SOCIAL SECURITY

JOURNAL

Implementation of Policy Within DSS

Financial Arrangements Within Australian Families

Changing Context of Retirement in Australia

Changes in Female Employment

Flexible Family And Age Pension Payments

Developments in Family Payments Since 1983

Social Security Notes – New Policies, Programs and Information Systems

Book Reviews

Social Security Statistics

Project Notes – New Research Listings

Details about New Books and Reports

DECEMBER 1995
This work is copyright. It may be reproduced in whole or in part for study or training purposes subject to the inclusions of an acknowledgment of the source and no commercial usage or sale. Reproduction for purposes other than those indicated above require the written permission of the Australian Government Publishing Service, GPO Box 84, Canberra, ACT, 2601.

The opinions expressed by contributors in the Social Security Journal do not necessarily represent the views of the Department of Social Security and, of course, cannot be taken in any way as expressions of government policy.

The Social Security Journal is published twice yearly and contributions are most welcome. Intending contributors are asked to contact the Managing Editor for an authors' guide on preferred length and style requirements. Intending authors should note that the guidelines were revised significantly in late 1994 and that not all styles and formats that were used in previous issues are appropriate guides to the new standard. As this publication has a widespread readership, it would be appreciated if articles submitted are written in plain, non-technical language.

Information from authors about forthcoming books and reports on income support and related research is also welcome. Wherever possible, timely reviews of relevant new works are included in the Journal.

Contributions should be forwarded to: The Managing Editor, Social Security Journal, International Branch, Corporate Services Division, Department of Social Security, Box 7788, Canberra Mail Centre, ACT, 2610.

Telephone: (06) 244 7541. Facsimile: (06) 244 5901.

Editor-in-Chief: Dr Neil Johnston.

Managing Editor: Mr Ian Vandenbergh.

Produced by the Australian Government Publishing Service
## Major Articles

- Philip Brown and David Rowlands, "Implementation of Policy: Some Perspectives from Recent Experience in the Department of Social Security"  
  Page: 3

- Horrie Foreman and Karen Wilson, "Financial Arrangements Within Families: Recent Findings"  
  Page: 24

- Professor Linda Rosenman and Jeni Warburton, "The Changing Context of Retirement in Australia"  
  Page: 54

- John Powlay and Kate Rodgers, "What's Happened to the Work Test?"  
  Page: 67

  Page: 78

- Nigel Patterson and Tammy Wolfs, "The Demand for Flexible Payment Arrangements"  
  Page: 97

- David Stanton and Michael Fuery, "Developments in Family Payments -"

## Social Security Notes

- Manny Palma, "Where We've Come From and Where We're Going: The Key Directions for the Department of Social Security in Access and Equity"  
  Page: 157

- Bob Daprè, "The Concept of Take-up"  
  Page: 170

- Philip Brown, "Evaluation of Home Child Care Allowance: Findings from Pre-implementation Survey"  
  Page: 176

  Page: 183

- Robyn Bedford, "The Preparation of Replies to Ministerial Correspondence in the Department of Social Security"  
  Page: 190

## Book Reviews

- 50 Years After Beveridge:  
  Page: 195

  John Hills, John Ditch and Howard Glennerster (eds), *Beveridge and Social Security - An International Retrospective* and Sally Baldwin and Jane Falkingham (eds), *Social Security and Social Change*  
  Reviewer: Dr Peter Whiteford

- Unemployment - An Overseas Perspective:  
  Page: 200

  Odile Benoit-Guilbot and Duncan Gallie (eds), *Long-Term Unemployment* and Discussion Paper by the Government of Canada, *Agenda: Jobs and Growth - Improving Social Security in Canada*  
  Reviewer: Kate Rodgers
Trends in the Australian Bureau of Statistics ... : 206
Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Social Trends 1995 and
Australian Women's Year Book 1995
Reviewer: Dianne Simpson-McGlynn

Finding the Way Through the Survey Maze: 212
David de Vans, Surveys in Social Research
Reviewer: Colette Svoboda

Social Security Statistics

Statistical Tables

1. Pensioners: Pension Type, Australia, June 1985 to June 1995 221
2. Pensioners: State by Pension Type by Sex, June 1995 223
3. Allowees: Allowance Type, Australia, June 1992 to June 1995 225
4. Youth Training, Job Search and Newstart Allowees: State by
Allowance Type, June 1995 226
5. Other Allowees: State by Allowance Type, June 1995 227
6. Youth Training, Job Search and Newstart Allowees: Duration,
Australia, May 1986 to May 1995 228
7. Family Payments: Clients and Children by Family Payment Type,
Australia, June 1993 to June 1995 229
8. Family Payments: State by Family Payment Type by Sex, June 1995 230
9. Age Pensioners: Selected Characteristics by Sex, Australia, June 1995 232
10. Age Pensioners: Country of Birth by Sex, Australia, June 1995 234
11. Age Pensioners: Age Group by Sex by Rate of Payment, June 1995 237
12. Age Pensioners: Age Group by Sex by Level of Payment, June 1995 237
13. Age Pensioners: Home Ownership by Age Group by Sex, June 1995 238
14. Age Pensioners: By Age Group by Receiving/ Not Receiving Rent
Assistance, June 1995 241 241

Graphs and Charts

1. Age, Disability Support and Sole Parent Pensioners, June 1985 to
June 1995 222
2. Number of Youth Training, Job Search and Newstart Allowees by
State, June 1995 226
3. Family Payments by Type and State, June 1995 231
4. Age Pensioners by Age and Sex, June 1995 233
5. Age Pensioners by Country of Birth, June 1995 236

Figures

1. Overseas Born Age Pension Recipients, June 1995 236
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Notes</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Editor's Note</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current and Planned Research</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Retirement Incomes</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Income Support for People with Disabilities</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Income Support for Families</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Labour Market Programs</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assistance for Young People</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Income Support research - Other</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Books and Reports</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MAJOR ARTICLES

Philip Brown and David Rowlands, "Implementation of Policy: Some Perspectives from Recent Experience in the Department of Social Security"

Horrie Foreman and Karen Wilson, "Financial Arrangements Within Families: Recent Findings"

Professor Linda Rosenman and Jeni Warburton, "The Changing Context of Retirement in Australia"

John Powlay and Kate Rodgers, "What's Happened to the Work Test?"


Nigel Patterson and Tammy Wolfs, "The Demand for Flexible Payment Arrangements"

David Stanton and Michael Fuery, "Developments in Family Payments 1983-1996"

SOCIAL SECURITY JOURNAL

DECEMBER 1995
IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY:
SOME PERSPECTIVES FROM RECENT EXPERIENCE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL
SECURITY

Philip Brown
Parenting Allowance Policy Analysis and Development Section, Parenting and Child Care Branch, Family
Programs and Services Division, Department of Social Security

David Rowlands
Director, Parenting Allowance Policy Analysis and Development Section, Parenting and Child Care Branch,
Family Programs and Services Division, Department of Social Security

Introduction

'Work', Bertrand Russell once wrote, 'is of two kinds: first, altering the position of matter at or near the
Earth's surface relatively to other such matter; second, telling other people to do so. ...The second kind is
capable of indefinite extension: there are not only those who give orders, but those who give advice as to
what orders should be given.' These two categories, of course, broadly correspond to doing things and
deciding what should be done, administration and policy, a dichotomy much analysed in the theory of public
management. Much of the discussion that appears in the pages of this journal is about social security policy:
this article discusses the 'other' sort of work - implementing a major policy change.

Why should this be of interest? First, although it is frequently convenient to maintain an intellectual
distinction between policy and administration, in practice the two are richly interconnected and should be
considered in tandem. Not only does administrative reality place constraints on policy options, but those
involved in the delivery of a program can often develop clear insights into the needs and opportunities for
program change and enhancement at a policy level. Also, complexity in either policy or administration will
certainly affect the other: unnecessarily complex policy measures are hard to administer well and over-
complicated administrative systems can subvert policy intentions. Elegance and simplicity of design are
much desired in both spheres, but often hard to achieve in either.

Second, an account of what is involved in implementing a policy should be of general interest to those who
are used to thinking about what policies should
be implemented. Anecdotal evidence suggests that awareness and understanding of the processes of implementation are very limited among those without direct experience. Those with that experience within the Department of Social Security will attest that nothing focuses the mind more clearly than being told that a new payment is to commence at a particular date, that it is expected to be paid regularly thereafter to (say) half a million people all over the continent and that you are responsible for ensuring that this happens effectively and efficiently and are accountable for the outcome. The experience of assuming this responsibility can be enhanced exquisitely if the particular policy is prominent among the government's recent public commitments.

Project Management - Getting Started

Where does the project manager start? The answer is that he or she depends on experience - there is little formal training that quite satisfies the demands of the job. That experience may be their own or that of colleagues, superiors and the staff in the Department's own network of Area and Regional Offices. But a warning must be given here: any one person's organisational experience is invariably parochial and we tend to be blind to that fact. At a minimum, there are new or slightly different traps and contingencies awaiting each project manager on the lengthy path to a successful implementation. Nevertheless, some practices seem worthy of the name 'good advice', although the present authors would hesitate to claim that they have been blessed with a clear insight into 'best practice' in this field.

What follows draws primarily on experience with two major projects, the implementation (if Home Child Care Allowance (HCCA, which commenced in September 1994) and Parenting Allowance (PA, which subsumed HCCA from 1 July 1995). These projects involved implementation work from late 1993 through to mid-1995. The account reflects the view from a 'program area' in the National Administration of the Department; that is, the perspective of those who are responsible for national implementation and management of the program. It is no blow-by-blow account and a much more complete picture of how things get implemented in Social Security could be obtained by including the accounts of others involved, especially staff in the Department's regional office network; but that is beyond the scope of this paper.

At the start, the national project manager naturally focuses on two issues: precisely what he or she has to do and what resources are available to do them. The task is likely to have been defined in a government statement of intentions (most likely in a Budget context). The resources required to implement and administer the change will have been estimated prior to any decision being taken and (as a matter of standard practice within the
Department) will include 'running costs' (that is, administrative) resources for implementation and ongoing delivery, including staff, training, computer systems, forms, correspondence, publicity and so on. Invariably, a critical resource will be the time available to do the job.

The implementation date will have been set by the government, based on expert advice, including what comprises a practical time frame (although other factors can influence the decision also). Such advice is not a purely algorithmic process of calculation but a matter of judgement. A typical situation might require balancing the desirability of an early date against the potential cost in increased risk, additional development resources, and often, other priorities. It requires a great deal of experience and good judgement to formulate advice on this issue.

Once the implementation date has been set, of all the resources at the project manager's disposal, time is the least flexible. Clearly, it is virtually impossible to seek a change in the start date for what has become a public commitment. Every project manager is therefore conscious of the inexorable approach of this deadline. Starting from the implementation date, and working back, the project manager must identify the key tasks on the critical path. To describe a task as being on the critical path is not to make an evaluative statement as to how important it is; rather it is to say that if that task were delayed then the whole implementation would be delayed. There are many important tasks but only some are on the critical path and these must command particular attention.

For most projects involving changes to social security payments, tasks usually on the critical path are micro-policy analysis, passage of legislation, the development of computer systems to support administration of the initiative, publicity, staff training and sometimes, a major data collection. Thus in the case of HCCA, to enable payments to commence from 29 September 1994, the data collection mailout (that is, a large-scale issue by mail of invitations to claim) to potential customers had to begin in early July so they would have time to lodge claims and the Department would have time to process those claims. In turn, this meant that, amongst other things, a large part of the computer system had to be complete and tested and the entire publicity strategy had to be in place prior to the start of the mailout. Working back like this, it soon becomes apparent that what may seem superficially like ample time for preparatory work in fact contains little allowance for contingencies.

A large amount of 'risk management' is frequently required in initiating tasks in parallel which, were unlimited time available, might only be tackled in series. For example, development of the computer system requires detailed specification of policy rules. This can be done with confidence only after the legislation has passed through the Parliament. However, it is rarely
practicable to await the outcome of the legislative process to begin systems development - especially for large and complex changes such as HCCA and Parenting Allowance. The risk, of course, is that the anticipated rules are not adopted into law and some computer systems change or redevelopment has to take place when the actual rules are known. Sometimes even last-minute changes do happen and are simply another contingency the project manager must manage. Where practicable this can be planned for and the capacity to change can be 'built in' where a matter is not resolved until the last minute. Some things simply have to be held up until the rules have been settled - one cannot afford to issue claim forms that turn out to have been based on unrealised policy intentions.

Each major project comprises a plethora of tasks. Some of these appear to be of marginal importance when viewed in isolation, but are potentially highly influential in the success of the new policy. If they are poorly executed, the implementation and, potentially, the policy itself, can be placed at risk. These many minor tasks comprise a sort of organisational analogue to the 'butterfly effect' in the mathematics of dynamic systems and chaos theory - a seemingly insignificant action (or failure to act) at one point on the path toward implementation can have tempestuous consequences at some as yet distant point. The problem is, of course, identifying which are the important actions. There seems to be no easy solution but attention to detail.

Diligent effort, then, needs to be invested in each of these spheres: specifying practical policy rules for incorporation into draft legislation and in computer systems design; consultation with stakeholders; designing the forms to be used by those who will claim the payment; rigorous testing of all 'products' directed to our customers, including the standard letters that will be generated by the computer system (usually referred to within Social Security as 'advices'); printing and distribution; resources analysis, including the making of resource bids and their allocation; staff training; liaison with unions; development of specifications for management information; compliance arrangements; ensuring privacy principles are scrupulously adhered to; drafting and issue of national staff instructions; updating of the administrative procedures; the development and production of a comprehensive publicity strategy and associated materials; and regular briefing for management and ministers- Most of these spheres involve specialist staff in distinct functional parts of the structure of National Administration of the Department. The largest such function is that performed by the Systems Division, which develops the computer systems to support the delivery of the Department's payments. Further, there are strong relationships among these many spheres of work on the project. However, the project manager in the Program Delivery Division is expected to take responsibility for the process as a whole to ensure its coherence, consistency and efficient realisation.
Organisationally, Social Security has been moving towards a program management orientation (and away from a more functional division of tasks). In this environment the project manager must assume that, as mentioned above, he or she will be responsible for ensuring that all of the necessary tasks are done, including those carried out by the many contributing areas of different technical expertise. Moreover, the project manager must be constantly aware of progress on each aspect and be able to report on it, identify problems and be accountable for their resolution.

With a project of high saliency, reporting requirements can be demanding and must be taken into account in the project plan. There is a false dichotomy to beware of here - that the success of the project would be better served by a manager being left to get on with managing the project rather than expending so much effort reporting on it. In fact, that effort is as much an element of project management as any other. Keeping senior management aware of progress ensures that a strategic eye is kept on progress. Moreover, it greatly eases invoking their support to deal with those inevitable contingencies that the project manager cannot deal with alone. Whereas bad news always has difficulty in flowing up a hierarchy, good and regular briefing builds commitment and involvement at all levels and reduces the incidence of the nasty surprise.

Having identified the necessary tasks, the project manager needs to put in place a strategy for the management of them all. Much is often made of the usefulness of project management software. However, the experience can be disappointing. On the basis of the authors' experience a number of points can be made. First, at the start of a project it is an excellent discipline to think through the tasks and the order in which they must be undertaken, and to document these systematically. Using a software package demands this and one immediately worthwhile result is the building of a large planning diagram (PERT chart) setting out all of these tasks and the precedence relationships among them. Impressive looking Gantt charts (timelines) can also be produced by the computer from the same information.

The second point is that there is usually a temptation to put too much detail into such plans. Also, many of the relationships between tasks are ‘softer’ than assumed. That is, although you may plan to finish A and then do B, you often find that some work on B has to begin before all of A is complete.\textsuperscript{10} The result of all this is that the project manager can easily build a plan that cannot be kept accurate and up-to-date. It is largely a question of balance: the manager needs a plan that is sufficiently detailed to be of practical value but not so detailed that keeping it accurate requires every waking hour to feed it with yet more data. The process of planning is essential but the over-detailed plan is a burdensome conceit of little continuing practical value.
An example of the plan (precedence network or PERT chart) as used in the middle to later phases of HCCA implementation is at figure 1 (see foldout page 9). This was particularly useful in the middle stage of the project (about six months before the implementation day) when many streams of activity had begun and a slower-than-expected legislative process threatened to place several of them on the critical path.

Given the central role of computer systems development in almost every major Social Security policy change, the relationship between the project manager in the Program Division and that person's Systems Division counterpart needs to be one of clear understanding, close communication and co-operation. Anything less is a threat to the project. Although these two people found themselves in almost daily contact throughout the nine months of work on the HCCA implementation project, a regular Monday morning meeting was a very effective mechanism for review of the status of the project, problem clarification and solving. A similar approach was adopted for Parenting Allowance. More generally, good relations and a sense of common objectives among the Program Division and Systems Division staff working on the project are important.

Parenting Allowance is more complex than HCCA in that it crosses traditional Social Security program boundaries. While the innovative policy which created this arrangement may be more than adequate justification, it imposes additional management challenges for a project manager. Managing an implementation like this requires close relationships with several equivalent-level Program and Systems Division counterparts, rather than a simple one-on-one arrangement. Skills in people management, coordination, and time management are all prerequisite qualities in project managing such a new payment.

