work less and are supported in taking up an alternative role by means of career leave and time credit schemes, they will effectively take on more family tasks (temporarily).*

In summary, the literature is equivocal about whether greater or lesser flexibility in working time has a direct impact upon the quantity and quality of men’s engagement in caregiving and unpaid domestic labour. The paid/unpaid division of time available to a parent can be moulded to better suit the needs of the family, especially when child care is required, but a range of individual, household, community and global influences (as summarised in Section 5 of this report) play a role in limiting the effectiveness of this intervention.

A particular limitation of these initiatives noted in many of the studies is that it is women who appear to preference jobs that offer flexibility due to their caring responsibilities, and that workplace cultures look less favourably on men than women when it comes to asking for workplace flexibility.

### 8.6 Parental leave

#### 8.6.1 Research regarding fathers taking parental leave

In a paper investigating fathers’ uptake of parental leave, Fox et al (2009) point to a growing number of studies that are demonstrating the importance of a country’s policy framework, with evidence suggesting that fathers are spending more time at home with children, especially in those countries that have proactive policies to engage fathers in care (Brandth 2004; Smith 2004; O’Brien 2007, cited in Fox et al, 2009: 317).

Data from Western Europe (mostly Nordic countries), where paid paternity leave has been offered for more than ten years, confirm that increasing numbers and proportions of fathers are using such leave, and are spending more time with their young children as a result of these policies, particularly when paternity leave is non-transferable to the mother (Valdimarsdóttir 2006, cited in Barker, 2009: 5).

Making use of data generated on the basis of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort, a nationally representative panel study of over 10,000 children born in 2001 in the USA, Nepomanyaschy & Waldfogel, 2007: 446-448) find:

- the vast majority (89%) of fathers take some time off work after the birth of their child, but most take one week or less
- fathers who take two or more weeks off work after the birth of their child are much more likely to be involved in child care-taking activities nine months after the birth of the child, including activities
such as feeding, dressing and bathing their children, and getting up with their child when he/she wakes up at night

- more advantaged fathers (white, better educated, in higher-prestige occupations) are more likely to take any leave, and are more likely to take a longer leave than those who are less advantaged on these indicators
- fathers are less likely to take a longer leave of two weeks or more if mothers are not working prior to the birth.

Based on data made available in the Parental Leave in Australia Survey conducted in 2005 and a subsequent organisational case study, Whitehouse et al (2007: 401) conclude that although a high proportion of Australian fathers take some leave at the time of the birth of a child, very few use any of their statutory parental leave entitlements unless a proportion is provided as paid leave by their workplace. Fathers are considerably less likely to take leave if they work fewer than full-time hours, are in non-permanent positions, or if they work in a small organisation.

In 2008, the Productivity Commission conducted an Inquiry into paid Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave, with the aim of inquiring into the economic and social costs and benefits of paid parental leave through an exploration of the extent of paid parental leave provided by employers in Australia. The Productivity Commission also hoped to investigate models of paid parental leave that could be used in Australia (Productivity Commission, 2008: 2). In its Issues Paper that was provided to encourage submissions to the Inquiry, the Productivity Commission drew heavily on ABS data from 2006 and 2007, and found:

- Since parents can use a combination of paid leave - including paid parental leave, holiday leave and long service leave - and unpaid leave, parents are frequently on paid leave and ‘unpaid’ parental leave simultaneously.
- In 2005, 44% of working women and 35% of working men had access to paid parental leave as a condition of employment.
- In 2006, 58% of female full-time employees had access to paid parental leave, compared to 28% of part-time employees.
- Paid paternity leave was available to one in ten male part-time workers, compared to 39% of male full-time workers.
- Employees on higher weekly incomes are more likely to have access to paid parental leave. The industries with the highest rates of availability of paid leave (over 60% for women and over 50% for men) are public administration, electricity, gas and water, education and training and financial and insurance services. In contrast, less than 20% of employees working in agriculture, forestry and fisheries and in the accommodation and food services sector had access to paid parental leave.

(Productivity Commission, 2008: 20-27)

The Productivity Commission Report titled Paid Parental Leave: Support for Parents with Newborn Children recommended that a Government funded Paid Parental Leave (PPL) scheme should include fathers or other eligible partners who share in the daily primary care of the child. The Productivity Commission recommended a two week period of exclusive paternity leave on a ‘use it or lose it’ basis, even if the mother is not eligible for statutory paid parental leave (Recommendation 2.9 of the Report).