An essential part of the project manager's strategy is marshalling the organisational support and commitment required for a successful implementation. This is not to say that there is any general lack of willingness to get the job done, but there is always a large number of tasks, with many program changes flowing from each Budget. The project manager's task is to convey the distinctiveness and importance of his or her own project, how it fits into a broader policy context and, most of all, that sense of enthusiasm and urgency necessary to get it done. This requires a great deal of careful work by the project manager in any organisation as large and geographically widespread as Social Security. It also implies a great deal of consultation with staff throughout the organisation.

A key aspect of this process is establishing a common understanding as to why a policy measure has been taken and how it fits with previous and prospective developments. Undoubtedly, in every large organisation there will be a minority who wish to know only what they have to do in order to
do their jobs and when. However, it would be a gross error for the project manager to assume that those
whose ultimate role will be to carry out the day-to-day administration have no interest in what the associated
procedures were designed to achieve. On the contrary, internal organisational consultation with a focus on
the policy objective taps a large reservoir of experience and brings insights, problems and solutions to the
fore.

What is more, public servants' accountability for program outcomes must be remembered. A distinctive
feature of Australian public administration (as contrasted with that in the United Kingdom and New Zealand,
with which Australia is often compared) is that program managers are expected to be concerned not only
with outputs - the things we do or produce - but also outcomes - the ways in which those things change our
customers' world. This approach has been taken because of a concern that 'a focus on outputs alone may run
the risk of allowing the focus of scrutiny to slip away from the real goals of a program' (Russell, 1994).

Those who work at some distance from the customers of the Department, whether at an area office or
National Administration, are inherently not as immediately aware as regional office staff of the direct
personal impact on customers of a change in policy. To ensure that the practical knowledge of direct
customer contact can be used in the design as well as the administration of programs, a common practice is to
second staff from the Department's network of offices to work as part of the project team in Canberra. These
staff members provide practical advice on how a new policy can be administered 'on the ground', as well as
insights into how the computer system should work and the likely effect of the policy on customers. That
practical experience, developed through extensive dealings with clients on the telephone and face to face,
helps to make the new arrangements workable, effective, efficient, and received as well as possible by both
staff and the customers to whom the policy is directed.

In the course of the respective implementations, both the HCCA and the Parenting Allowance project teams
visited each of the Department's 20 Area Offices twice to hold information and feedback sessions. There
were several purposes for this. First, a visit about six months before a major implementation provides a local
focus for area and regional offices to develop their own implementation plans. Second, it provides a chance
for the project team to clarify policy questions with network staff and get feedback and suggestions from
them. But it also plays a part in the process mentioned above of marshalling support and commitment to
these particular projects in a widespread organisation. Personal familiarity between the project team and key
staff throughout the network greatly encourages and eases subsequent communication.
The second round of visits to the network was made closer to implementation, this time with systems staff who could address detailed technical questions. To invest in an extensive program of travel and consultation has costs, not so much in fares and the like but in the substantial periods of absence from Canberra of project team members, each of whom has specialised areas of responsibility and knowledge. However, in the case of HCCA and Parenting Allowance, the consensus within the organisation is that this investment was very worthwhile.

**Project Implementation - External Agencies**

A further and often underrated factor is the management of external stakeholders such as other government agencies and community interest groups. For example, HCCA was intended to replace another program in the taxation system - the Dependent Spouse Rebate (DSR) for couples with children.\(^1\) This implied the ‘winding down’ of that tax measure by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) at the same time as implementation of HCCA was being planned. Therefore the Department initiated a working party between officers of both agencies to oversee the management of issues which affected HCCA and the DSR. This working party continued, with the same objective, in the development of Parenting Allowance.

At first glance, the introduction of HCCA as an alternative program to the DSR appeared a minor task, perhaps involving no more than a simple change to the Income Tax Assessment Act and an updated 1995 Tax Pack. However, upon closer examination it became clear to officials, both in Social Security and the ATO, that the changes, particularly as they affected families, were quite complex. For example, questions arose about entitlement to the two benefits: how should entitlement to the two benefits be handled for 1994-95, the transition year? How would the change in rules be brought to the attention of taxpayers already getting the DSR by having lower tax instalment deductions made from their salary or wages? How would couples be prevented from claiming both HCCA and the DSR in respect of the same period? How should those taxpayers getting the DSR be made aware of the HCCA payment that their spouse may be entitled to?

A further complication was the timing of legislative changes. Because of the lead times in preparing to introduce a new payment, Social Security legislation must be in place well before the new payment begins. In the case of HCCA this was complete in April 1994, nearly six months prior to implementation. However, legislative amendments to taxation provisions such as for the DSR could be made much closer to the date of the change. In fact, from an administrative perspective, since taxpayers lodge their tax returns and make their claims for the DSR after the end of the financial year, the amended rules for the DSR only needed to be settled well after...
implementation of HCCA. In practice, the legislation to amend tax law was still being considered by Parliament just before the commencement of HCCA payments, in September 1994. A lesson for all of those involved is that it is more efficient for related legislative changes, such as these, to be considered simultaneously by Parliament if this is possible.

**Project Implementation - Micropolicy Development and Legislation**

Each Social Security payment must work with a set of rules about who is entitled to the payment, how they claim it, when it will be paid from, how much it will be and so on. Complexity of Social Security rules is currently the subject of much attention. Complexity is generally regarded as iniquitous and undesirable and is attributed variously to 'targeting' of payments, and pressure to avoid 'losers' from any change and processes of administrative review.\(^\text{12}\) A major review of the categorical structure of payments is currently under way in the Department with an ultimate aim of simplifying the policy rules for people of working age, for which there is much scope.\(^\text{13}\) However, the ultimate reservoir of complexity for any organisation with a large customer base is the customer population itself and its various circumstances which will always test every rule, occasionally spawn new ones and continually require judgement by decision-makers to take account of each individual's particular circumstances.

The primary set of rules for a new payment will be encapsulated in a government decision and papers issued at an announcement of the new policy. But a government decision on a policy change normally deals only with the fundamental structure of that policy. This must be elaborated upon and translated into drafting instructions and then into a Bill to go before Parliament. Drafting instructions for the legislation are prepared by the Department's Legal Services Division, on the basis of rules articulated by the program area in the light of the government decision. The Minister's (or, where appropriate, the Prime Minister's) view is sought if there are substantial issues for which rules are needed but no guidance and authority can be found. When the drafting instructions are complete, the Office of Parliamentary Counsel (after confirming that there is authority for a Bill) then translates these instructions into the draft Bill which is the basis of the legislation that gets enacted. This, then, is the first level of detail to which rules must be set out.

However, to implement a new payment or major policy change a great deal more rule specification must be done. This must explain how the policy set out in the legislation is to be translated into administrative action. It has to take account of the variety of circumstances in the world in which the policy will be applied, and necessarily becomes complex in itself. This additional
detail is set out initially in 'question and answer' documents and then, more formally, in staff instructions. This material is subsequently incorporated in to the Department’s three-volume Guide to the Administration of the Social Security Act.

Although a formal boundary between the policy and administrative rules is distinguishable, it is possible to conceive of all of these rules as a hierarchy or decision-making tree. A great deal of care is needed to take rule-specification to the appropriate level. On one side there is the Scylla of extending the rule hierarchy to cover every conceivable circumstance. On the other side is the Charybdis of too little detail. The temptation to continue indefinitely to pose ‘What if ...’ questions and to set out ways of answering them must be resisted as futile - every regional office will be happy to nominate at least one case that simply ’doesn’t fit’ any schema. Such attempts would also produce too much indigestible material for operational staff to use. On the other hand, insufficient specification brings the risks of too much discretion being assumed and inconsistency in policy application.

Thus, a project manager, in the very early stages of the implementation process, must attempt to identify and tease out micropolicy details to the appropriate level. Fortunately, there is both precedent and experience to call on. Experienced network staff, who are the experts in translating micropolicy into operational procedures, can provide much help in defining the rules. For HCCA and Parenting Allowance, one of the earliest tasks was the preparation of a policy discussion paper setting out much of the proposed detail. This was circulated throughout the organisation for comment and suggestions. This process helped to identify and clarify many micropolicy issues prior to the drafting of the legislation. In addition, it involved and raised the awareness of many of those who would be administering the payments in the Social Security network well in advance of implementation.

The passage of legislation is arguably the most fundamental stage in the implementation task. Not only does the legislation provide the authority for the program or change, but its passage can also be one of the most highly contingent factors. Further, until passage of the legislation is achieved, the final 'rules' for the payment are not known. Knowledge of those rules in every detail is critical for computer systems design and, given the time required to design and test a complex computer system, it is important to get the earliest possible passage through Parliament.

In recent years, for various reasons, there has been much more lengthy Parliamentary deliberation over Bills and more late alterations before passage. From the point of view of the project manager, the pragmatic implications are primarily the compressing of the time remaining for implementation and the possibility of late change. For example, after the introduction of HCCA was announced in the 1993-94 Budget, the Bill to
amend the Social Security Act was introduced into the House of Representatives in December 1993. However, Royal Assent was obtained only on 7 April 1994, after referral of the legislation to a Senate Committee and considerable debate. Given that the commencement date for the new payment was 29 September 1994, any fundamental difference between the rules set out in the Bill and those in the legislation assented to (particularly had they been of a structural nature) could have posed special difficulties for the computer system then being developed to support the payment. It is possible to try to diminish the uncertainties of the project environment by early identification of the issues likely to attract debate, to give careful consideration to them and to provide briefing to parliamentary members as to how these issues will be handled. Ultimately, however, the inherent fundamental right of the Parliament to decide has to be accepted and catered for in project management by contingency planning.

**Project Implementation - Computer Systems Development and Data Collection**

Legislative processes are not the only source of contingency for computer systems design. Delay by the program area in resolving micropolicy issues, complex interactions with other Social Security computer systems, capacity to test systems thoroughly, availability of sufficient processing capacity and dependence on strategic developments in the computer systems environment can all add to uncertainty. Perhaps the best way to convey the nature of the system constructor's task is to view each Social Security computer systems development as a substantial public works project with a major engineering component. Fundamental changes to the design of a new road bridge cannot be made efficiently after construction has begun. The later that major changes are required, the greater the risk that the bridge will not be open for traffic by the intended date. Similar constraints face those building a new computer system, but the physical manifestations of system construction are not as evident as bridgeworks and the implications of late changes are not so readily apparent to those not directly involved in construction. Worse, most Social Security projects are equivalent to building a whole network of new or replacement roads and bridges with an expectation that no traffic delays should be experienced at any time.

For systems development, the dependency upon finalising the policy specifications will always be problematic, and any ongoing uncertainty is incongruent with the methodical, engineering approach naturally favoured by systems developers. Systems developers in Social Security plan major implementation projects using the DSS Project Lifecycle planning methodology. This planning tool provides a highly rationalised basis for developing computer systems to support major system changes. In fact a
great deal of time must be invested in detailed specification by the program area of what they want and expect the computer system to do. Decisions have to be taken on which processes will be automated and which will not. (Those that are not will have to be dealt with manually.) Because of the inherent rigour of the approach, it is also possible for some micropolicy issues hitherto overlooked to be identified during the process of systems analysis.

What is wanted and what is practicable sometimes differ and one of the most challenging aspects of this work is ensuring that, on the one hand, the program area's requirements and expectations are reasonable, and on the other, any limits on what the system provides are not merely to satisfy some technical convenience. Again, a mature and professional working relationship between program area and systems staff is the only way to ensure that the optimum path is taken.

Many new social security measures require a mailout to potential customers. This is an effective, well-targeted technique for providing an explanation of a policy change to existing customers. If there is a need under the new policy to collect new or additional information from those customers in order to assess entitlements, the mailout can become the beginning of a data collection. In the case of HCCA, it was clear that a substantial proportion of the potential recipient population were already Social Security customers getting family payment. Therefore the most efficient and effective way of commencing the new payment was to write directly to that potential population to explain HCCA and to invite them to claim. Most others could be reached by a complementary (but smaller) mailout by the Australian Taxation Office. A general publicity campaign was run to raise community awareness of the new payment and invite claims from others who might be eligible and those who might become eligible later (for example, those having their first baby after commencement of the new payment).

A particular benefit of this approach is that only a limited amount of additional information may be needed from existing customers wishing to claim the new payment. Customers can use a computer-printed, personalised, abbreviated claim form with their individual personal details already on it for them to confirm or amend. They need supply only that additional information needed to assess their claim.

Before the mailouts, the mailout package, comprising information about HCCA (including the intention to replace the DSR with the new payment), a claim form, and a reply-paid envelope, was market tested. Despite the great care with which this package was originally designed, the changes made to it as a result of market testing with actual customers were substantial. The dismay of the designers was tempered by the knowledge that the consequent improvements were likely to enhance take-up of the payment, and certainly made form processing much more efficient than it otherwise would have
been. Thus market testing, although nominally an expensive and time-consuming task, was very cost effective for two reasons. First, the better design of the package improved the understanding of HCCA among claimants, and forms were completed more effectively than otherwise. (There were still some imperfections that caused frustration for staff in some parts of the Department, but much less so than might have been the case.) Second, the package made it very easy for those who would not qualify for the payment to 'select themselves out' of returning a claim form. This is no trivial matter as minor errors in design at this point could have prompted several hundred thousand additional telephone queries to the Department's Teleservice Centres, tens of thousands of additional claims with commensurate additional processing cost and inevitable customer disappointment. After this episode, market testing of forms and mailout packages has become the norm in Social Security.

The Parenting Allowance mailout was equally complex. Because Parenting Allowance subsumed HCCA, this mailout had the advantage that there was not a large group of potential customers 'unknown' to the Department. But the same feature introduced complexity: the payment itself has two components - a basic (the 'HCCA component') and an additional amount. Generally, the latter is paid to the partners of income support recipients or low income earners. As a consequence, Parenting Allowance is paid to three major, distinct customer groups. To issue each potential customer the same mailout package would have been awkward, inappropriate, and poorly received by customers themselves. Therefore, each customer received a package tailored to their likely circumstances. The problem, of course, was to identify correctly the customers as belonging to a particular group. This was done by careful analysis of existing Social Security records, which provided a good indication of their likely parenting allowance entitlement. In addition, the information provided to customers in the mailout had to explain clearly the changes to policy, including the fact that HCCA, introduced only the previous year, was being replaced by a component of Parenting Allowance.

Project Implementation - Publicity

Strongly linked to the mailouts and data collection were the publicity strategies. An important performance indicator for a program such as HCCA and Parenting Allowance is 'take-up' - the proportion of the eligible population who seek and obtain an entitlement. Directing publicity to all potential customers is a complex task, since those customers are numerous, and in very diverse circumstances. They live in major urban areas, provincial centres, and rural and isolated communities. They include people from a wide variety of non-English speaking backgrounds, as well as Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders. The customers have a range of literacy skills, education levels and family income.
A publicity strategy must not only ensure that people who are likely to qualify at the commencement of the payment are informed and able to claim easily, but it must also raise community awareness of the new or changed program so that the likelihood of people who become qualified for the payment later are also likely to claim and receive their entitlement. It must also present a clearly identifiable and consistent ‘imagery’ in all forms of publicity to optimise recognition of the particular payment. In the case of HCCA, an added complication was that its implementation coincided with the commencement of a quite separate program, the childcare cash rebate, with which some people might confuse it.

Thus, for HCCA, publicity centred on the mailouts, with each person receiving a brochure designed around a simple ‘quiz’ that would quickly establish whether they were likely to get HCCA. Similar brochures were made widely available in public contact areas of the Department and in hospitals (for new mothers) at the same time. Television and newspaper advertising (including ethnic press) - again carrying the quiz theme - began just after the mailouts commenced. Apart from raising general community awareness, this was intended to encourage recipients of the mailout packages who thought they might be eligible to complete and return their claims, and to do so promptly. The television campaign included Imparja, Golden West and North Queensland TV to ensure coverage of remote areas.

These major publicity thrusts were complemented by a range of targeted strategies including a mailout to tax professionals, advertising in women’s magazines, and information kits and posters.

**Project Implementation - Staff Preparation**

Probably the most important and most difficult task of all for a new initiative is ensuring that the regional network of the organisation is resourced, prepared and ‘up to speed’ in time for implementation. This is not just a matter of it having the resources and knowing the new rules and procedures but also being equipped to deal with contingencies. Every project manager realises that wherever he or she may have slipped up, for every minor error in the computer system, oversight in forms design, confusion in expression in an instruction, publicity item or letter, the staff in the Department’s regional offices and teleservice centres will have to deal directly and promptly with the result. The onus is therefore squarely on the project manager to make certain that the network has the necessary resources and that staff have the proper training and understanding of the new payment. For both of these payments (HCCA and Parenting Allowance), resource allocations to the network were based on very thorough analysis of each of the work processes involved, and the time each type of activity would take. These analyses were themselves substantial tasks for the program area.
However, the first element in staff preparation was the circulation almost at the start of each project of a discussion paper setting out policy issues. This was followed, in due course, by the extensive program of visits to all the Department's areas by the project teams. The six months leading up to implementation day saw the issue of a stream of written 'national instructions' to staff, covering detailed policy and procedural issues. This is a traditional form of information dissemination within Social Security and continues to be a central component of the Department's internal communications strategy. Production of these instructions requires considerable care and judgement. As these are the day-to-day sources of authority for administrative action they must be precisely correct, unambiguous and clear. On the other hand, they must also get the essential message across succinctly and be in the hands of the users neither too early (so that their message may be forgotten) nor too late (so there is no time to read them).