The Productivity Commission estimated that of mothers who give birth in a year (281 000 based on 2007 figures), approximately 80 per cent of fathers (225 000) would be eligible for a paid paternity leave scheme with an eligibility test similar to the one for the PPL scheme. This figure is higher than the number of mothers estimated to be eligible for PPL (145 000) due to the greater employment rate of fathers. (Appendix B of the Report).

Of these fathers, the Productivity Commission used behavioural modelling to estimate that around 25 per cent (55 000) would actually use their entitlement (a weighted figure given some fathers using leave will actually use less than their full entitlement of two weeks).
The take up of paid paternity leave by fathers is likely to be affected by the fact that it would be paid at the rate of the National Minimum Wage. Fathers whose regular wage was at or below that of the National Minimum Wage may be more likely to take up paid paternity leave.

The Productivity Commission estimated that around 12 per cent of fathers eligible for the proposed scheme earn the minimum wage or less (Appendix G.4 of the Report).

The Australian Government decided to defer introduction of the two-week paternity leave component proposed by the Productivity Commission, thus reducing the cost to Government and employers of the scheme.

Instead, the Government has committed to undertaking an evaluation and comprehensive review of the scheme, with the review starting two years after the scheme commences. The paternity leave component is planned to be considered as part of the proposed review of the scheme.

In a comparative study of 20 countries, Hook (2006: 653) tests for the effect of men’s eligibility to take parental leave on the time they spend doing unpaid work. She finds that where men are eligible to take parental leave, men living with children do 19 minutes more of unpaid work per day, or 2.2 hours per week, than do men living with children in countries not offering parental leave for men, or men not living with children. The implication is that eligibility for parental leave does lead to an increase in the carrying out of unpaid work for men with resident children.

Haas & Hwang (2008) study the impact of taking parental leave on father’s participation in child care and relationships with children in Sweden. This study is particularly useful, because it sheds light on the issue of whether taking parental leave actually produces the desired outcomes. Their findings show:

- simply taking leave, regardless of length, was not significantly related to any measure of sharing child care or of father’s having close relationships with children
- when fathers took more days of parental leave, they were significantly more likely to report they sometimes had solo responsibility for children, spent more time doing things for or with their children on workdays and were more engaged in child care tasks, including physical and emotional care-giving
- when the leave-taking variable was introduced as an independent variable at the same time as control variables (individual traits, employment situations), the results provide modest support for the hypothesis that leave-taking has an independent effect on fathers’ sharing of child care.

The research described above points to clear increases in men’s use of parental leave, especially when it is paid, and when it is non-transferable to the mother. There is also research indicating that male use of parental leave has a positive effect on the gendered division of labour and fathers’ subsequent involvement in child care (Haas & Hwang 1999, cited in Lister, 2009: 255). At the same time, research demonstrates that ‘very long maternity leave and minimalist arrangements for fathers does little to improve gender equality in terms of the division of unpaid care work in the household’ (Lewis & Campbell, 2007: 15).

8.6.2 The effectiveness of statutory parental leave with non-transferrable fathers’ entitlements

Developments in Norway provide a good example of the effect of a ‘father’s quota’ (as described in section 4.7.2) on fathers’ take up of parental leave. In the years prior to the introduction of the father’s quota, less than 4% of fathers took some parental leave, which was a relatively short optional leave period to be shared with the mother. In 2004, some years after the introduction of the father’s quota, about 90% of eligible fathers took their leave. After an extension of the father’s quota to six weeks in 2006, figures based on public records in 2007 show that 70% of eligible fathers take more than five weeks, and that more and more fathers take six weeks (Brandth & Kvande, 2008: 274-275). These

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10 The measures used for men’s unpaid work in this study have been described in Section 8.1.
authors note that ‘this instant take-up among fathers tells us that the existence of an individual right for fathers may have been important’ (Brandth & Kvande, 2006: 152).

The increase in men taking parental leave once a portion of parental leave was specifically set aside for fathers has also been measured in Quebec (see discussion of parental leave system unique to this Canadian Province in section 4.5.4). As a result of these changes, the proportion of fathers taking parental leave in Quebec increased from 22% in 2002 to 48.4% in 2006 (Fursman & Callister, 2009: 72).