New technology, and in particular the advent of a personal computer on almost every desk, has created opportunities for innovative means of informing staff of changes. For example, electronic mail allows a program officer in Canberra to advise all relevant staff of an urgent item of information very quickly. National instructions are largely disseminated by this means already. Both HCCA and Parenting Allowance also employed newsletters dedicated to implementation, again largely distributed electronically, and which were very favourably received by staff throughout the organisation. These focused not so much on how the payments would work as policy but on progress with implementation. Another relatively new form of information dissemination is the use of satellite television to provide immediate - sometimes 'live' - information to the entire network. This technique also has taken a prominent role in staff training programs.

Proper training, however, requires specific training materials to be provided for staff at various levels, with differing interests and needs. Drafting training materials is a time-consuming task, usually requiring input and clearance from staff across several areas in the Department, particularly the program and systems areas. Perhaps the most effective and most utilised training resources within Social Security are the in-office trainers (IOTs), a staffing resource based in nearly all offices in the Department's network. The IOT positions tend to be staffed either by one individual officer on a permanent basis, or alternatively, by several, highly technical proficient officers, on a rotation basis. In either case, IOTs coordinate and undertake training and analyses of training needs at the local level. Self-paced training packages, produced in National Administration, with delivery coordinated by IOTs, have become a common and effective training medium for processing staff. The self-paced workbooks provide detailed policy and systems information, practice in rate calculations, and case study examples.
Clearly, it is as well if a project manager can ensure that staff are committed to and supportive of their project. When there is a sense of ownership there is more likely to be a commitment to dealing with it, including any unexpected aspects. The Department consults with staff through various forums, including working parties and local consultations and, of course, the union representing staff members. For HCCA and Parenting Allowance, a formal mechanism to ensure that issues of interest to staff were addressed in the management of the project was established through regular contact with the relevant union, the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU). The CPSU appointed a nominee to represent staff nationally. That delegate met with relevant project personnel on a regular basis, and these forums were able to address the issues that are frequently foremost in the minds of staff, including resourcing for the new work, systems, training, information and work flows.

**Project Completion - Implementation Day and Beyond**

From the project manager's perspective, if a project has been relatively well managed, and if there are no major contingencies affecting the commencement of operation of the new computer system, implementation day can seem an anti-climax. Soon after, of course, will come a new workload comprising such things as a demand for information on progress (in terms of processing and customer take-up), policy queries from the network (based on those inevitable circumstances not envisaged in micropolicy development), representations from parliamentarians and correspondence from the public putting views on some aspect of the new program. Detailed management information on client characteristics and departmental processing performance will soon be expected as part of monitoring program performance. Also, an internal post-implementation review must be organised to try to find out how the organisation itself views the implementation project in retrospect. That review aims to assess the organisational aspects of implementation rather than formally evaluate the policy. A longer-term task will be a thorough evaluation of the program in terms of its policy objectives.

Implementation day itself can see the project manager sensing the nearness of achievement but also feeling worried and frustrated. The frustration is due to the fact that they have been actively managing a complex process for, say, nine to twelve months and there is very little they can now do that can affect the outcome in any substantial way - the whole complex apparatus is inexorably coming to life based on what has been put in place over that development period. The worry is about the unexpected. Is there, within that apparatus of people and machines, some minor but essential process or ritual that has been neglected? Is there some simple switch, which everyone has
forgotten, and for the want of its being thrown, the whole mechanism will shudder to a halt, no payments will be made and, however elegant the design, however hard you have worked, the whole thing will pass into organisational and public mythology as a disaster? Fortunately, for HCCA and Parenting Allowance there was not, but only hindsight could prove it to the project managers.

In practice there will always be some faults and deficiencies. Because the computer system is at the heart of daily social security work and prescribes what can be done, faults in it will be noticed soonest. Good managers will have strategies to address these rapidly and contingency plans for larger problems. Rapid communication through electronic mail enables information on 'work-arounds' (temporary techniques for dealing with difficulties or unexpected idiosyncrasies in processing) to become widely known quickly. The real test of project administration will be the views of the regional and teleservice staff, who, as noted earlier, have to cope with the consequences of oversights or blunders.

The policy cycle is complete only when possible changes and improvements are identified in the evaluation of outcomes for customers and decisions are made to modify the program. Sometimes changes can occur very rapidly such as HCCA being subsumed into Parenting Allowance only nine months after implementation. However, program evaluation in Social Security is a large subject which has been canvassed elsewhere. The authors hope that program implementation can be the subject of further formal discussion, preferably past mere exposition and increasingly with analytical intent.

**Endnotes**

1 Russell, B. (1960), P. 11.

2 This point has been acknowledged by academics, practising public servants and ministers. See Uhr (1990), Wilenski (1986) and Baldwin (1995).

3 The Department of Social Security makes good use of this in drawing upon suggestions from its staff each year in formulating advice to the Minister on options for policy change. Typically, it gets 700-800 such suggestions a year.

4 However, an extremely useful guide for implementation project managers has been prepared recently by the Program Management Coordination section of the Department (DSS 1995).

5 Background to the introduction of Parenting Allowance is provided in Keating (1994). Background to the introduction of HCCA is given in Rowlands (1994).

6 The 'program area' responsible for implementation of HCCA and Parenting Allowance was the Family Programs and Services Division in the Department's National Administration in Canberra.
A data collection is where the Department needs to seek information from the potential client population before a new program or major change starts so that claims or other information can be processed in time for the change to take effect from the commencement day of the new legislation.

Designing and building a computer system to cater for a range of legislative outcomes is no panacea; it adds to complexity, uncertainty, testing load and costs. Computer systems development in support of social security payments is a major enterprise in itself with its own particular challenges and techniques. It is mentioned only briefly in this paper: it deserves separate treatment.

Only some of these spheres of work can be canvassed in this paper and, even then, only a sketch can be made.

This is probably due to the origins of project management software in the building and engineering industry. By and large, activities in these spheres do have 'hard' dependencies - you have to dig the hole before you can pour the concrete.

As it turned out, Parliament decided to retain the DSR for families with children in the tax system. In effect, a family could choose between receiving HCCA and claiming the DSR.


By 'computer system' we mean a suite of purpose-written applications software designed to support a particular set of functions such as the administration of a social security payment.

Computer systems development in support of social security payments is a major enterprise in itself with its own particular challenges and techniques. It is mentioned only briefly in this paper: it deserves separate treatment.

Department of Social Security (1994).
References


FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS WITHIN
FAMILIES: RECENT FINDINGS

Horrie Foreman
Evaluation Special Projects Group, Divisional Coordination and Planning, Family Programs and Services
Division, Department of Social Security

Karen Wilson
Parenting Allowance Policy Analysis and Development Section, Parenting and Child Care Branch, Family
Programs and Services Division, Department of Social Security

Introduction

This paper presents recent research findings on the distribution of family income between family members
and the decision-making roles adopted in relation to income within families in Australia. It also relates these
findings to other research findings.

There has been only a small number of studies in this area in Australia and overseas and the research has
generally overlooked financial arrangements within families reliant on social security, as well as the effect of
cultural/ethnic background.

In this paper we use data derived from two recent studies, conducted as part of broader evaluations of the
social security system, which provide information on the distribution of income within families in receipt of
income support or family assistance:

- the Social Impact Study involved surveys conducted in 1992 and 1993 in two phases by the
  Department of Social Security (DSS) of a number of family allowance/family payment recipients whose
  partners were receiving Job Search, Newstart or Sickness Allowance; and

- the pre-Home Child Care Allowance survey was a separate survey, undertaken in 1994 by a private
  research contractor on behalf of DSS, under which a large number of family payment recipients were
  interviewed prior to the introduction of Home Child Care Allowance (HCCA).

In assessing the findings of the studies, it should be noted that interviews
were held with the female partner. The first study covered a specific group of low income families, while the
second covered a specific group of families at all (other than high) income levels.

Selected statistical tables from the two studies are at the back of the article.


Previous Research

Previous research in Australia and overseas in the area of financial arrangements within families provides information relevant to the study. The research has generally examined this issue in terms of how financial arrangements differ according to the income group/social class to which the families belong. However, it has tended to concentrate on families in which one or both partners are in paid employment. Financial arrangements within families reliant on social security as their main or sole form of income support appear to have largely escaped the attention of researchers. As well, the effect on family financial arrangements of cultural/ethnic background has either not been examined, or considered only briefly.

Research in the United Kingdom and United States (cited for example in Edwards (1981), Wilson (1987) and Wheelock (1990)) indicates that financial arrangements tend to differ according to the income level of the family, with a number of researchers suggesting that women from lower-income families have greater control over, as well as management of, family finances than do women from higher-income families (Edwards 1981:11). For example, in Wilson's survey of 90 families in the UK, a majority of the wives in low-income households were responsible for all spending on collective consumption (Wilson 1987:145).

In middle-income families, by contrast, overseas research suggests that the most common arrangement is for the husband to play a greater role in the management of finances. Particularly if the wife has no paid employment, the husband pays the bills, giving his wife a housekeeping allowance (Edwards 1981:11-12). In Wilson's survey, wives in middle-income families had sole responsibility for financial matters in less than 50 per cent of cases, with joint financial responsibility being the more common arrangement (Wilson 1987:147).

The only significant published research on family financial arrangements in Australia has been by Edwards (1981 and 1984) and more recently by the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) (Glezer and Mills 1991 and Glezer 1994).

Edwards conducted a survey in 1980 of 50 families in Queanbeyan, New South Wales (comprising roughly equal numbers of 'high' and 'low' income earners) focusing on the management and control of family finances. For the purposes of the survey, control was defined as the 'decision-making aspect of family finances' (for example, deciding on major purchases) and management as the 'carrying out of (financial) decisions which have already been made' (such as paying the bills and doing the shopping) (Edwards 1981:4).

Edwards's findings are largely in line with those of overseas researchers. In the case of lower-income families, particularly where the wife was not
employed, she found that it was the wife, rather than the husband, who was more likely to manage the finances. If the wife was employed, either she managed the finances herself or she and her husband did so jointly. In higher income families, if the wife was not in paid employment, the husband often managed the finances directly or gave his wife a housekeeping allowance. In regard to the aspect of control, just over half the couples surveyed controlled finances jointly, with this joint control occurring more frequently in lower income families. Wives who neither managed the finances nor earned an income (predominantly those in higher-income families) were much less likely than others to have a joint say with their husbands.

The AIFS touched on the issue of family financial arrangements in the second stage of the Australian Family Formation Project in 1990-91. This involved a survey of just over 1100 respondents aged from 27 to 43 years who were married or living with a partner. Respondents were not grouped according to income level. The AIFS survey found a higher degree of joint financial management and control than Edwards had, with 75 per cent of couples sharing financial control and major financial decision making for the household. In 15 per cent of cases, the husband had the entire or main responsibility, with wives having the entire or main responsibility in 9 per cent of cases.

Demographic and other characteristics of couples had variable effects on financial control arrangements within couples. The characteristics found to have some effect included the following:

- **age** - those aged over 35 years were slightly less likely than those under 35 to report shared financial decision making;

- **urban/rural location** - rural couples were significantly more likely than urban couples to report shared financial decision making;

- **husband's occupational status** - while shared financial control was the norm, husbands at all occupational levels, except for 'tradespeople' (using the Australian Bureau of Statistics definition), were slightly more likely than wives to have a greater say in financial decision making;

- **wife's contribution to household income** - where the wife was earning the same as, or more than the husband, there was a slight increase in wives having a greater say in decision making and also in couples maintaining separate finances;

- **financial situation** - where the couple's financial situation was perceived by them as difficult, the husband was more likely to have a greater say than the wife in financial decision making than was the case for couples whose financial circumstances were less difficult; and
1761 family allowance recipients whose husbands were receiving Job Search, Newstart or Sickness allowance. Responses were received from 1037 recipients; and

- phase two, which was conducted after integration and was intended to assess the effect of integration on family financial arrangements. The main survey in June 1993 comprised an interview of a sample of 461 of the respondents to the main phase one survey. Responses were obtained from 365 of them.

In both phases, separate small surveys of a number of wives with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander husbands receiving Job Search Allowance, Newstart Allowance or Sickness Allowance were conducted.

The surveys concentrated on three areas of family finances: access, control and management. Access referred to which member(s) of the couple had access to accounts into which social security payments were made; control covered who had responsibility for major decisions about how the individual social security payments were to be spent; and management was concerned with the day-to-day handling of household spending. Separate information was sought on these aspects both in relation to Family Allowance (Family Payment after integration) and the basic Income Support Payment.

The findings reported in this paper are based solely on the phase one surveys. 5

Access to DSS Payments - Main Survey

Prior to January 1993, each of the survey families received two payments fortnightly from DSS. These comprised:

- Family Allowance (which by law normally has to be paid into the account of the main carer of the children, invariably the mother); and

- Job Search, Newstart or Sickness Allowance (referred to in this paper as the Income Support Payment).

Since both Family Allowance and the Income Support Payment were paid directly into bank or other accounts, wives were asked whether they had joint or sole access to the accounts into which these moneys were paid.

In 50 per cent of the families, both partners had access to the Family Allowance account. In 47 per cent of families, the wives had sole access to the account. There was a high level of joint access to the account into which the Income Support Payment was made (68 per cent). Husband-only access to the Income Support account was 29 per cent. Other types of access (such as accounts held in trust for the children) accounted for only 3 per cent in both cases.

The smaller extent of joint access to the Family Allowance account may have been related to the perception that family allowance was 'the
woman's/children's money' whereas the Income Support Payment was viewed by families as 'the family's money'. Levels of access to both the Family Allowance and Income Support accounts were examined according to a number of family characteristics. While country of birth, education level of the wife or husband and number of children in the family appeared to have some minor relation to access arrangements, other characteristics such as age of the wife/husband and period of residence showed no material differentiation.

Country of Birth

Joint access to the Family Allowance account was more likely where the wife was born overseas (55 per cent) than where she was born in Australia (44 per cent). Wives born in Australia had a high level of sole access (53 per cent). Similarly, joint access to the Family Allowance account occurred in 57 per cent of families where a language other than English was spoken in the home. Where English only was spoken, the wife had sole access in 54 per cent of cases. These trends were similar when the access arrangements to the Income Support Payment account were examined although the levels of access were different.

Age

Access to the Family Allowance account did not vary greatly according to the age of the wife or the husband. Husband-only access to the Income Support Payment was highest where the ages of wives or husbands was under 30 years (38 per cent for both), while joint access was highest where the ages of wives or husbands ranged from 30 to 49 years (72 per cent and 70 per cent respectively).

Education

The level of joint access to both the Family Allowance and Income Support accounts varied according to the education level of the wife and to a lesser extent the husband. In general, higher education levels were associated with higher levels of joint access to the accounts. Sole wife access to the Family Allowance account and sole husband access to the Income Support account were more common among families with lower levels of educational attainment.

Occupation

Access to accounts varied according to the occupation of the wife and husband - professional type occupations were associated with higher levels of joint access to the accounts. Joint access was 59 per cent to the Family Allowance and 73 per cent to the Income Support account where the wife was in a professional type occupation. For wives in non-professional type occupations, joint access to Family Allowance was 51 per cent and 71 per cent.
to the Income Support payment. These trends were similar when the husband's occupation was examined.

**Number of Children**

Access to the Family Allowance account varied according to family size. As the number of children in a family increased (and thus the amount of the allowance) so did the incidence of wife only access. Access to the Income Support account did not change with the number of children in the family.

**Financial Control - Main Survey**

Arrangements regarding the control of finances within families were explored to determine which partner decided how the Family Allowance and the husband's Income Support Payment were spent.

The most common arrangement was joint decision making in families. Decisions on how to spend the Family Allowance were reported to be joint in 58 per cent of cases, while 80 per cent of families made joint decisions about spending the Income Support Payment. In 38 per cent of families, wives had sole responsibility for making decisions about how to spend the family allowance. Only 4 per cent of husbands had sole responsibility for Family Allowance spending. Approximately equal proportions (10 per cent) of wives and husbands had sole responsibility for decision making about the Income Support Payment. The levels of joint control for the Family Allowance and the Income Support Payment were noticeably higher than the respective levels of joint access.

For financial control, some minor relationships are apparent in respect of country of birth, age, education level, occupation and number of children in the family.

**Country of Birth**

Wives born overseas were more likely than Australian born wives to share in decisions on how the Family Allowance money is spent (64 per cent compared with 50 per cent respectively). Wife-only decision making was 31 per cent in the families of overseas born wives and 46 per cent for Australian born wives.

Differences in who controlled the spending of the Income Support Payment were not as clear between families where the wife was born overseas or in Australia. Joint decision making was slightly higher in the families of overseas born wives (82 per cent) than Australia born (79 per cent). Husband-only decision making was roughly equal at 10 per cent in the families of overseas born wives and 9 per cent for Australian born.
Age

Joint decision making on spending of Family Allowance was 63 per cent in families where the wife was under age 30 compared with 59 per cent for the 30 to 39-year-age group and 50 per cent for those over 40. Sole wife control was 32 per cent, 38 per cent and 45 per cent for each respective age group. Sole husband control varied slightly between 3 and 6 per cent over the age groups. The association shown with wife's age was not evident in the analysis of the age of husband. Joint decision making on Family Allowance spending peaked where the age of the husband was in the range of 30 to 39 years (62 per cent).

Control of the spending of the Income Support Payment did not vary greatly according to the age of the wife or husband.

Education

Where post-secondary qualifications were held by either the wife or husband, the levels of shared decision making in relation to both Family Allowance and the Income Support Payment were consistently higher than in families where no post-secondary qualifications were held.

Occupation

Levels of joint control of the Family Allowance and Income Support Payments were higher among wives and husbands with professional-type occupations than those with non-professional-type occupations.

Number of Children

Arrangements for financial decision making appeared to be related to the number of children in a family. Wife-only financial control of Family Allowance and Income Support Payment increased as the number of children increased. The relationship for the Income Support Payment was in the opposite direction to that for access arrangements.

Management of Finances - Main Survey

Questions as to who usually paid the bills (such as gas, electricity, telephone and council rates), who did the shopping, and who bought items for the children were included in the survey in order to examine the aspect of financial management within families. Wives were also asked how they usually used their Family Allowance money and whether they were able to set aside any money for personal spending on themselves.

As with control of family finances, joint responsibility was the most common arrangement in management of finances. Joint responsibility for paying the bills was frequent among all families, with sole husband responsibility more frequent among the overseas born. Both partners frequently shopped for food and, slightly less often, the wife alone, but rarely the husband alone.
Frequently partners jointly paid the rent (49 per cent), the bills (48 per cent) and bought the food (52 per cent). Wives mostly took sole responsibility for buying items for the children (52 per cent). After buying items for the children, the second highest sole wife responsibility was buying food (41 per cent). Sole husband responsibility was highest for paying the rent (30 per cent) and the bills (23 per cent) and lowest for buying food (7 per cent) and items for the children (4 per cent).

**Country of Birth**

Rent was paid jointly in 51 per cent of families where the wife was born overseas compared with 45 per cent where she was born in Australia. Sole husband responsibility for paying the rent was higher where the wife was born overseas (35 per cent), while sole wife responsibility was higher where she was born in Australia (31 per cent).

Payment of bills showed a similar trend. Bills were paid jointly in 52 per cent of families where the wife was born overseas and in 44 per cent of families with Australian born wives. Sole husband responsibility for paying the bills was higher where the wife was born overseas (29 per cent) while sole wife responsibility was higher for wives born in Australia (41 per cent).

As noted, the highest level of sole wife responsibility was for buying items for the children, followed by buying food. However, in families where the wife was born overseas, both these roles were undertaken as predominantly joint activities. Shopping for food and for items for the children was carried out jointly in 59 and 53 per cent respectively of these families compared with 53 and 33 per cent for families where the wives were born in Australia.

Shopping for food and items for the children appears generally to be a shared or wife only activity, with sole husband responsibility being very limited. The highest rate of sole wife responsibility was for Australian born wives buying things for the children (64 per cent) and buying food (52 per cent). The comparable rates for overseas born wives were 41 per cent and 32 per cent respectively.

**Allocation of Family Allowance**

Family Allowance was mainly spent on items for the children (75 per cent), while 48 per cent of wives said they spent Family Allowance on 'housekeeping' and 41 per cent on paying bills. Only a small proportion saved it for the children (13 per cent) or for emergencies or special occasions (13 per cent). These percentages add to more than 100 because for many families the family allowance was spent on several items.

**Allocation of Personal Money**

The great majority of families did not put any money aside, from either the Family Allowance or the Income Support Payment, for personal spending.
(72 per cent). Only 21 per cent of families had any personal spending money for both partners. The incidence of sole husband or sole wife personal spending was roughly equal at 3 per cent.

Findings for Families Where Husband was an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander - Supplementary Survey

The small survey of wives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allowance recipients indicated that among these families:

- sole wife access to the Family Allowance (85 per cent) and sole husband access to the Income Support Payment (79 per cent) predominated;

- the wife alone made decisions regarding spending of the Family Allowance in 65 per cent of families while joint decision making on spending of the Income Support Payment applied in 65 per cent; and

- management of the finances was generally a wife only or joint activity, management by the husband alone being the exception.  

Summary of Main Findings

The phase one survey of the Social Impact Study showed that joint access, control and management of finances is generally the most common arrangement in families. The only exceptions to this are that wife only access to the Family Allowance (which is usually paid to the wife) was about equal to the incidence of joint access and that spending on the needs of the children was predominantly a wife only activity. Where one or other aspect of financial arrangements are not a joint activity, they are more often the responsibility of the wife than the husband.

Sharing arrangements were generally more common where the wife was born overseas. Joint access and control was more common among families where either of the partners were in their thirties or had post-secondary education qualifications or had professional-type occupations. Among families where the wife was married to an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander allowance recipient, the extent of joint arrangements was less.

As noted, the phase two results have not been used in the analysis. However, the Social Impact Study found that the impact of integration on financial arrangements within families was minimal.

Pre-Home Child Care Allowance Survey

A private research contractor was commissioned by DSS to undertake a study of two-parent families receiving Family Payment prior to the introduction of a new allowance called Home Child Care Allowance (HCCA) in September 1994. HCCA replaced the Dependent Spouse Rebate (DSR) at the with-child rate payable through the taxation system, but was subsumed into the new Parenting Allowance from 1 July 1995.
The government introduced HCCA to provide direct assistance to the partner in a couple who is not in the paid workforce and is caring for children at home. Whereas the DSR (at the 'with-child' rate) is available through the taxation system for a similar purpose, it is made available to the taxpayer (predominantly the husband in single income families). HCCA is paid direct to the parent with the daily caring responsibility, usually the mother. For most families, this resulted in a redistribution of family resources from the husband to the wife.

A total of 1453 partnered Family Payment recipients (usually the mother) across Australia were interviewed either by telephone or in person prior to the introduction of HCCA. By selecting Family Payment recipients, the sample was effectively limited to families with income below around $60 000 a year.

**General Results from the Pre-HCCA Survey**

The survey found a high degree of homogeneity in earning and caring roles among two-parent families in receipt of Family Payment. This was borne out by the role wives usually play as the main carer of children in such families, as well as mostly being the secondary income earner in the family.

The general characteristics of the survey group were:

- the main income earners in the family tended to be males;
- about a third of secondary income earners in the families were in some form of paid employment (mainly part-time or casual work);
- the remainder of secondary income earners were not working or looking for work, and had not worked for five years or more;
- the majority of secondary income earners felt that their current situation Working or not - was ideal;
- the average total income for families in receipt of Family Payment was estimated to be $35 800 a year (including Family Payment);
- estimated income from Family Payment was approximately 9 per cent of total income; and
- the vast majority of families (95 per cent) received income from employment.

Another interesting finding from the pre-HCCA survey was the low level of awareness by wives of the Dependent Spouse Rebate (DSR). Almost half (43 per cent) of secondary income earners had not heard of the DSR, while close to two-thirds (68 per cent and 63 per cent respectively) of secondary income earners in non-English speaking background families and indigenous families had not heard of the DSR.
The generally positive response to the introduction of HCCA is therefore not surprising. Almost half (43 per cent) of secondary income earners felt that they would be personally better off by the receipt of HCCA. This perception was related to financial considerations, such as a belief that HCCA would provide more money than the DSR or that the family would have a more regular source of extra income. Among other things, the survey respondents felt that HCCA would be an additional source of financial autonomy provided to women.

**Expenditure Decision Making Roles**

The involvement of secondary income earners in the decision making process regarding family expenditure was high. The majority (74 per cent) of families’ expenditure decisions were made jointly by main and secondary income earners. In another 22 per cent of families, expenditure decisions were made by the secondary income earner alone. In only 4 per cent of cases was the decision made by the main income earner alone.

A number of respondents said that the secondary income earner usually took on responsibility for family budgeting and expenditure related activities such as shopping, as an extension of the usual role of primary carer for children in the family.

Decision making roles appeared to be influenced by the level of family income and the age of the secondary income earner. Variables such as the labour force status of the secondary income earner and the amount of personal income earned by the secondary income earner did not impact on the decision making roles within families.

**Family Income**

Joint decision making on how to spend family income was more prominent among middle income families than lower income families. It was found that 64 per cent of low income families made decisions jointly compared with 74 per cent of middle income families. The main income earner (usually the male) in low income families was more likely to make financial decisions alone (7 per cent) than those in middle income families (3 per cent), although this difference was fairly small.

**Employment Status**

Decision making arrangements did not appear to be related to whether the secondary income earners have a paid job or not. The proportion of secondary income earners in paid employment was similar in both low and middle income families (5 per cent and 6 per cent respectively). Likewise, there was little difference in decision making between those secondary income earners who had a paid job or not - 26 per cent of those with a job
were solely responsible for the decision making compared with 20 per cent of those with no job. The propensity to make their own expenditure decisions increased slightly as the secondary income earner's income from employment increased.

Age

The age of the secondary income earner seemed to be related to the way in which decisions regarding expenditure were made. Ninety-one per cent of families where the secondary income earner was aged between 18 and 24 years shared expenditure decisions between partners, while in only 5 per cent of cases, the secondary income earner was solely responsible. As the age of the secondary income earner increased, the likelihood of the expenditure decisions being made jointly diminished, while decisions being made mainly by the secondary income earner increased.

Non-English Speaking Background Families

The proportion of families where the expenditure decision making was shared was higher in non-English speaking families than English speaking background families (84 per cent and 74 per cent respectively). However, non-English speaking background families who did not share the decision making were more likely than families of English speaking backgrounds to have the main income earner make the decisions. The secondary income earner in English speaking families was more likely to make the family's financial decisions compared with non-English speaking families (23 per cent compared with 8 per cent).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Families

The proportion of secondary income earners in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families who made the expenditure decisions by themselves most of the time was higher than the proportion in non-English speaking background families (12 per cent). However, this was still lower than for non-indigenous families overall (23 per cent). The proportions of indigenous families where the main income earner was the person who mainly decides (7 per cent), or where the decision making is shared (80 per cent), were higher than the comparative proportions of non-indigenous families (4 per cent and 74 per cent respectively).

Allocation Of Personal Money

Despite the role of secondary income earners in making expenditure decisions, less than one-third indicated that they set aside money for spending on themselves. Of those who did, an average of $50 a fortnight was allocated for their personal expenditure.
Secondary income earners in middle income families were more likely to allocate such money than those in low income families (30 per cent and 26 per cent respectively), although this difference was small. In low income families, the average amount allocated was $37 a fortnight, while in middle income families it was $51.

Secondary income earners in a paid job were more likely to allocate such money than those who did not have a paid job (35 per cent compared with 26 per cent). As might be expected, the amount of money that the secondary income earners spent on themselves increased as family income increased, although the labour force status of the secondary income earner or the amount of money received from their employment did not seem to influence the money they allocated to themselves.

Interestingly, the proportion of male secondary income earners who set aside money for their personal expenditure (42 per cent) was considerably higher than the proportion of female secondary income earners (29 per cent). The amount of money they apportioned themselves each fortnight was also higher ($68 compared with $50).

**Number of Children**

The proportion of secondary income earners who allocated themselves money for personal expenditure decreased as the number of children increased. Forty per cent of those with one child allocated themselves money, compared with 29 per cent of those with two children, 24 per cent of those with three children and 21 per cent of those with four or more children. There were insufficient differences among the average amount of money secondary income earners allocated to themselves to suggest a relationship with the number of children.

**Non-English Speaking Background Families**

Secondary income earners from a non-English speaking background were more likely to allocate themselves money to spend than those from English speaking backgrounds (42 per cent compared with 28 per cent). They also allocated themselves more money on average than those from English speaking backgrounds ($72 compared with $46).

**Comparative Research Findings**

The Social Impact Study covered a specific group of low income families, while the pre-HCCA survey covered a specific group of families at all income levels other than high. Both studies showed that sharing arrangements were the most prominent among low income families. Between the two DSS studies, wife-only control of finances varied from 10 per cent in 1992 to 22 per cent in 1994. This variation may to some extent reflect the different coverages of the Social Impact Study and the pre-HCCA survey.
The Social Impact Study found that a wife-only arrangement was more prominent in the areas of financial control and management of family finances in comparison with access to money. This prominence of wives in the financial control and, in particular, the management of finances (the actual spending of the money) is confirmed in both the Social Impact Study and the pre-HCCA survey. Edwards' (1981) study found that the person who manages the finances in a family is not necessarily the person who controls the finances.

The high wife-only access to the Family Allowance account identified in the Social Impact Study suggests a direct relationship to the fact that Family Allowance was normally paid to the female partner. This contrasts with the finding that the majority of couples have joint access to the Income Support Payment account and joint control of finances. The study also showed that there was a higher level of wife-only control of the Income Support Payment than husband-only control of Family Allowance.

Prior to the introduction of HCCA, there was a low incidence of personal allocation of spending money by women - both studies show this. This may, however, reflect the generally low incomes of these survey groups. These findings will need to be monitored as the distribution of money continues to change over the years.

Notwithstanding the differences in the various surveys, Australian studies on financial arrangements in families appear to indicate that these arrangements may be changing over time. Since Edwards's study in the early 1980s, the extent of joint financial control and management in families has increased markedly - from around 50 per cent in the early 1980s (Edwards, 1981), to between 75 and 80 per cent in the early 1990s (Glezer and Mills, 1991). The changes found since Edwards's study coincide with the increasing participation of women in the paid workforce and the beginning of changes in the social security system in regard to payments made to mothers (mainly the Families Package in 1993).

The main studies in Australia also reveal a number of family characteristics that most commonly influence the financial arrangements. These characteristics include family income, the number of children in the family, age of the parents, and education/occupational categories. However, whereas Edwards's study found that the labour force status of women was related to financial control, the latest DSS study (pre HCCA) did not identify this as a significant variable.
Future Implications

Perry (1993) has suggested that, for many years, the social security system in Australia assumed that income is shared equally between partners whether legally married or de facto, or at least that the primary breadwinner has control over the disposal of the income. These assumptions were reinforced in the payment of allowances prior to the Families Package implemented on 1 January 1993 and underlie the joint income test structure in existence prior to the introduction of Parenting Allowance on 1 July 1995.

Recent reforms to income support, including the payment of Family Payment to the primary carer (usually the mother) and the introduction of HCCA, Partner Allowance and Parenting Allowance, recognise the need to provide some assurance of income for each partner. While the two DSS studies show the increasingly prominent role of women, either solely or jointly with their partner, in controlling and managing the family finances, this recognition is important to provide women in all family circumstances with access to money. Without the reforms, access to money may not have been necessarily available to both partners under the voluntary income sharing of a family's financial arrangements.

Parenting Allowance is designed to provide individual entitlement to income support for spouses whose primary activity is the care of children. Spouses of unemployed people will no longer be assumed to be their partners' dependants, but rather they will be direct income support recipients. This is confirmed by the payment of Parenting Allowance direct to the carer, and the structure of the income test which prevents the income support of each partner from being affected by the other's earnings up until a certain income point.

With such major changes to the underlying structure of the social security system, it is important that trends in financial decision making roles in families are monitored. The evaluation of Parenting Allowance will provide a further opportunity to examine the financial arrangements in low and middle income families and whether the predominant trend towards sharing of financial responsibilities continues.
### Table 1: Access to Accounts for DSS Payments by Whether Wife was Born in Australia or Overseas: Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Family Allowance</th>
<th>Income Support Payment</th>
<th>Joint</th>
<th>Wife</th>
<th>Joint</th>
<th>Husband</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Joint</th>
<th>Husband</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian born</td>
<td>Access Access</td>
<td></td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas born</td>
<td>Other Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (n=1037)</td>
<td>Access Access</td>
<td></td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2: Control of DSS Payments by Whether Wife was Born in Australia or Overseas: Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Family Allowance</th>
<th>Income Support Payment</th>
<th>Joint</th>
<th>Wife</th>
<th>Husband</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Joint</th>
<th>Husband</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian born</td>
<td>Access Access</td>
<td></td>
<td>50.1</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas born</td>
<td>Other Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (n=1037)</td>
<td>Access Access</td>
<td></td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>80.4</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3: Access to Income Support Payment by Education of the Wife: Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Joint</th>
<th>Husband</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>71.2</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate/Diploma</td>
<td>80.8</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Certificate</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior High School</td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior High School</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Completed Primary School</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Totals -with Post Secondary qualifications</td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-without Post Secondary School qualifications</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a* Comprises cases where there was some other form of access including the wife had sole access.

Note: Excludes cases where there was no response.
Table 4: Access to Income Support Payment by Education of the Husband: Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Joint Access</th>
<th>Husband Only Access</th>
<th>Other a</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree (n=110)</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate/Diploma (n=91)</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Certificate (n=177)</td>
<td>77.2</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior High School (n=249)</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior High School (n=265)</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School (n=98)</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not Completed Primary School</td>
<td>(n=39)</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with Post Secondary qualifications (n=378)</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>without Post Secondary School qualifications (n=651)</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Comprises cases where there was some other form of access including the wife had sole access.
Note: Excludes cases where there was no response.