Greater equality of the gender division of labour is hindered if parental leave is reserved for, or assumed to be targeted only at mothers. In particular, long maternity leaves have been identified as weakening their labour force attachment of mothers, and short maternity leaves have been shown to be better for gender equality in the labour market than long leaves, especially in terms of women’s pay and promotion prospects (OECD 2007, cited in Mahon, 2009: 196; Lewis & Campbell, 2007b: 16).

8.6.3 Campaigns to improve uptake of fathers’ leave

State initiatives on parental leave to encourage fathers to take care of young children are crucial to changing workplace culture (Lewis & Campbell, 2007: 14). Klinth (2008) undertook a qualitative study of the policy implementation of paternity leave in Sweden, focusing on the way fatherhood and gender equality had been represented in the public debate during the 30 years from 1976 to 2006. In describing his methodology, he noted that government authorities and ministries, labor union organisations, and different kinds of interest groups had produced materials to promote paternity leave, but that his study focused only on materials produced by the State bureaucracy or State funded projects. This incorporated materials from 13 nationwide campaigns and around 20 local (eg municipal) campaigns (Klinth, 2008: 24). Amongst other findings, his study showed:

- the early paternity leave campaigns significantly contributed to making the Swedish father a public figure eg men shown in TV-spots and posters involved in everyday child care activities like bottle-feeding babies
- while the campaigns challenged traditional barriers between male and female spheres and responsibilities, men were reassured that active fatherhood did not pose a threat to their masculine identity – ‘men were supposed to be active fathers, but in a distinctly masculine way’ (Klinth, 2008: 28)
- the general optimism about men’s will and ability to change was often connected to notions of modernity, which ‘itself was said to be the most important source of change…as an almost irreversible historical process’ (Klinth, 2008: 29)
- a significant feature of the campaigns was the frequent reminder of what men could gain by using their right to paternity leave
- there was a shift in the way gender relations were understood and communicated in the early 2000s, and paternity leave was discussed to a greater extent than previously within an overall framework of gender equality.

In summary, Klinth’s study points to the importance not only of having a father’s quota in parental leave, but also of governments undertaking campaigns that would improve uptake of the parental leave. He concludes (Klinth, 2008: 21):

In the public eye, the representations of fatherhood displayed in the campaigns probably have had a greater impact than any policy declaration.

8.6.4 Summary

Based on a study of the development of parental leave policy in 15 countries, Haas (2003: 109-110) provides the following statement of conditions under which such leave would be most likely to help bring about a shared care model of gender relations:
there should be a universal, individual, non-transferable right to parental leave

the leave must offer job protection, benefits and ‘substantial pay as a symbol of its social value’

it should be flexibly administered, so that parents can take turns, and so that leaves can be taken part-time as well as full-time

the right of fathers to take leave needs to be actively promoted

the ‘business case’ for supporting parents’ right to paid leave should be studied, articulated and disseminated

the benefits to society, such as increasing fertility rates above replacement level, benefits for children, and reducing unemployment, should be studied and widely publicised, since this would ‘promote solidarity between working parents and the rest of society’.

On the basis of their research into fathers’ use of parental leave in Australia, Whitehouse et al (2007: 402) conclude:

There are reasons for optimism and some for caution in assessing prospects for fathers’ use of leave for parental purposes in Australia, and the potential benefits this might bring for family well-being and gender equity…The kinds of changes needed in the policy framework are easy to identify, involving simply the extension of a period of paid leave for fathers, and its separation from mothers’ entitlement to maternity leave…[but at the same time]…the cost of paid leave entitlements would need to be met directly by government.
8.7 Child care and ECEC policies

Of all the interventions discussed in the literature, the role of publicly-funded child care and ECEC services in contributing to greater equality in the gender division of labour appears most controversial. Its contribution to increasing maternal employment in the (paid) labour market has been demonstrated in many countries (see eg discussions in Sections 4 and 7), but there is a strong view that ‘publicly funded child care may have countervailing effects on men’s unpaid work…making it easier for men to adhere to traditional gender ideology about the parental division of labor and specialization within the home’ (Windebank 2001, cited in Hook, 2006: 643-644).

Based on research carried out in Australia on, amongst other issues, the impact of non-parental child care on couple households, by Craig et al (2008: 36-38) finds:

- the use of non-parental child care does not impact upon men’s time in unpaid work, total work, parental child care or subjective time pressure
- the use of non-parental child care is associated with a modest decrease in unpaid work, total work and parental child care for women, and an increase in their subjective time pressure.