Table 5: Access to Income Support Payment by Occupation of the Wife: Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Joint Access</th>
<th>Husband Only Access</th>
<th>Other a</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managers/Admin (n=16)</td>
<td>81.2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals (n=39)</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Para-Professionals (n=16)</td>
<td>81.2</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradespersons (n=24)</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks (n=136)</td>
<td>72.8</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales Persons (n=119)</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant and Mach Operators (n=42)</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers (n=87)</td>
<td>74.7</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Managers/ Professionals (n=71)</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Para-Professionals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- others (n=408)</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Comprises cases where there was some other form of access including the wife had sole access.
Note: Excludes cases where there was no response.
Table 6: Access to Income Support Payment by Occupation of the Husband: Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Joint Access</th>
<th>Husband Only Access</th>
<th>Other a</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managers/Admin</td>
<td>(n=41)</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>(n=109)</td>
<td>75.3</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Para-Professionals</td>
<td>(n=27)</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradespersons</td>
<td>(n=295)</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks</td>
<td>(n=36)</td>
<td>77.1</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales Persons</td>
<td>(n=69)</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant and Mach Operators</td>
<td>(n=105)</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>(n=727)</td>
<td>76.1</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Comprises cases where there was some other form of access including the wife had sole access.

Note: Excludes cases where there was no response.

Table 7. Access to Income Support Payment by Number of Children: Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Joint Access</th>
<th>Husband Only Access</th>
<th>Other a</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One child</td>
<td>(n=336)</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two children</td>
<td>(n=400)</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or more children</td>
<td>(n=301)</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Comprises cases where there was some other form of access including the wife had sole access.

Table 8: Access to Income Support Payment by Age Group of Wife: Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Joint Access</th>
<th>Husband Only Access</th>
<th>Other a</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 30</td>
<td>(n=331)</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 49</td>
<td>(n=671)</td>
<td>72.3</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 50</td>
<td>(n=35)</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Comprises cases where there was some other form of access including the wife had sole access.
Table 9: Access to Income Support Payment by Age Group of Husband: Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Joint Access (n)</th>
<th>Husband Only Access</th>
<th>Other (^a)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 30</td>
<td>58.1 (n=201)</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 49</td>
<td>70.4 (n=751)</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 50</td>
<td>65.4 (n=85)</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Comprises cases where there was some other form of access including the wife had sole access.

Table 10: Control of Income Support Payment by Education of the Wife: Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Joint Control (n)</th>
<th>Husband Only Control</th>
<th>Wife Only Control</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>90.9 (n=66)</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate/Diploma</td>
<td>84.7 (n=104)</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Certificate</td>
<td>79.6 (n=49)</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior High School</td>
<td>80.3 (n=336)</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior High School</td>
<td>77.0 (n=318)</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>81.1 (n=106)</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Completed</td>
<td>79.1 (n=50)</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with Post Secondary qualifications</td>
<td>85.4 (n=219)</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>without Post Secondary qualifications</td>
<td>79.1 (n=810)</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Excludes cases where there was no response.
### Table 11: Control of Income Support Payment by Education of the Husband: Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Joint Control (n=110)</th>
<th>Husband Only Control (n=91)</th>
<th>Wife Only Control (n=265)</th>
<th>Total Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate/Diploma</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Certificate</td>
<td>82.8</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior High School</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior High School</td>
<td>79.3</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>81.4</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Completed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Totals - with Post Secondary qualifications</td>
<td>83.2</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Totals - without Post Secondary qualifications</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Excludes cases where there was no response.

### Table 12: Control of Income Support Payment by Occupation of the Wife: Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Joint Control (n=16)</th>
<th>Husband Only Control (n=39)</th>
<th>Wife Only Control (n=136)</th>
<th>Total Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managers/Admin</td>
<td>81.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Para-Professionals</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradespersons</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks</td>
<td>79.3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales Persons</td>
<td>82.2</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plant and Mach Operators</td>
<td>85.4</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>80.3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Totals - Managers/Professionals/Para-Professionals</td>
<td>80.3</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>others</td>
<td>80.9</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Excludes cases where there was no response.
**Table 13: Control of Income Support Payment by Occupation of the Husband: Percentage Distribution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Joint Control</th>
<th>Husband Only Control</th>
<th>Wife Only Control</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managers/Admin (n=41)</td>
<td>85.4</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals (n=109)</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>para-Professionals (n=27)</td>
<td>92.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tradespersons (n=295)</td>
<td>81.1</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clerks (n=36)</td>
<td>80.6</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales Persons (n=69)</td>
<td>79.4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant and Mach Operators (n=105)</td>
<td>75.7</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total sub Totals</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers/Professionals/para-Professionals (n=177)</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Excludes cases where there was no response.

**Table 14: Control of Income Support Payment by Number of Children: Percentage Distribution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Joint Control</th>
<th>Husband Only Control</th>
<th>Wife Only Control</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One child (n=336)</td>
<td>83.2</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two children (n=400)</td>
<td>81.1</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or more children (n=301)</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 15: Control of Income Support Payment by Age Group of Wife: Percentage Distribution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Joint Control</th>
<th>Husband Only Control</th>
<th>Wife Only Control</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 30 (n=331)</td>
<td>81.6</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 49 (n=671)</td>
<td>79.8</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 50 (n=35)</td>
<td>82.3</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 16: Control of Income Support Payment by Age Group of Husband: Percentage Distribution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Joint Control</th>
<th>Husband Only Control</th>
<th>Wife Only Control</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 30 (n=201)</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 49 (n=751)</td>
<td>81.6</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 50 (n=85)</td>
<td>78.4</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 17. Access to Family Allowance by Education of the Wife: Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Joint Access</th>
<th>Wife Only Access</th>
<th>Other a</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>(n=66)</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate/Diploma</td>
<td>(n=104)</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Certificate</td>
<td>(n=49)</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior High School</td>
<td>(n=336)</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior High School</td>
<td>(n=318)</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>(n=106)</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Completed</td>
<td>(n=50)</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Totals</td>
<td>(n=219)</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with Post Secondary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qualifications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>without Post Secondary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school qualifications</td>
<td>(n=810)</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Comprises cases where there was some other form of access such as a children's trust account was used or the husband had sole access.

Note: Excludes cases where there was no response.

Table 18: Access to Family Allowance by Education of the Husband: Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Joint Access</th>
<th>Wife Only Access</th>
<th>Other a</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>(n=110)</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate/Diploma</td>
<td>(n=91)</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Certificate</td>
<td>(n=177)</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior High School</td>
<td>(n=249)</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior High School</td>
<td>(n=265)</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>(n=98)</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Completed</td>
<td>(n=39)</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Totals</td>
<td>(n=378)</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with Post Secondary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qualifications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>without Post Secondary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school qualifications</td>
<td>(n=651)</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Comprises cases where there was some other form of access such as a children's trust account was used or the husband had sole access.

Note: Excludes cases where there was no response.
Table 19: Access to Family Allowance by Occupation of the Wife: Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Joint Access</th>
<th>Wife Only Access</th>
<th>Other $^a$</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managers/Admin</td>
<td>(n=16)</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>(n=39)</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>para-Professionals</td>
<td>(n=16)</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tradespersons</td>
<td>(n=24)</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clerks</td>
<td>(n=136)</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sales Persons</td>
<td>(n=119)</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plant and Mach Operators</td>
<td>(n=42)</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abourers</td>
<td>(n=87)</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sub Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers/Professionals/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>para-Professionals</td>
<td>(n=71)</td>
<td>59.2</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>others</td>
<td>(n=408)</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$ Comprises cases where there was some other form of access such as a children's trust account was used or the husband had sole access.

Note: Excludes cases where there was no response.

Table 20: Access to Family Allowance by Occupation of the Husband: Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Joint Access</th>
<th>Wife Only Access</th>
<th>Other $^a$</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managers/Admin</td>
<td>(n=41)</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>(n=109)</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>para-Professionals</td>
<td>(n=27)</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tradespersons</td>
<td>(n=295)</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clerks</td>
<td>(n=36)</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sales Persons</td>
<td>(n=69)</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plant and Mach Operators</td>
<td>(n=105)</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abourers</td>
<td>(n=222)</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sub Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers/Professionals/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>para-Professionals</td>
<td>(n=177)</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>others</td>
<td>(n=727)</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$ Comprises cases where there was some other form of access including the wife had sole access.

Note: Excludes cases where there was no response.
### Table 21: Access to Family Allowance by Number of Children:
Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Joint Access</th>
<th>Wife Only Access</th>
<th>Other a</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One child (n=336)</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two children (n=400)</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or more children (n=301)</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Comprises cases where there was some other form of access such as a children's trust account was used or the husband had sole access.

### Table 22: Access to Family Allowance by Age Group of Wife:
Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Joint Access</th>
<th>Wife Only Access</th>
<th>Other a</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 30 (n=331)</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 49 (n=671)</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 50 (n=35)</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Comprises cases where there was some other form of access such as a children's trust account was used or the husband had sole access.

### Table 23: Access to Family Allowance by Age Group of Husband:
Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Joint Access</th>
<th>Wife Only Access</th>
<th>Other a</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 30 (n=201)</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 49 (n=751)</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 50 (n=85)</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Comprises cases where there was some other form of access such as a children's trust account was used or the husband had sole access.

Social Security Journal, December 1995

48
Table 24: Control of Family Allowance by Education of the Wife: Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Joint Control</th>
<th>Wife Only Control</th>
<th>Husband Only Control</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>(n=66)</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate/Diploma</td>
<td>(n=104)</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Certificate</td>
<td>(n=49)</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior High School</td>
<td>(n=336)</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior High School</td>
<td>(n=318)</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>(n=106)</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Completed</td>
<td>(n=50)</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-with Post Secondary qualifications</td>
<td>(n=219)</td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-without Post Secondary school qualifications</td>
<td>(n=810)</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Excludes cases where there was no response.

Table 25: Control of Family Allowance by Education of the Husband: Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Joint Control</th>
<th>Wife Only Control</th>
<th>Husband Only Control</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>(n=110)</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate/Diploma</td>
<td>(n=91)</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Certificate</td>
<td>(n=177)</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior High School</td>
<td>(n=249)</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior High School</td>
<td>(n=265)</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>(n=98)</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Completed</td>
<td>(n=39)</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-with Post Secondary qualifications</td>
<td>(n=378)</td>
<td>65.8</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-without Post Secondary school qualifications</td>
<td>(n=651)</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Excludes cases where there was no response.
Table 26: Control of Family Allowance by Occupation of the Wife:
Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Joint Control</th>
<th>Wife Only Control</th>
<th>Husband Only Control</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managers/Admin (n=16)</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals (n=39)</td>
<td>69.2</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Para-Professionals (n=16)</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradespersons (n=24)</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks (n=136)</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales Persons (n=119)</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant and Mach Operators (n=42)</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers (n=87)</td>
<td>55.8</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Totals -Managers/Professionals/Para-Professionals (n=71)</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>others (n=408)</td>
<td>55.1</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Excludes cases where there was no response.

Table 27: Control of Family Allowance by Occupation of the Husband: Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Joint Control</th>
<th>Wife Only Control</th>
<th>Husband Only Control</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managers/Admin (n=41)</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals (n=109)</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Para-Professionals (n=27)</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradespersons (n=295)</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks (n=36)</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales Persons (n=69)</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant and Mach Operators (n=105)</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers (n=222)</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Totals -Managers/Professionals/Para-Professionals (n=177)</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>others (n=727)</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Excludes cases where there was no response.
### Table 28: Control of Family Allowance by Number of Children: Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Joint Control</th>
<th>Wife Only Control</th>
<th>Husband Only Control</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One child (n=336)</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two children (n=400)</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or more children (n=301)</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 29: Control of Family Allowance by Age Group of Wife: Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Joint Control</th>
<th>Wife Only Control</th>
<th>Husband Only Control</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 30 (n=331)</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 49 (n=671)</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 50 (n=35)</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 30: Control of Family Allowance by Age Group of Husband: Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Joint Control</th>
<th>Wife Only Control</th>
<th>Husband Only Control</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 30 (n=201)</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 49 (n=751)</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 50 (n=85)</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 31: Personal Allocation of Spending Money by Average Weekly Family Income: Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$10 to $349</th>
<th>$350 to $499</th>
<th>$500 or more</th>
<th>$100.0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Allocation of Spending Money</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Personal Allocation of Spending Money</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 32: Personal Allocation of Spending Money by Paid Work Status of Secondary Income Earner: Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>In Paid job</th>
<th>Not in Paid job</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Allocation of Spending Money</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Personal Allocation of Spending Money</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>73.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 33: Financial Arrangements by Average Weekly Family Income: Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$10 to $349</th>
<th>$350 to $499</th>
<th>$500 or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Income Earner Makes Decisions</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner Makes Decisions</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Decision Making</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>75.9</td>
<td>74.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 34: Financial Arrangements by Paid Work Status Of Secondary Income Earner: Percentage Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>In Paid job</th>
<th>Not in Paid job</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Income Earner Makes Decisions</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner Makes Decisions</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Decision Making</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>74.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Endnotes

1. The authors acknowledge the considerable assistance of officers of the Family Programs and Services Division in the Department of Social Security in the preparation of this paper, particularly Mr Bob Daprè and Mr Michael Fuery. Opinions expressed in the paper are those of the authors and should not be taken in any way as expressions of government policy.


3. Comprising family allowance, family allowance supplement, additional pension, benefit or allowance for children, rent assistance for pensioners, beneficiaries or allowees with children and guardian allowance.

4. 'Husbands' refers to male partners, married or de facto, while 'wives' refers to married or de facto female partners.

5. The phase two surveys found only minor changes in access, control and management arrangements following integration.

6. Some possible cultural reasons for these results are suggested in the report on the Social Impact Study.

7. The secondary income earner was defined as the partner from a two-parent family who received the lower amount of all income, whether earned or unearned and including 'nil' income.

8. Total family expenditure, not just expenditure of moneys received from DSS.
For purposes of this paper, low income families were defined as those with incomes below the JSA/NSA cut-off for a married couple with children as at August 1994, to provide comparability with the Social Impact Study - $16 500 a year was used as an approximation of this figure.

References


THE CHANGING CONTEXT OF RETIREMENT IN AUSTRALIA

Linda Rosenman
President, Academic Board and Professor of Social Work and Social Policy, The University of Queensland

Jeni Warburton
Research Officer, Department of Social Work and Social Policy, The University of Queensland

Introduction

Retirement has long been viewed as one of the major transitions in later life and is often said to mark the beginning of old age. Over the past 25 years, changes have occurred in the labour market that have had implications for both individuals and social policy. Older workers have been particularly affected by these changes. This paper will discuss some of the changes that are occurring in both work and retirement, and will demonstrate the need for these changing circumstances to be reflected in new approaches to policies for older workers.

The Changing Retirement Scene

Although some have argued that retirement is the creation of modern industrial society, only one aspect of retirement - income transfers on a national scale - is new (Quadagno & McClellan 1989). The introduction of age pensions in 1909 was a response to poverty among the aged and was not viewed as a means of enabling healthy and capable workers to retire (Howe & Manning 1987). The concept of retirement as stopping income-earning employment in old age and relaxing at leisure was relatively unknown in Australia until this century.

Despite the absence of an overall compulsory retirement age, retirement has been viewed and understood as a homogeneous concept, as the permanent cessation of full-time income earning employment and entering full-time leisure at age 65, the age of pension eligibility. Ideas about ageing, including the policies and practices around it, tend to be anchored by this concept of retirement. But it is fast becoming apparent that this concept of retirement while never really applying to women, is becoming less applicable to men as their work patterns in later life are changing.

For men, these changes are reflected in a steadily decreasing age of retirement over the past 25 years (see Figure 1). Most retire before the age of 54...
65, with the majority exiting the workforce by age 60. Between the ages of
60 and 64 only 48 per cent of men remain in the workforce, down from
77 per cent 25 years ago (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1987).

Women's work patterns are more complex (see Figure 2). Figures for 1992 indicate that few women in the
age cohort over 55 remain at work in older ages (ABS 1992). Less than 30 per cent of women remain in the
workforce past age 55; and by the age of 60, only 15 per cent of women are working. The trends indicate an
increasing rate of labour force involvement for older women, particularly those in the 45-54 age cohort,
compared with the generally decreasing pattern for older men. However, women's rates of labour force
participation are very low at older ages, and it is likely that most women will continue to retire earlier than
men. While male retirement peaks at around age 60, female retirement peaks in the early to mid-fifties.

In conjunction with overall trends among the working population towards earlier retirement, life expectancy
is increasing. Having reached age 65, most men can expect to live a further 15 years and most women a
further 19 years.

There is a growth in absolute numbers in retirement as well as an increase in the proportion of life spent in
retirement. This is a primary retirement incomes policy consideration, as is the impact that these issues have
in a wider societal context. These general changes can be discussed in terms of three main themes:

1. What is the link between retirement patterns and trends and labour market restructuring?
2. What is the link between changing retirement patterns and social and fiscal policies?
3. How are people adjusting to retirement and are societal views of retirement changing?

What is the Link Between Retirement Patterns and Trends and Labour Market Restructuring?

The pattern of decreasing age at retirement has been evident throughout the advanced industrialised countries
during the past quarter century and Australia is no exception (Kohli et al 1991). Changes to the process and
timing of retirement mark an end to the accepted pattern of stable lifelong employment with a set termination
age for most of the population, particularly the male population. These changes include the growth in trends
towards 'early retirement', through redundancy or financial inducements; and the development of more
flexible retirement options with moves towards part-time work options in later life, or through anti-
discrimination legislation which ends compulsory retirement.
Figure 1: Labour Force Participation Rates for Males Over 45 Years

The Labour Force, Australia

Figure 2: Labour Force Participation Rates for Females Over 45 Years

The Labour Force, Australia
Late Life Unemployment

Retirement is embedded in the nation’s strategies with respect to rising unemployment and massive industrial restructuring (Esping-Andersen 1991). Over the past decade, there has been a marked increase in unemployment rates amongst older workers which poses a major challenge for social welfare, income security and labour market policies. Traditionally, older workers have been assumed to have been protected against retrenchment by seniority. However, during the most recent recession, unemployment rates for workers aged over 50 have increased significantly.

Males in particular are over-represented in the long-term unemployed with unemployment rates for men aged over 55 doubling in the period 1981 to 1991. By August 1993, males aged over 55 accounted for 16.5 per cent of all long-term unemployed males, compared with their labour force share of 10.2 per cent (ABS 1993a). The incidence of long term unemployment (unemployed for 12 months or more) increases markedly with age, reflecting the fact that once unemployed, older workers have a high risk of becoming long-term unemployed (CEO 1993). This has occurred because older workers are more likely to be concentrated in declining industries particularly in the manufacturing sector, and there is a diminishing number of employment opportunities in those industries and occupations for which they are skilled.

Women may be less affected by late-life unemployment, although women are more likely to leave the labour force if they become unemployed. They are not therefore considered in the unemployment statistics. Amongst many of this cohort of older women, mid-life has become the time when they are able to re-enter full-time employment with a view to establishing themselves as financially independent (Rosenman 1992). Becoming unemployed late in life may have a significant impact on the retirement decisions and retirement income of such women.

Migrants from a non-English speaking background suffer a clear disadvantage in terms of high unemployment rates due to the strong association between proficiency in English language and labour market success (CEO 1993). Older women from a non-English-speaking background are particularly vulnerable to retrenchment given their low English language ability and their tendency to be located at the lower end of the job market, often in part-time and casual positions (Winocur, Rosenman and Warburton 1994).

Amongst older workers, the boundaries between unemployment and retirement are semi-permeable, and this is encouraged by recent changes to the income security system which allows unemployed workers aged over 55 to draw benefits on much the same basis as the age pension. Depending upon their age, financial status and the conditions under which they became unemployed, in particular as part of an early retirement scheme, many decide to give up the job search and relabel themselves as retired (Rosenman 1994).
A potentially more important impact of the increase in unemployment rates is that labour force restructuring disproportionately affects older workers. Early retirement is a much more acceptable way than retrenchment for an employer to reduce the workforce. Over the past 10 years, unemployment, and particularly the impact on youth, has become defined as a key social problem. The result of this has been that the rights of certain groups to a place in the labour force have been challenged. While initially it was married women who were accused of selfishly taking jobs from others, the attitude that older people should exit the workforce in favour of the young has developed. Older workers are subjected to social and workplace pressure and economic incentives to do so. Labour market policies and practices have also acted to encourage this view with an emphasis on job creation and training for the young rather than retraining for older workers.

Some governments view early retirement as a painless remedy for unemployment (James 1995). According to the World Bank, while this policy may be appealing in the short term, it is costly and short-sighted. It reduces a country's experienced labour force, shrinks potential output, as well as reducing political pressure to cut unemployment, resulting in regressive redistributions. There is also little evidence that early retirement reduces unemployment. In any case, it is a costly solution to the unemployment problem and an expensive way to restructure enterprises.

On an individual level, enforced early retirement or late life unemployment can have a major impact on adjustment to retirement both emotionally and financially. As long as pensionable ages remain at age 60 or 65, reliance on unemployment payments causes a run down in assets, particularly those that have been identified as being for retirement. Since people can access accrued superannuation at age 55, this and early retirement or redundancy payments go into replacing or supplementing unemployment benefits rather than being saved for retirement.

**Changing Processes for Retirement and Employment Later in Life**

The abrupt transition from full-time work to complete labour force withdrawal is still the most common exit from the workforce, although a point of definitive labour force exit is becoming harder to identify with many workers using intermediate steps to leave the workforce (Quinn, Burkhauser & Myers 1990). Some are forced through late life unemployment to seek other work or work fewer hours, others are taking advantage of the growth in these options. This appears to match overall labour market patterns with a growth in part-time and casual employment and a decline in full-time permanent jobs. These changes have been neglected by statistical agencies, as definitions of retirement used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, for example, have
tended to ignore any other pattern than permanent cessation of full-time work. This has resulted in less being known about the retirement decisions and patterns of Australian women, many of whom retire from part-time positions. Labour market research focuses primarily on men, who have traditionally made up a larger share of the full-time labour force. However, changes have occurred in the work patterns of many men.

National statistics indicate an increase in the proportion of people working part-time over the past 10 years. This has been particularly marked amongst older workers, many of whom seek to work part-time to phase into retirement. In 1992, 17 per cent of employed men aged over 55 were in part-time employment and 53 per cent of employed women. This compared with 10 per cent and 44 per cent respectively 10 years earlier (ABS 1993b). The biggest increase in part-time work has been in the 60-64 age group. Amongst those aged over 65 who were still employed, 40 per cent of men and 64 per cent of women worked part-time.

A characteristic of the recent recession in Australia has been the growth in the proportion of the labour force that is self-employed or who are small business proprietors. There has been a growth in self-employment generally among the middle classes, as permanent employment gives way to more casual work and consultancies, including among men made redundant from management positions (Morgan 1995). The numbers of people self-employed (excluding farmers) has risen by 75 per cent in the U.S. and 50 per cent in the U.K. since the late 1980s (Morgan 1995). This is particularly marked among the older working population with high rates of self-employment relative to wage and salary employment. In 1993, nearly a quarter of older workers aged over 55 were self-employed compared with 9 per cent of those aged 15-54 (ABS 1993b). The growth of self-employment, contract employment and consulting is a major change in the labour force patterns of older workers which has received relatively little policy attention in Australia (Rosenman 1994).

Much of the appeal of self-employment among older workers relates to the control that self-employed workers are able to exercise over if and when they retire, that they are able to choose to continue in employment. For this reason, the self-employed have been identified by Bond, McCallum & Marshall (1986) as the most likely exceptions to 'normal retirement'. A proportion of self-employment appears to be 'second careers' financed by lump sum superannuation, redundancy or early retirement payments. The high failure rate of small businesses increases the financial vulnerability of this group, particularly as superannuation coverage by the self-employed and small business owners generally is extremely low.
What is the Link Between Changing Retirement Patterns and Social and Fiscal Policies?

The notion of an appropriate age of retirement has been set by the age of eligibility for the major retirement incomes systems in society. The practice, and often requirement, that women should retire at 60 and men at 65 was set by the eligibility ages for the Age Pension that were established early this century. Most people's expectations about when they will retire are in line with these traditional pensionable ages. The requirement to preserve superannuation benefits until age 55 is establishing another benchmark for retirement ages for many people. The messages sent by the social security, superannuation and tax systems about pensionable ages are important in establishing expectations about the 'appropriate time' to retire, although it appears that the current pension ages in Australia now seem to be setting the upper age limits for most workers.

As a result of earlier retirement practices, other income security programs, in particular the unemployment and disability systems and the occupational superannuation system, have been utilised to bridge the gap between the age of labour force exit and the age of access to the Age Pension. For many people this can be a period of 10 years or more. The Social Security response has been to restructure unemployment benefits for those aged over 55 to approximate the Age Pension by reducing job search and reporting requirements, and allowing voluntary work. This is explicit recognition of the difficulty of encouraging employers to hire older workers regardless of retraining and wage assistance programs, and the message through Social Security is that once older people become unemployed the probability of re-employment is remote.

Age Pensions

Currently about 70 per cent of the older population draws at least a part Age Pension. The age of eligibility for the Age Pension has traditionally established the expected retirement age. It has also tended to mark the upper limit of retirement. There has been in Australia an 'early retirement' pension in the form of the Veterans Service Pension which has allowed older people, predominantly men, who have served in the armed services to obtain a pension at age 60 rather than waiting until 65. The impact of this is reducing as the age profile of eligible veterans gets older and fewer now have access to this pension.

Although the pension age for women is lower than for men, the income testing of the Age Pension and the availability of a Wife's Pension for the non-pension-aged wife of a pension-eligible man has, in the past, encouraged even earlier labour force withdrawal for women whose husbands wish to establish pension eligibility. The removal of the Wife's Pension from
1 July 1995 may well encourage these women to continue in employment. Since that income would often render husbands ineligible for the Age Pension on the basis of the level of family income, this may well encourage an extension of male working lives.

The government is also in the process over the next twenty years of equalising female pensionable age with that of males. This may go some way towards redressing the inequities in women's labour market provision given the tendency to identify retirement age with pensionable age. Maintaining lower ages for pension eligibility can lead to greater discrimination against women. Not only does it cause a significant additional shortening of already short working lives, but ‘...in times of economic recession considerable pressure is put on workers who are entitled to a pension to give up their jobs: women are thus the first to be excluded from the workforce’ (Brocas et al 1990 p. 46). On the other hand, the large numbers of non-pensionable women suggest that its phasing out will remove a major source of income for couples who are planning joint retirement. This change may have an important impact on increasing both male and female retirement ages.

Superannuation

Superannuation is becoming an increasingly important component of people's planning for retirement. The majority of the workforce now has superannuation through the Superannuation Guarantee Charge. However, this will take at least 20 years to mature into a significant retirement incomes amount for most workers. Although superannuation is currently seen as a supplement to the basic Age Pension there is an expectation that for many workers it will substitute for the Age Pension over some if not all of their retirement period.

Both occupational superannuation and the Superannuation Guarantee Charge ensure preservation of funds until age 55. The impact of this may be to establish age 55 as an 'appropriate' age for retirement. In some cases, the availability of a lump sum payout through occupational superannuation at the age of 55 makes it easier to terminate a worker's employment through enforced or induced 'early retirement'. In such cases rather than being used for retirement and supplementing or replacing the Age Pension, superannuation is actually being used to finance late life unemployment, and is an alternative to the unemployment benefits schemes.

Amongst the current generation of older people, occupational superannuation membership has been limited in both coverage and in the duration of membership for those who have belonged. Women, in particular, are unlikely to be members of a superannuation scheme. Currently, although it is likely to change, for most people savings and investment are a more important component of retirement incomes than superannuation.
Removal of Compulsory Age Retirement

Despite the growth in early retirement and late life unemployment, several Australian States have legislated to abolish compulsory age retirement. This is part of an international move for human rights and the elimination of all forms of discrimination, rather than a specific assessment of the need to extend working lives past traditional retirement ages. In those countries where the explicit abolition of compulsory age retirement has occurred, there is little evidence that it has led to a substantial extension of working lives past the age of 65 (Reid 1989). Its main effect may be longer term in changing expectations about the right of older workers to choose their own best time for retirement and has the potential in the longer term to redefine retirement ages upwards.

Retirement Income and Social Security Alternatives

The retirement incomes system, particularly as it interfaces with labour market training and employment programs, is structured upon the assumption that older people are not, and should not, be working. High benefit reduction rates on the Age Pension, and taxation penalties upon older people who attempt to combine partial income from superannuation entitlements with part-time or self-employment, comprise significant disincentives to continued employment of older workers. This is in contrast to public policies in some European countries such as Sweden which act to encourage part-time work by older workers by offering part pensions (Schmal 1989).

Social Security needs to encourage and facilitate mixtures of income earning employment, particularly part-time employment, with the receipt of Social Security payments targeted at older workers. How Social Security can respond to both early retirement and late life unemployment and, concomitantly, how it can best respond to, or encourage, delayed retirement or the extension of working lives past traditional retirement ages, are key issues.

How are People Adjusting to Retirement and are Societal Views of Retirement Changing?

The decrease in the age of exit from gainful work over the past 25 years has resulted in the period spent in retirement expanding as a result of both a younger age of labour force exit and increasing life expectancy (Kohli & Rein 1991). The traditional view of retirement was that it was a period of disengagement between productive work and death. Yet today's retirees are still relatively fit, healthy and capable of maintaining a full life. The majority of people look forward to, and enjoy, their retirement.
This has led to the concept being developed of a 'Third Age' which is the period of life when work and family demands reduce and people have time, resources, and, by and large, enjoy good health. This is facilitated by early retirement which means that more people are leaving the workforce when they are fit, healthy and still active. This group is not currently the major focus in research into policy and practice issues in relation to ageing. The current focus of 'gerontology' and ageing research is on 'Fourth Age' issues of physical frailty, institutionalisation and health care.

Issues relating to the Third Age relate to time use, life satisfaction, and the development of alternative measures of productivity and achievement. Consumer society has caught up with Third Agers, realising that those now entering retirement are more healthy, active and financially affluent than ever before. They are now targeted as a major potential market. Not only are today's older people major purchasers of goods and services, which is fast becoming recognised by the consumer industry, they are also providers of a range of support to their families and in the wider community. There is a need to broaden the concept of productivity to include the alternative contribution that older people make outside the paid workforce (Kendig 1986).

The 'success' of retirement is strongly linked to personal circumstances, financial circumstances and choice about when and how to retire. An important factor influencing retirement decisions and adjustment is health. Poor health or chronic illness not only forces people into retirement but also limits the options and ability to enjoy the freedom associated with retirement. Poor health is not, however, inevitably associated with retirement or old age, and many people live long lives with few health problems, never in fact entering a Fourth Age of frailty and dependency.

While retirement impacts on many facets of individual lives, Borowski (1990) has argued that the reason retirement is such a major decision is its impact on income. Those with limited or no resources or who are completely dependent upon the Age Pension find it difficult to deal with the constant limitations set on their lives and their choices by lack of money. On the other hand, in some cases, lower-income workers, particularly women, may be relieved when they reach pensionable age and are able to rely on a secure and constant income from the Age Pension.

In general, women, particularly single women, are vulnerable to financial difficulties in retirement given their shorter working histories and lower incomes. It has been suggested that older women in particular may benefit from the removal of compulsory age retirement because they will be able to continue working and so compensate for their limited labour force participation earlier in life and their resulting inability to amass superannuation or other forms of saving for retirement. Currently, however,
the majority of women describe themselves as retired by the age of 55. There is a possibility that this limited labour force participation for older women may change in the foreseeable future as the ‘baby boom’ generation grows older. Women now aged in their thirties to mid-forties have had significantly higher rates of labour force attachment than their mothers and many may well choose to work longer.

This difference between cohorts may be reflected in other practices and behaviours. The generations born after World War II have had quite different patterns of education, work and income that may well determine substantially different patterns of retirement. It may be that extended education, delayed labour force entry as well as later marriages and childbearing may be reflected in a desire also to retire later. For this to happen, government and employer policies, as well as community perceptions regarding work and retirement, must also change. It may well be that the trend to earlier retirement will in fact reverse, and that the trends that seem to be developing of continuing part-time and self-employment before and after traditional retirement ages may become more common.

Conclusions

Patterns of employment later in life appear to be diverging from traditional patterns of full-time, stable employment, with an abrupt stop at a set point. In addition, the meaning and process of retirement is changing with high rates of part-time and self-employment both before and after traditional retirement ages. These changes require major adaptations to existing social security and retirement savings programs which have been developed from a concept of retirement as the permanent cessation of full-time work at age 65.

Currently, the structure of social security benefits, limitations on superannuation scheme membership for those aged over 65, and the taxation of superannuation benefits make part-time employment, and employment that continues after the age of 65, economically unattractive. Government fiscal and social policies, especially retirement incomes policies, also play a major role in establishing individual and community expectations about whether, when, and how people should retire.

This paper has suggested that when, how and why people retire has changed dramatically over the Past quarter-century, and may be destined to continue changing over the next few decades. Retirement lies at the nexus of a nation's policies on labour force restructuring, unemployment and income security. Australia and most of the Western industrialised countries are in the process of change in terms of retirement. This has involved changes in the established age, the traditional process and the accepted definition of 'retirement' that reflects the major changes and restructuring of the labour force and of income security policies that have been under way for the past decade.
References


WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE WORK TEST?

Kate Rodgers
Labour Market Section, Labour Market Programs Branch, Labour Market and Retirement Programs Division, Department of Social Security

John Powlay
Assistant Secretary, Labour Market Programs Branch, Labour Market and Retirement Programs Division, Department of Social Security

Introduction

Since the federal introduction in 1945 of unemployment benefits in Australia, payment has been contingent on customer compliance with a requirement to demonstrate continued efforts to return to the full-time workforce. While that fundamental requirement has remained remarkably resilient, the original 'work test' has evolved into a broader, more flexible 'activity test'.