This research suggests that gender differences come into play with regard to the issue of non-parental child care as well, and that fathers involve themselves to a much lesser extent with the subjective time pressures associated with non-parental child care than do mothers. It also suggests that change is only likely to come if men do involve themselves more by, for example, rescheduling their time to meet the child’s needs, keeping to the usually strict deadlines that exist for non-parental care arrangements, and arranging and providing transport.

Research has shown that child care policies have been adopted for a variety of reasons, including as an anti-poverty measure (see discussion in Section 7.3.2). The suggestion is that these policies could also be pursued also with the motivation of preparing and equipping men better for fatherhood, and encouraging them to invest in the time needed to ensure their children derive the best benefits from the child care and early education they receive from sources outside of the family.

Based on the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey (see Appendix A3), the following data on child care in Australia are provided (Wilkins et al, 2009: 14-20):

- the proportion of households with children aged 14 or younger who used some type of child care while the parents were at work increased from 40% of households in 2002 to 45% in 2006
- in 2006, 54% of households with children aged two to five used child care while one or both of the parents were at work, and pre-schoolers spent an average of 23.9 hours per week in child care
- the most common problem encountered with child care is finding care for a sick child (24% of couple households and 40% of lone parent households reported this difficulty in 2006)
- other problems with child care include the cost of child care, finding the right person to take care of children, getting care for the hours needed, and finding care during school holidays.

There is a gap in the research in terms of investigating publicly-funded child care services which may explicitly be operated on a more ‘father-friendly’ basis, as discussed in Section 7.4.2. Measuring the long-term effects of such services on men’s participation could be a fruitful area for exploration. Such research would combine the demonstrated positive effects of child care on maternal employment, with the hypothesised positive effects of father-friendly child care services on men’s greater propensity to be

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11 Subjective or perceived time pressure is measured in the ABS Time Use Survey (see also Appendix A) by including a question on how ‘rushed or pressed for time’ respondents generally feel. The answers – ‘never’, ‘rarely’, ‘sometimes’, ‘often’, and ‘always’ – give a measure of subjective time pressure. It allows researchers to ‘draw conclusions about how these relate to employment participation, the stress of combining employment with home responsibilities, and the constraint associated with childcare’ (Craig et al, 2008: 11).
involved with these services as a further contribution to their involvement in caring and other forms of unpaid domestic labour.
9 Summary and key future directions

Table 8 below summarises the government initiatives that support men to engage in caring and other unpaid domestic labour. Based on the evidence provided in the literature (especially data on the effectiveness of interventions discussed in Section 8), these initiatives are arranged in a suggested order of likely effectiveness.