In 1945 the prevailing rationale for the work test was to lend legitimacy to government-provided income support to the unemployed. That rationale remains an important one, in terms of community support; (one need only to peruse the letter and opinion columns of major daily newspapers or listen in on the more popular talk-back radio programs, for evidence of this). However, the current activity test is now seen in a more positive light, as a vehicle which can improve unemployed people's labour market potential by offering them a range of training and other options as an alternative or complement to job search. Over recent years the activity test has become increasingly flexible and adaptable to both the needs of unemployed individuals and the prevailing state of the labour market, and as such, is a useful touchstone for discussion about the nature of unemployment and associated future policy directions.

History

Australia did not have a federal system of income support for the unemployed until 1944, but even the earliest forms of State-supplied relief for able-bodied unemployed people were linked to work: in the late 1800s it was customary to grant wages or rations in return for work specially provided by the government. At that stage, it did not concern authorities if the work was of little consequence to the worker; what mattered was that government relief should not be given without work in return.
Providing a payment for the unemployed has always posed the public policy problem of how it might be achieved without acting as an incentive to leave, or not take up, paid employment. Consequently, almost all variations of the work test have included this as an important objective, and the first federal legislation to provide income support for the unemployed was no exception. The Unemployment and Sickness Benefits Act 1944 provided payment on the condition that 'an applicant for unemployment benefit [showed] that he was capable of undertaking and willing to undertake "suitable" work and had taken reasonable steps to obtain such work' (Kewley 1965).

The 1944 interpretation of the work test was based on the assumption that work was generally available to a person seeking it regardless of background, qualifications or experience, and that if a person were unemployed, it would only be for short periods. Some thirty years elapsed before any significant changes were made to the work test, no doubt reflecting the prevailing buoyant state of the labour market. Between 1976 and 1988 the changes were largely administrative and were portrayed as tightening the rules to guard against abuse of the payments system:

- the introduction of fortnightly lodgement of income statements and more selective reviews by Department of Social Security (DSS) officers (1976);
- tighter provisions for workers involved in industrial action and for people leaving work voluntarily (1979); and
- compulsory registration with the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) and the requirement to personally submit the fortnightly income statements to DSS and to list work efforts on each fortnightly form made during that period (1986).

**The Change to an 'Activity Test'**

The most substantial policy shift to date on the work test requirement occurred over the period 1986 to 1991. This culminated in the redefinition of the work test to an activity test. The main catalyst of this change was the recognition that the state of the labour market was such that it was unreasonable to expect all unemployed people to find work without some government assistance, at both the macro and micro economic level. The Social Security Review, which commenced work in 1986, under the direction of Professor Bettina Cass, made some important observations on the role of income support for the unemployed in light of this recognition.

Cass (1986) observed that a departure from the passive system of support for the unemployed entailed an expanded approach to the hitherto implicit reciprocal obligations between the unemployed and society, obligations only partially reflected in the work test. Whereas earlier conditions had allowed both parties to rely on job search in a buoyant labour market to provide work
within a short time and so promptly discharge reciprocal obligations, this was no longer the case. When unemployment became prolonged or the unemployed person faced particular difficulty, job search alone was clearly no longer sufficient. If additional effort was required of the unemployed in seeking employment, was not society also obliged to extend its support through training opportunities and income support?

The changes to work test requirements foreshadowed in the Social Security Review were gradually introduced over the period from 1988 to 1991. In 1988 Unemployment Benefit was replaced by Job Search Allowance (USA). The work test was expanded to become the activity test, encompassing training and education as well as job search. The compulsion factor of the work test remained, in that continuation of payment was dependent on recipients demonstrating job search and/or participation in training and labour market programs, but the approach was intended to be cooperative and flexible to both customer needs and the current state of the labour market. Newstart Allowance (NSA) was introduced in 1989. It incorporated a compulsory activity test identical to that for JSA plus (from 1991) a system of agreements between the recipients and the CES on plans for job search and training.

This positive view of the new 'activity agreement' regime was echoed by Mitchell Dean in a paper he presented at the 1993 Social Policy Conference, in which he indicates the potential of the activity agreement concept as an important psychological tool in combating the risk of dependency. He suggests that under this system, an unemployed person is given the role of the 'active subject', as opposed to the individual rendered dependent by the old passive system of unemployment benefit. According to Dean (1993), there are two main advantages in the notion of an active subject: the first is that through the requirement of the activity test to seek employment, a customer remains bound to social networks and engages in practices that overcome those attributes (boredom, loss of self-esteem) which constitute the risk of dependency. Second, by installing the notion of contract in the Newstart agreement, 'the client is asked to become... an active entrepreneur of his or her own self, ready and able to take up such opportunities that the labour market, social provision, education and social networks may provide, and thus able to combat the risk of dependency'.

The arrangements introduced through the 1991 Newstart strategy continue to prevail for the current activity test, although the mechanics and interpretation of the activity test have been undergoing a subtle but persistent metamorphosis.

Activity Test - Theory and Practice

The last five years have been marked by a steady increase in the number and diversity of activities allowed under the activity test. This, together with the
range of specific exemptions from compliance with the activity test (stated either in the Social Security Act or in policy guidelines) and the discretions available in the Act, allows much greater flexibility in the application of the activity test. The discretionary power that can be exerted by departmental officers is certainly subject to guiding boundaries and has been quite limited in practice, but nevertheless the legislative scheme is such that activity test requirements can now be tailored to individual circumstances.

The flexibility now available within the activity test requirements can be seen through an analysis of the current legislation, to identify the range of ways in which an unemployed person could meet or be exempted from those requirements. This analysis indicates that the range of permissible activities has become surprisingly diverse. A person receiving JSA/NSA could be involved in one or more of the following activities:

- **Job Search** - seeking and willing to undertake suitable work;
- **Work** - full/part-time and/or permanent/casual work, labour market programs, work experience or voluntary work;
- **Training** - an approved study or training program or rehabilitation program;
- **Business** - developing a self-employment or cooperative venture;
- **Other Activities** - any activity to reduce labour market disadvantages or other activities proposed by the customer, including attending an army reserve or similar defence forces training; or
- **Exemptions** - living in a remote area and having educational or cultural barriers to participation or other special circumstances.

While theoretically there appears to be a myriad of activities allowable under the activity test, this breadth of scope is somewhat compromised in practice. Participation in any of the above activities (or the granting of an exemption) has been subject either to the approval of the CES (or DSS) or the successful negotiation of an activity agreement between the unemployed person and the CES. However, a large proportion of recipients of JSA/NSA have remained subject to the primary job search requirement.

As at February 1995, job search was recorded as the activity type for 95 per cent of JSA recipients and 92 per cent of NSA recipients (unpublished departmental data). (See Appendix).

While job search is probably still appropriate for the majority of unemployed people, the flexibility available within the current activity test requirements may not yet have been fully exploited for the benefit of those individuals for whom the simple job search requirement is likely to be insufficient, unrealistic or unproductive.
**Administration**

Why, then, is there this gap between the theory and practice of the activity test? There are some tensions with other requirements of the system and it is true that some geographical areas may not have the facilities for activities other than job search. However, on examination, it would seem that the source of this problem is largely administrative. Until very recently, the administrative infrastructure has not been amenable to the flexible application of the activity test that is reflected in the legislation. There has been little scope in either DSS or CES procedures or resourcing for officers to provide individual customer attention. This has resulted in a tendency within both agencies to fall back on the more bureaucratic approach of codifying the requirements and standardising most activity agreements and job search reporting requirements.

This tendency to standardisation is to some extent understandable given the restrictions imposed on most officers, and it can be argued that it is also justifiable on equity and efficiency grounds. However, this lack of flexibility in administrative practices has contributed to a more restrictive application of the activity test than is intended under the legislative scheme. For example, there is often considerable delay in the formulation of activity agreements, and when an agreement is reached, it may only be an interim one, which is not finalised subsequently. Recent DSS market research has revealed that a significant proportion of JSA/NSA recipients displayed very limited knowledge of the extent of activities allowable under the activity test, and some did not even know what an activity agreement was (Yann et al 1995).

In a more general sense, standardisation of activity agreements detracts from the contribution the customer can make to formulating activity agreements, and thus the scope for equal participation between the departments and the customer is diminished. The customer has less choice, and becomes a more passive and disempowered recipient of income support rather than the ,active entrepreneur of his/her own destiny' envisaged by Dean (Dean 1993). In effect, the standardisation of activity agreements represents a retrograde step away from the notion of contract inherent in the concept of the active society, which underlied many of the policy initiatives arising from the Social Security Review.

**Case Management**

The introduction of case management services for some long-term unemployed people in the 1993-94 Budget marked the advent of a more individualised and flexible approach to activity testing, and with the Working Nation statement in May 1994 case management has since been extended to all people unemployed for 12 months or more or who are assessed as being at risk of becoming long-term unemployed. This extension of case management
has occurred in tandem with the opening up of the hitherto CES-dominated case management market to private-sector and community agencies. This means that increasingly, as the private case management market develops, unemployed customers will have a choice of agencies for case management. The introduction of a more competitive system should also motivate case managers to produce strategies that are more responsive to individual customer needs. The Employment Service Regulatory Agency (ESRA) has been established to foster competition among case management providers, and monitor outcomes.

Although the introduction of case management should see the emergence of a more flexible and inclusive approach to activity testing, there are already signs of reversion to standardised administrative practices. The role of contracted private-sector case managers and the ESRA will be particularly important in promoting and maintaining a tailored and individualised approach to activity testing, and there will need to be careful scrutiny from government and the relevant agencies to ensure that customer needs are not compromised by other competing demands, such as the need to meet targets for program participation.

The Changing Labour Market

While it remains to be seen whether case management will be successful in addressing the aforementioned administrative shortfalls in the application of the activity test, there are some other aspects of the unemployment allowance system that may operate in apparent discord with the potential flexibility of the activity test. The tension lies mainly in the continuing perception that unemployment allowances are expected to be short-term payments and that customers will return to work via full-time employment. This is reflected in the work-testing component of the activity test, which generally assumes that job search is directed predominantly toward obtaining full-time work.

Diversity of Working Arrangements

However, this assumption no longer reflects reality for a growing number of people. Firstly, partly as a result of the two economic recessions experienced over the last decade, the incidence of part-time work has been increasing at a faster rate than that of full-time work:

- Of the 1.4 million new jobs created between 1980 and 1993, 60 per cent have been part-time (Department of Social Security 1993); and

- there has also been a steady decline in the probability of leaving unemployment for full-time work and an increase in the probability of leaving unemployment for part-time work (Fahrer and Heath, in Department of Social Security 1993).
While permanent full-time employment is still the dominant form, 'atypical' forms of employment (including part-time work, casual and seasonal work, contract work, voluntary work, cottage industries and self-employment) are now the normal pattern of labour market participation for many people. Employment options for unemployed people are increasingly likely to be short-term or of uncertain duration, and for many, part-time rather than full-time. One effect of this trend has been the increase in the proportion of unemployment payment recipients reporting income from part-time or casual work in recent years.

In addition, the last decade has seen a steady rise in the average duration of unemployment and the numbers of long-term unemployed. The average unemployment duration is now slightly greater than 12 months (53.2 weeks in March 1995), and even after several years of strong economic growth, in March 1995, 13 per cent of unemployment beneficiaries had been unemployed for between one and two years and 19 per cent had been unemployed for more than two years (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 6203.0). Among this latter group are some who have been unemployed since the previous recession of the early 1980s. Thus 'unemployment' for many people is no longer a short period of relative inactivity between full-time jobs. In addition, re-entry into the labour market is more likely to be characterised by a combination of part-payment of income support and earnings from casual and/or part-time work, over a more lengthy period.

While the Social Security Act definition of 'suitable' work includes both full and part-time work, the requirements of the activity test would suggest that a person combining part-time work with a part-payment may risk losing entitlement to JSA/NSA, because in practical terms they are not ready and willing to undertake full-time work. By maintaining the emphasis on full-time work, is it possible that the current interpretation of the activity test operates against the prevailing labour market climate? If so, it may not fulfil the important objective of encouraging unemployed people to maintain labour force attachment through part-time work or training, thereby improving their labour market potential. Similarly, some sectors of the community argue that maintaining rigorous job search requirements for longterm unemployed people is unduly onerous for the customer and involves them in meaningless activity.

**Recognition of Part-time Work?**

While the extension of activity test flexibility is a recognition of the increasing emergence of part-time work, it is only partly so - the range of activities permitted under the activity test are not seen as legitimate in their own right but gain legitimacy from the extent to which they may contribute to gaining full-time employment.
Should part-time work now be more formally recognised as a legitimate activity concomitant with receipt of income support? While this may seem an appropriate response to current labour market trends, it could also result in some undesirable outcomes. If the job search component of the activity test were to shift its focus away from full-time work, there is the risk that the predominance of part-time/casual work over full-time work would become entrenched, to the detriment of the significant number of people who not only would prefer to increase their hours of work but also are missing out on the security benefits of full-time work, such as paid sick leave and holiday pay. Furthermore, the activity test is designed to ensure that people on taxpayer-funded income support payments are active in trying to improve their labour market potential and reduce their reliance on income support. Formally recognising part-time work may reduce this effectiveness.

Provisions already exist for relaxation of activity test requirements for certain customers; for example, customers aged 50 and over who have found substantial part-time employment are not required to actively seek full-time employment, and may spend more time than their younger counterparts in undertaking other activities, such as voluntary work.

In the context of future policy directions, it may be desirable to introduce further flexibility into the system by allowing certain other customer groups legitimately to combine part-time work with part-income support. This could include recognising unpaid work as a legitimate activity under an expanded activity test. For example, there are some customers whose caring responsibilities are not substantial enough to warrant eligibility for Carer Pension, yet which occupy enough time to preclude their working full-time and, as such, may preclude them from JSA/NSA. In such a case, it may be appropriate to either grant a temporary exemption under the aegis of a flexible and individualised activity test, or to specifically recognise part-time work as a legitimate activity for this group.

**Developments**

The Government's most ambitious initiative to date in tackling the problem of long-term unemployment is the Job Compact, a combination of case management and labour market assistance that has been operating since July 1994. The Job Compact involves the guarantee of an offer of subsidised employment for six to 12 months to those who have been in receipt of unemployment payments for 18 months or more. The Job Compact promises all long-term unemployed people the opportunity to make valuable contacts and gain a significant amount of work experience, and in many cases, participants are expected to gain ongoing employment. In so doing, the job Compact makes the activity test requirement to link with the full-time job market more realistic.

74
In terms of addressing practical tensions that may exist in the current application of the activity test for long-term unemployed people, there are two possible solutions: relax the job search requirements of the activity test, or create employment places for as many unemployed people as possible. It can be argued that current arrangements that combine individualised case management and a job compact placement guarantee for long-term unemployed adopt both these approaches. Previous administrative shortfalls aside, the activity test has the potential to be flexible enough, particularly in the context of case management, so that job search need not be an unemployed person's central activity. Moreover, in order to utilise more effectively the opportunities provided by case management, from September 1996 certain unemployed customers will be subject to less frequent reporting requirements.

Conclusion

While the primary objective of income support for the unemployed is to ensure that unemployed people who are actively searching for work or participating in other labour market related activities receive adequate levels of income, the overall aim is to encourage unemployed people to achieve the transition to income self-sufficiency. The latter is achieved partly through a system that is flexible enough to cater for the many and diverse needs of people who are unemployed and seeking work. Nevertheless, the gap between the theory and practice of the activity test, as well as the emergence of tensions and pressures in the interaction between labour market trends and the social security system, point to a crossroads in the future direction of the activity test. Does this signal the introduction of further flexibility in the activity test, or is it simply a temporary aberration, from which the original work test, with its direct focus on ongoing full-time employment, will emerge as resilient as ever? Suffice to say that exploring responses to this question will need to form a significant part of the ongoing examination of the nexus between social security and labour market policy.
Appendix

*Breakdown of Customers by Activity Type*

*JSA Numbers by Activity Type - as at February 1995*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JSA Numbers by activity type</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>job search</td>
<td>395 907</td>
<td>95.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incapacitated</td>
<td>6 053</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formal training</td>
<td>5 548</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>short course</td>
<td>2 451</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austudy/Abstudy first 3 wks</td>
<td>1 803</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adult migrant education</td>
<td>1 577</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>1 240</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rehabilitation</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>caring responsibilities</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>voluntary work</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refugee</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal crisis</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bereavement payments</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>literary course</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>youth activities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>part-time work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>415 554</strong></td>
<td><strong>76</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NSA Numbers by Activity Type - as at February 1995*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity type</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>job search</td>
<td>371 622</td>
<td>92.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formal training</td>
<td>17 592</td>
<td>4.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incapacitated</td>
<td>6 808</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>short course</td>
<td>1 401</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>1 252</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rehabilitation</td>
<td>938</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austudy/Abstudy first 3 wks</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adult migrant education</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>caring responsibilities</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>voluntary work</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal crisis</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>literary course</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refugee</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>youth activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>part-time work</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bereavement payments</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>400 838</strong></td>
<td><strong>76</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References

Australian Bureau of Statistics:
• The Labour Force Australia - monthly - Catalogue No. 6203.0.


A GENERATION OF GROWTH IN FEMALE EMPLOYMENT, BUT HOW MUCH CHANGE?