Table 8 – Summary of government initiatives that support men to engage in caring and other unpaid domestic labour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government initiative</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Literature</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broadly-based promotion of gender equality in the political and economic spheres</td>
<td>Political and economic empowerment of women in a given society leads to greater gender equality at all levels, including the domestic sphere.</td>
<td>The example of Sweden shows the importance of having gender equality policies in place for some time in order to have measurable effects.</td>
<td>Lambert 2008</td>
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<td>Gender equality has been underpinned by anti-discrimination legislation, generally as an initial step, in most countries.</td>
<td>Policies to bring about equal rights to pensions still need to go some way to acknowledge the different impacts of care work between men and women and the consequences for incomes in old age.</td>
<td>Hook 2006</td>
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<td>Political empowerment of women is facilitated in some countries by proportional representation or quotas.</td>
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<td>Knudsen &amp; Waerness 2008</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Strong evidence that greater proportions of women in paid employment lead to increases in men’s participation in unpaid labour.</td>
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<td>Lister 2009</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Legislative measures include equal access to quality jobs, equality of labour market attachment and sex discrimination measures.</td>
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<td>Cooke 2006</td>
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<td>Co-ordinated whole-of-government focus on work-family reconciliation</td>
<td>The composite of laws, regulations and service provision in a given country is more influential than any single policy initiative.</td>
<td>A focus on economic imperatives and national competitiveness in the globalised economy can lead to the gender equality agenda being sidelined.</td>
<td>Pascall &amp; Lewis 2004</td>
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<td>A key question is whether the facilitation of dual-earner families and the striving for economic goals is accompanied by initiatives to promote work-family reconciliation ie whether employment and family policies operate in tandem.</td>
<td>If women are forced to choose between work and family (through employment and family policies not operating in tandem), then long-term fertility may be threatened.</td>
<td>Geist 2005</td>
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<td>Social democratic welfare regimes have been most successful at bringing about a long-term, co-ordinated approach to promoting work-family reconciliation.</td>
<td>The cultural and historical underpinnings of different welfare state regimes need to be taken into consideration when evaluating the impact of whole-of-government approaches to work-family reconciliation.</td>
<td>Gornick &amp; Meyers 2005</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Whole-of-government principles to support work-family reconciliation include:</td>
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<td>Crompton &amp; Lyonette 2006</td>
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<td>• acknowledging the influence of competing values and the incorporation of values into policies</td>
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<td>Hook 2006</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• the need to draw men and fathers more explicitly into the work-family reconciliation debate</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nordenmark 2004</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• promoting the view that policies operate at many levels, from the individual and household levels, to the level of civil society</td>
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<td>Van der Lippe et al 2010</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• the need to take into account issues of time, money and services, which all have an impact on the private domestic sphere</td>
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<td>Pfau-Effinger 2005</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Knijn &amp; Smit 2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government initiative</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
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| Tax and family benefits that promote work-family reconciliation | Family benefits can take the form of:  
- cash transfers  
- tax breaks towards the family  
- services.  
Mechanisms used within the social security system include financial assistance to families to help with the cost of raising children and for child care, paid parental leave, maternity payments and pensions.  
A key mechanism used within the tax system is to ensure that women’s incomes do not drive household tax rates higher.  
The tax system is often favoured over the social security system when countries wish to maximise the choices of individual workers. | All mechanisms are subject to constant fluctuation, linked especially to changes in government and changes in economic conditions. | Knijn & Smit 2009  
Brennan 2007  
Blaxland et al 2009  
Himmelweit 2002 |
| Promotion of flexibility in work arrangements | Labour market and occupational regulation mechanisms include:  
- employees’ statutory right to request a flexible working pattern  
- career breaks  
- time credits  
- reducing the maximum hours of the working week.  
Gender equality is strongly promoted when protection is offered to all part-timers in labour law and in the social protection system.  
Flexibility needs to be adjusted if families have children or other dependents with special needs.  
Strategies could include promotion of the business case of the benefits of flexible working arrangements on employees. | The ROI to employers of flexible work arrangements is only recently being systematically investigated, and measures may take some time to impact on entrenched workplace cultures, especially in certain industries.  
There may only be temporary effects on men’s more equitable participation in the domestic sphere.  
Needs to take into account that much of the growth of employment in recent years has been non-standard (e.g., part-time, temporary) in nature. | Boje 2007  
Vanderweyer & Glorieux 2008  
Edlund 2007  
Anxo et al 2007  
Gregory & Milner 2008  
Lewis & Giulari 2005 |
| Parental leave | As a policy area that lies at the intersection of employment and family concerns, parental leave requires a whole-of-government focus (as discussed above).  
The legal status, duration and payment of parental leave | Without a fathers’ only portion, most parental leave is taken by mothers.  
Long periods of parental leave | Haas & Hwang 2008  
Moss 2008  
Brandth &
<table>
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<th><strong>Government initiative</strong></th>
<th><strong>Discussion</strong></th>
<th><strong>Issues</strong></th>
<th><strong>Literature</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>leave differ vastly from country to country.</td>
<td>leave for women have an impact on their ability to establish themselves in the labour market.</td>
<td>Kvande 2006, 2008</td>
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<td>As a tool for increasing fathers’ involvement in child care:</td>
<td>Unpaid leave is not affordable to less well-off parents.</td>
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<td>- it needs to have a non-transferrable portion reserved for the father on a 'use it or lose it' basis</td>
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<td>- the statutory portion needs to be well paid</td>
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<td>- it should be flexibly administered</td>
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<td>- it should be actively promoted amongst employers and employees.</td>
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<td>Campaigns can address issues including:</td>
<td>The impacts of campaigns on levels of awareness and possibly behaviour (eg taking parental leave) can be measured, but impacts on attitudes, specifically gender ideology, would be more difficult to test.</td>
<td>Klinth 2008, Estes et al 2007, Leon 2009, Haas 2003</td>
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<td>- workplace cultures and the promotion of family-friendly workplaces</td>
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<td>- best practice amongst employers</td>
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<td>- fatherhood in general, including public debate on the importance of fathers’ input to children's development</td>
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<td>- encouragement of fathers to make use of leave and other benefits for child care purposes</td>
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<td>- promoting father-inclusive practices in family and children’s services.</td>
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<td>Campaigns can play a key role in promoting solidarity between working parents and the rest of society.</td>
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<td>Child and family, health and social services are often seen as 'female spaces' and if fathers are to become more involved in the everyday care of their children, they would need to become more involved in dealing with these services.</td>
<td>Child care services and ECEC give carers the time to engage in paid work and thus to earn incomes and pensions, but unless they are subsidised, the benefits could accrue mainly to the financially better off.</td>
<td>Fletcher 2008, Barker 2008, Windebank 2007, Craig 2008</td>
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<td>This would require the services to become more father-inclusive and father-friendly.</td>
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<td>Father-inclusivity could be linked to the modernisation of public services.</td>
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<td>Specific strategies might include the revision of:</td>
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<td>- service policies</td>
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<td>- hiring practices</td>
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<td>- referral pathways</td>
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<td>- staff training.</td>
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<td>Legislation could contribute to the empowerment of women within a relationship, as well as promoting fathers' involvement with non-resident children.</td>
<td>Mothers may not want to register fathers.</td>
<td>Cook 2007a, Cook 2007b, Gregory &amp; Milner 2008</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>There is a growing body of evidence that housing affordability and commuting distances are problems in Australian cities, impacting on the opportunities parents have to spend time with their children.</td>
<td>Government housing initiatives are limited in countries such as Australia, where market mechanisms are</td>
<td>There is a lack of research specifically testing for the effect of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SUMMARY AND KEY FUTURE DIRECTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government initiative</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The valuing of care work</td>
<td>A focus on housing and infrastructure could be seen as part of the whole-of-government approach to promote work-family reconciliation.</td>
<td>preferred.</td>
<td>housing and infrastructure policies on work-family reconciliation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The promotion and financial support for caring would help to reduce the gender coding assigned to ‘breadwinner’ and ‘carer’.</td>
<td>Countries may officially recognise the social importance of giving care, but finding ways to adequately reward care work has proved elusive.</td>
<td>Orloff 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caregiving would need to be seen as integral to citizen rights and obligations, and rewarded accordingly.</td>
<td>The commodification of care through outsourcing may do little to alter the gender division of labour.</td>
<td>Haas 2003, Kershaw 2006, Pascall &amp; Lewis 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research agenda</td>
<td>Time use studies could include a more specific gender breakdown of the different activities that constitute domestic labour; there is a need for studies that measure the impact of government housing and infrastructure policies on work-family reconciliation.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eichler &amp; Albanese 2007, Bonke et al 2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 9.1 Program logic

Based on the findings of this report, a program logic has been developed for the study. This program logic can be used by OfW to inform the development of future activities in this area.

Program logic offers an analysis of the factors which contribute to program outcomes and different levels of interventions. Program logic develops from a theory of action. It is the underlying rationale that links the aims and objectives of an intervention or program model with its various components. These components are the range of activities undertaken, outputs delivered and outcomes achieved. In other words, program logic is the logic of how a program is supposed to operate to achieve the desired outcomes.

A proposed program logic for initiatives that might be led by government is set out in Figure 2 below.
The model proposes a range of simultaneous government-led legislative, economic and communication activities, based on the strategies identified by the stocktake as having the most promise in the Australian context. Because there is a need to shape both attitudes and behaviour, it is critical that the issues be addressed from multiple angles.
10 References


Craig, L., & Mullan, K. (2010). *How mothers and fathers share childcare in USA, Australia, Denmark, France and Italy: A comparative time-diary analysis*. Unpublished article based on presentation at the
REFERENCES


FaHCSIA (nd) *Gender Equality for Women Program*, unpublished.


Office for Women (2008). *Inquiry into pay equity and associated issues related to increasing female participation in the workforce: Submission to the House Standing Committee on Employment and Workplace Relations (Submission Number 112)*. Office for Women, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Canberra.


Appendix A  Measures used in studies
A.1 The International Social Survey Program (ISSP)

The International Social Survey Program (ISSP) is used in a number of the studies read for this review (Sjöberg, 2004; Nordenburg, 2004; Geist, 2005; Breen & Cooke, 2005; Knudsen & Waerness, 2008), and is described by Sjöberg (2004: 113) as ‘an attempt to create a truly comparative data set on attitudes among the populations of industrialized countries’. The ISSP is an annual social survey conducted in countries throughout the world. Response rates have varied from 55% in Germany and the UK, to 77% in Australia.

‘ISSP data are gathered through a 15-20 minute questionnaire, conducted in connection with regular national surveys, or as a separate survey…[and]…is one of the few data sets that provide information on the amount of and the division of housework across the broad array of industrialized countries’ (Knudsen & Waerness, 2008: 100).

Selected features of the survey, as described in the literature, include:

- The age, sex, education, religiosity and work experience or respondents are measured (Sjöberg, 2004: 114).

- Questions are asked pertaining to the gendered division of labour (Breen & Cooke, 2005: 51):
  - A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work ®.
  - A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works.
  - All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job.
  - A job is all right, but what most women really want is a home and children.
  - Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay.
  - Most women have to work these days to support their families ®.
  - Both the man and the woman should contribute to the household income ®.
  - A man’s job is to earn money; a woman’s job is to look after the home and family.
  - It is not good if the man stays at home and cares for the children and the woman goes out to work.
  - Women should stay at home full-time when there is a child under school age.
  - Work is best for women’s independence ®.

- A couple’s relative responsibility for domestic tasks is ascertained (Breen & Cook, 2005: 50) by asking ‘Who (‘always the woman’, ‘usually the woman’, ‘about equal’, ‘usually the man’, ‘always the man’) is normally responsible for’:
  - caring for the sick
  - doing laundry
  - doing the grocery shopping

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12 In the study carried out by Nordenmark (2004), questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 9 were used to measure ‘gender ideology’. In the study carried out by Sjöberg (2004), ‘attitudes towards female labour force participation’ was measured by making use of questions 2, 3, 5, 8 and 9.

13 ® refers to ‘reverse coding’, so that a higher score reflects more non-traditional attitudes.
− deciding what to have for dinner
− doing small repairs

- Work-life conflict is measured using four items, to which respondents are asked to indicate whether each occurred several times a week, several times a month, once of twice, or never (higher scores indicate higher work-life conflict) (Crompton & Lynette, 2006:383):
  - I have come home from work too tired to do the chores which need to be done.
  - It has been difficult for me to fulfil my family responsibilities because of the amount of time I spent on my job.
  - I have arrived at work too tired to function well because of the household work I had done.
  - I have found it difficult to concentrate at work because of my family responsibilities.

Hook (2006: 640) recognises the importance of the ISSP in comparative studies, but notes that research with these data is limited by three factors:

- Researchers have been able to analyse only men’s relative share of household labour, which conflates men’s and women’s time.
- The ISSP gathers information on only a fraction of household labour, missing activities such as cooking, cleaning and child care.
- The imprecise nature of the scale to identify who usually does each household tasks is problematic because of the role that cross-national differences in social desirability may play in self-reports.

A.2 Time Use Surveys

Time use surveys including diaries provide information about how people structure their everyday life i.e. labour supply to the labour market, time spent on household work and participation in leisure activities. Bonke (2005: 349) writes that ‘time-use information is preferably obtained from diaries, as this method is considered more reliable than information from questionnaires’.

Hook (2006: 644) notes that the time-diary format is widely recognized as the most valid and reliable measure of time use, and it is generally robust to variations in data collection, facilitating cross-national comparison’.

At the same time, it should be considered that ‘men are found to be more unreliable than women in evaluating their amount of work on the labour market, while the opposite is the case for the unpaid/household work, with women underreporting their contribution more than men’ (Bonke, 2005: 349).

Multinational Time Use Study

The Multinational Time Use Study (MTUS, versions 501, 551 and 552) (Hook, 2006) is a collection of over 50 harmonized time-use datasets from over 20 countries providing background and time expenditures variables for individuals aged 20 to 59. Time expenditures are measured in a standardized 40-category typology (Gauthier, Gershuny & Fisher, 2002, 2003, cited in Hook, 2006: 644). Activities are categorised as:

- core unpaid domestic work, such as cooking, laundry and housework
- non-routine domestic work, including shopping, maintenance, paperwork, pet care and gardening. This category also includes the care of dependent adults
- child care, including direct care and supervision, helping and playing.

The MTUS does not include information on secondary activities, which is ‘most likely to affect reports of child care, which is often multitasked or involves passively being on call’ (Budig and Folbre 2004, cited...
in Hook, 2006: 647). Child care tasks are also often recorded as housework, for example cooking for children. Most national time-use datasets do not collect time-use information from both partners in a couple, ‘therefore, direct tests of bargaining models within particular relationships cannot be conducted with these data’ (Hook 2006: 647).

**Australian Bureau of Statistics Time Use Survey**

The ABS has carried out Time Use Surveys in 1992, 1997 and 2006 (Craig et al, 2010: 30). The Survey makes use of the time-diary method, diaries being collected at four different points in time over the year. Each person aged 15 years or older that was resident in each sampled household was required to record all his or her activities over two days. Activities were recorded a five-minute intervals. Specific measures included:

- Active child care, including all types of child care that are active rather than supervisory, including physical care, interactive care, child-related travel and communication (ABS activity codes 500-530 and 550-599)
- Hours a day spent in unpaid work, excluding parental child care, but including food and drink preparation, home maintenance and purchasing goods (ABS activity codes 400-499 and 600-699)
- Hours a day spent sleeping (ABS activity codes 100-112)
- Hours a day spent in personal care activities such as bathing, dressing and grooming (ABS activity codes 131-199)
- Hours a day child-free recreation time, including social and community interaction, recreation and leisure.

In a study analysing all three ABS Time Use Surveys, child care is divided into that carried out as the main or primary activity and that carried out in addition or ‘secondary’ to some other activity. Secondary activity child care carried out while not simultaneously doing paid work, primary activity child care, any domestic work or sleeping is included in the measures (Craig et al, 2010: 34).

Using the Time Use Survey, objective time pressure is calculated by quantifying total time committed to paid and unpaid work. Subjective or perceived time pressure is measured by including question on how ‘rushed or pressed for time’ respondents generally feel. The answers – ‘never’, ‘rarely’, ‘sometimes’, ‘often’, and ‘always’ – give a measure of subjective time pressure. It allows researchers ‘to draw conclusions about how these relate to employment participation, the stress of combining employment with home responsibilities, and the constraint associated with childcare’ (Craig et al, 2008: 11).

**A.3 Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey**

The HILDA Survey seeks to provide nationally representative longitudinal data on Australian residents. It does so by means of a panel survey which follows people's lives over time. Starting in 2001, the same households and individuals are interviewed every year, (Wilkins et al, 2009: iv).

In its Annual Update, the Survey covers four overlapping ‘life domains’:

- household and family life, including child care issues
- incomes and economic wellbeing, including examination of the income distribution and income mobility over time, welfare reliance and financial stress
- labour market outcomes, focusing on labour force status mobility and job mobility, as well as the evolution over time of wages, hours preferences, household joblessness and job satisfaction
- life satisfaction, including examination of respondent assessments of their psychological wellbeing, physical and mental health and economic participation.
The annual reports also contain articles on topics not canvassed every year, and which are responsive to issues such as changes in the government policy environment, or economic conditions (Wilkens et al, 2009: v-vii).

The HILDA survey is commissioned and funded by the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and is managed by the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research at the University of Melbourne.
Appendix B  Data sources and search terms
B.1 Data sources and search terms

Literature for the stocktake was sourced by using an advanced academic literature search engine (Google Advanced Scholar) and a wide range of other electronic searches of academic databases (such as Sociological Abstracts) in order to access:

- refereed articles published between 2006 and 2010 (intensive, full-scale search)
- refereed articles published before 2006 (with a more selective focus, particularly on literature that has also been cited in other studies)
- grey literature
- books.

The key literature search terms used were:

- work/family conflict
- men’s involvement in caring for children
- men’s involvement in unpaid domestic labour
- policies to support men to engage in caring and unpaid domestic labour
- domestic division of labour
- gender division of labour
- welfare regimes and family policies
- work/family reconciliation policies
- employment, caregiving and gender relations
- gender ideology
- child care and the gender division of labour
- maternal/paternal/parental leave
- social policy and the gender division of labour
- housing affordability and the gender division of labour
- family assistance through the tax and benefit systems
- legislation and the gender division of labour.

Issues connected to the gender division of labour have been and continue to be a focus of regular study, debate and policy formation, and therefore there was a considerable body of relevant published material available for this review.

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14 Grey literature refers to research that is either unpublished or has been published in non-commercial form. Examples of grey literature include government reports, policy statements and issues papers, conference proceedings, research reports and working papers. Grey literature is a good source of up-to-date research, and is generally easily accessible on the internet (see www.une.edu.au/library/eskillsplus/research/grey.php).
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