Alan Jordan
Strategic Development Division, Department of Social Security

Women and 'Full Employment'
The White Paper, Full Employment in Australia, published by the National Government in May 1945, while Australia was still at war in the Pacific, promised not merely a return to pre-war conditions but a future better than the past:

- On the average during the 20 years between 1919 and 1939 more than one-tenth of the men and women desiring work were unemployed. In the worst years of the depression well over 25 per cent were left in unproductive idleness... Governments should accept the responsibility for stimulating spending on goods and services to the extent necessary to sustain full employment. ¹

For more than 25 years the policy appeared to be highly successful. Statistics for the mid-1950s, as reported in the Bureau of Census and Statistics Labour Report [for] 1955 and 1956, can be taken as reasonably representative.

Between the censuses of 1947 and 1954, the total number of 'occupied persons' rose by 15 per cent, and the total number of wage and salary earners by 18 per cent. Unemployment fell from 3.2 per cent of the workforce in 1947 to 1.8 per cent in 1954. Those figures include people who said they were prevented from working by illness, accident and industrial disputes. By later definitions of unemployment, the 1954 rate would have been under 1 per cent. Not only was full employment achieved but real wage rates rose steadily through the late 1940s and the 1950s.

Employment had been promised to 'men and women desiring work', and although the White Paper's authors had felt no need to say what they meant by 'employment' it was implicitly a job that paid a living wage and, therefore, normally full-time. Most adult but non-aged women were neither working nor looking for work. Female employment had reached a wartime peak in 1943, by 1946 had fallen back to the level of 1942 and increased irregularly thereafter, so that in June 1955 the number of women employed was 14 per cent higher than in 1943. The female share of employment had increased only slightly, from 25 per cent of all wage and salary earners in July 1939 to 27 per cent in June 1955, 1956 and 1957. Of those employed in June 1955, 31 per cent were in manufacturing industry, 16 per cent in retail trade,
10 per cent in health services and 9 per cent in personal services. At the 1966 census 29 per cent of jobs were held by women.

A structural change seems to have occurred in 1973. Until then, rates of unemployment had continued to fluctuate around one per cent and only exceptionally had gone over two. By 1975 the rate was nearly 5 per cent and by 1978, 6 per cent, falling slightly until 1981, rising to nearly 10 per cent in 1983 and falling to nearly 6 per cent in 1989, when a recession - brought on to restrain demand but quite severe - took it to 11 per cent in 1992. Issuing a new White Paper on full employment in 1994, the Australian Government committed itself to a rate of 5 per cent by the end of the century. The 1945 concept of full employment was as dead as the policies intended to ensure it; but then the meaning of 'employment' had changed along with types of job and the composition of the labour force.

Despite the much higher rates of unemployment, female labour-force participation and employment had continued to rise. Women occupied 33 per cent of all jobs in August 1972 and 43 per cent in August 1995. There has, however, been concern that in some ways they tend to be disadvantaged. In the present article, published reports of the Australian Bureau of Statistics sample surveys of the labour force are used to examine trends in female employment, and the adequacy of available statistics for description and understanding of those trends. Some comparisons will be made between Australia and other countries.

Female Labour Supply Since 1972

Between 1972 and 1994, male employment ratios - the proportions of each age group actually employed - contracted at all ages, but especially for men over 45 years of age and, for them, mostly in the earlier part of the period. Various explanations can be, and have been, advanced for the withdrawal or exclusion of these older men; the less pronounced but similar tendency for men between 25 and 45, apparently a secular trend and not simply a consequence of cyclical changes in demand for labour, is harder to explain.

Figure 1 summarises the very different female experience. Ratios expanded for most age groups, particularly in the range corresponding to the bearing and raising of children. In 1966 only 30 per cent of married women under 55 years of age, with or without children, were in paid work, but by 1994 the inflection now representing only a temporary withdrawal from employment had almost disappeared. Between 1982 and 1994, when the employment ratio of married mothers whose youngest or only child was 10 but under 15 years of age rose from 58 to 68 per cent, the ratio for mothers of children under 5 years of age rose even more strongly from 29 to 44 per cent. Employment of middle-aged women expanded about as much as that of their male counterparts contracted.
Female employment growth was largely in part-time jobs. Although some commentators have described the rise of part-time work as 'dramatic' or an 'explosion', the truly impressive thing about the changes in the allocation of employment between male and female, full- and part-time in the 22 years from 1972 to 1994, shown in Figure 2, is their regularity. The underlying process, as though having its own momentum, appears indifferent both to the ups and downs of the business cycle and shifts in economic policy. In reality, of course, there must be some kind of relationship, and perhaps a reciprocal one. A study of trends in the United Kingdom from 1971 to 1994 found, similarly, that 'The growth in part-time jobs is a proportion of all jobs has been fairly steady... regardless of the different stages of the economic cycle.'

Firstly, it will be understood that Figure 2 represents the distribution of the working population between types of employment and neither absolute numbers of jobs nor contributions to total supply of labour. In 1994 more people were in full-time work than in 1972 - six million as compared with five million - because the employed population had grown, although in the same period the number of part-time workers tripled from 620 000 to 1.9 million. In the United Kingdom, by contrast, 'Since 1971 ... the number of full-time jobs has fallen'. Secondly, female full-time work as a proportion of all employment was almost constant throughout the period - 24.2 per cent in 1972 and 24.4 per cent in 1994 - but the female share of all full-time work rose from 27 to 32 per cent in the same years. Thirdly, although the Bureau of Statistics classifies anything under 35 hours a week as part-time work, the average is much shorter - 15 hours for both males and females in June 1995, when parttimers constituted 25 per cent of all workers but contributed only 11 per cent of all hours worked. It should also be noted that, on average, women's full-time hours of work are consistently shorter than men's: 36.7 and 40.9 hours respectively in June 1989, for example, and 38.1 and 42.3 in June 1995.

Figure 3 shows the composition of the part-time labour force in August 1995. Seventy-four per cent were female and 32 per cent women with children under 15 years of age. Eighteen per cent were full-time students under 25 years of age. Figure 1 indicated some reduction in the employment ratio of females under 20 years of age. One factor was a stronger propensity of young people to stay in education. To take one indicator, in August 1980, 35 per cent of 17-year-olds were attending school: the corresponding figure in August 1995 was 66 per cent, and a total of 73 per cent were engaged in full-time study. Thirty-two per cent of the students were also in paid work.

Adolescent and young-adult females have made greater educational gains than males, with probable enhancement of their employability and earning capacity. Figure 4 shows rates of employment and full-time study of males and females aged 15 to 19 from 1987 to 1995. The effects of a sharp downturn
in the business cycle in 1990 with a low point in 1992, followed by recovery, are apparent in each of the series but most clearly in male employment, which fell to, and remained at, the female levels. At the same time, however, female rates of participation in education continued to climb above the male rates. Overlap of the student and young employed populations has been mentioned. In August 1995, 44 per cent of employed males and 45 per cent of employed females under 20 years of age were students, and 27 per cent of male but 37 per cent of female students were employed.

Similar trends were apparent in the next older group, aged 20 to 24 years. Male rates of participation in full-time tertiary study rose from 11 per cent in 1987 to 16 per cent in 1995 but female rates almost doubled, from 9 per cent in 1987 to 18 per cent in 1995. As in the younger group, female students were more likely to be employed than males, the rates being 45 and 39 per cent respectively in 1995.

A study of trends in the United Kingdom concluded that:

- While employment rates among mothers increase, and employment among fathers remains high and constant, employment among younger and older adults is falling due to increased further education and early retirement and high unemployment among under 25s and over 50s. The result of these diverging trends is an increasing concentration of employment among the 25-49 years age group, and specifically among men and women with children... an ever closer relationship between employment and family life.

Some of those things have happened in Australia, but they have not resulted in 'increasing concentration of employment... among men and women with children' if that is understood to mean a larger share of jobs. In 1981, 42 per cent of all workers and in 1995, 40 per cent of all workers were parents with dependent children. The corresponding proportions of full-time workers were 40 per cent and 39 per cent. The proportion of all parents working did rise, from 70 per cent of married parents in 1980 to 74 per cent in 1995, although the rate for lone parents declined slightly from 43 per cent to 42 per cent.

The increased female share of employment and the growing participation of women with children might have led one to expect more change in parental rates of employment. Figure 5 shows employment ratios for male and female married and lone parents from 1977 to 1995. Evidently the rates for lone parents are influenced heavily by the business cycle, although the trend for the male minority is clearly down. So, gently but persistently, is the trend for married fathers, offsetting somewhat an equally persistent rise in employment of married mothers.

It is true that, although the parental share of employment and the female share of full-time jobs have remained nearly constant, full-time as well as
part-time employment of mothers with dependent children has increased. Between 1982 and 1994, rates of full-time employment of married mothers with children under 5 years rose from 11 to 15 per cent, of mothers with youngest children 5 and under 10 from 20 to 25 per cent, and of mothers with youngest children 10 and under 15 from 28 to 34 per cent.\textsuperscript{15} Shares of full-time employment for all parents with dependent children are shown in Figure 6. The trend for fathers is again down and the trend for mothers up, which raises the question of whether mothers' earnings had substituted for fathers' earnings and not merely supplemented them.

The answer seems to be no, or, at least, not often. Rates of employment in couple families with dependent children in September 1995 were 63 per cent for women whose husbands were employed and 26 per cent for women whose husbands were not.\textsuperscript{16} Rising employment of women with children has reduced the number of one-income rather than no-income families. In 1982 both parents were employed in 42 per cent of families and the husband only in 51 per cent: the corresponding 1995 figures were 56 and 33 per cent. Neither parent was working in 6 per cent of families in 1982 and 8 per cent in 1995. Trends in the United Kingdom were again similar: 'During the 1980s... there was... growth in the proportion of 'dual earner' families (from 40 to 48 per cent) due in equal measure to more families with two full-time earners and more with one full-time and one part-time earner [which] led to a fill in 'one earner' families.'\textsuperscript{17}

Only a minority of unmarried women - a category which includes the formerly married - remain in employment until the conventional age of retirement. In the fifteen years from 1980 to 1985 employment ratios of unmarried women 35 years of age and above tended to rise, from 62 to 66 per cent for women aged 35 to 44, 52 to 62 per cent for women aged 45 to 54, and from 31 to 38 per cent for women aged 55 to 59.\textsuperscript{18}

**Supply and Demand**

Many factors have combined to sustain the growth of women's employment. The most fundamental must have been, on the one hand, changes in the economy and the magnitude and pattern of its demand for labour and, on the other, changing cultural perceptions of behaviour appropriate to the roles of man, woman, spouse and parent. The observable effects of those deep changes will have depended on existing social and political institutions and changes in them. Similarities between the various industrialised and industrialising countries are evidence of the depth of the process, and differences in timing and form demonstrate the influence of local contexts. In the member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.
The mobilisation of the female population in the labour market... has increased considerably... over the last decades. Nevertheless, if this has been a general tendency, it has taken place at a very different pace in different countries... While female participation rates are on the rise everywhere, male participation rates are on the decline in many countries [and] differentials are therefore diminishing overall while remaining very pronounced in certain places...

Participation rates vary according to age but differently between the sexes... In most OECD countries the curve of female participation rates according to age showed a similar shift over the 1980s: an upward movement of the curve and a flattening out of any depression for the 25-35 age group... If this trend continues, the participation rates of men and women in the 25 to 54 age group could well be at the same level in some countries by the year 2000.19

The study reported wide variations in total rates of employment and ratios of part-time to full-time work for that age group. In Finland 'eight women out of ten in between the ages of 25 and 54 are employed full time 'while the Netherlands, at the other extreme, had 'fewer than one in five women in full-time employment 'but' more than three women in ten' worked part-time. Total employment was very high in Sweden, but nearly half was part-time. 20

It seems clear that in Australia the labour supply of women in roughly that age range could rise considerably above present levels and probable that it will, because of continued weakening of both customary and institutional constraints. In the period after adoption of the Australian full employment policy of 1945, neither law, regulation nor public opinion were supportive of the employment of married women in general and mothers in particular. Until 1966, for example, women employees of the Federal Government were required to resign on marriage. By contrast, real government expenditure through the children's services program approximately doubled between 1976 and 1983, doubled again between 1983 and 1987 and then tripled by 1994; and 'Most formal child care was used for work reasons - for instance, 84 per cent of children in... family day care services were in work-related care in June 1993.,21 On the other hand, trade unions 'have resisted the use of part-time and casual labour since the turn of the century [although recently] labour market deregulation may have had some effect on the incidence of part-time employment.22

The OECD's Women and structural change remarks that 'the expansion of the service sector favoured the employment of women. In several countries, four out of five women in employment are in the service sector and elsewhere the trend is in that direction.'23 That also is broadly true of Australia. In 1955, mining and quarrying, manufacturing, building and construction and transport accounted for 57 per cent of wage and salary employment, apart
from primary industry, but in 1994 only for 27 per cent. In February 1995, the industry subdivisions: health services, education, personal and household goods retailing, business services, food retailing, accommodation, cafés and restaurants, community services, finance, and personal services accounted for 63 per cent of female employment, and each had a higher proportion of women workers than the labour force as a whole. In the year from August 1994 to August 1995, female employment increased by 5.8 per cent overall but by more than 10 per cent in wholesale trade, property and business services, and education.24

Nonstandard or Substandard?

If permanent full-time work for a wage or salary is taken as the dominant, typical or standard form of employment, as apparently it was by the authors of the 1945 White Paper, part-time employment is only one of the atypical or nonstandard forms often said to constitute an increasing - even rapidly increasing - proportion of all jobs in Australia and other countries.25 An article in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's annual Employment Outlook enumerated 'shift work, weekend work, self-employment, part-time work and temporary work'26, and the OECD's Jobs Study related 'a rise in [these] 'nonstandard' forms of employment' to 'the growth of the service sector over the 1970s and 1980s'.27 In Australia, the Committee on Employment Opportunities wrote of 'the combined effect of... recession and structural adjustment leading to a move on the part of large firms towards a reduced core of skilled, educated, long-term full-time employees supplemented as necessary by a peripheral group of subcontractors, part-timers and casual employees [and other] efforts by employers to reduce... labour costs and achieve flexibility in the workplace'.28

Flexibility for the enterprise can mean insecurity for the worker, and erosion of rights and benefits associated with permanent employment, and to the extent that women belong to the 'peripheral group' of employees rather than the élite 'core', they may be disadvantaged by change. For example, according to Women and structural change, 'secure, full-time... employment is no longer the norm', and

While women are concerned in all forms of atypical employment, there is one form of flexibility that is considered to be particularly 'female', namely part-time employment [which] has the undeniable advantages of creating new employment opportunities for many women and making it easier to combine work and family life. But it has also several drawbacks... Part-time jobs tend to be 'inferior' on a whole range of criteria. Moreover, to the extent that there is substitution... part-time employment is imposed on women for lack of alternative choice [and] compounds job segregation...
On balance, all forms of atypical employment offer fewer safeguards than 'normal' employment in... job and income security, social protection and enterprise training [and] more individualised labour relations [reduce] the influence that collective bargaining can have on the terms and conditions of...

employment.\(^{29}\)

Things may be different elsewhere, but the Australian evidence indicates that part-time work is the preferred alternative of most female part-timers and not imposed on them. For instance, in the September 1995 labour force survey (LFS), 80 per cent of females working part-time said they preferred not to work longer hours. That only 19 per cent of male and 7 per cent of females said they had actively looked for full-time work in the last four weeks, although full-time employment was rising, appears to confirm that the preferences of the great majority had been satisfied. Nevertheless, international comparison seems to show that many more women would choose longer hours if certain conditions - positive or negative - were met.

Certainly, most part-time work involves formal or potential disadvantages as compared with permanent full-time work. For a start, most of it is 'casual' which may require some explanation because, as Romeyn says, 'There is a great deal of confusion and imprecision surrounding the terms 'casual' and 'part-time' work.'\(^{30}\)

As a term of the language, a casual worker is one who works or not according to the immediate needs for labour of an employer or series of employers. In law, casual work is work performed under a particular kind of contract of employment or, rather, various kinds of contract having certain things in common:

- The distinction between casuals and permanents turns on the notion that permanents have an ongoing contract of employment of unspecified duration, whilst casuals do not. While a casual worker may be... with the same employer over a long period, the law assumes that each engagement of a casual constitutes a separate contract of employment... In Australia the common law position is supplemented by statutory and award definitions and entitlements. However, as entitlement to benefits... is often based upon continuity of employment, and as it is difficult for a casual employee to establish an unbroken employment contract, casuals are generally [excluded] from benefits such as annual and long service leave [although] the wage rate is generally loaded to compensate for... intermittency, impermanency and associated non-entitlement to award benefits.\(^{31}\)

In August 1993, 67 per cent of all part-time employees were 'casual' and 72 per cent of all 'casual' employees worked part time.\(^{32}\) However, the Bureau of Statistics definition of 'casual employees' as 'employees who were not entitled to holiday leave or sick leave in their main job' is intended to
approximate to the legal category, although of necessity imprecisely, and therefore provides no information whatsoever on other conditions of employment or its continuity in fact. If length of tenure is taken as criterion, many part-time jobs are far from insecure: in February 1993, 64 per cent of part-time workers had been with the current employer for twelve months or longer, and 40 per cent for three years or longer. Fifty-five per cent of 'casual' part-time workers had been more than a year with the current employer.33

Because of the high degree of overlap with the casual category, most parttime workers do report a relative lack of rights and benefits. In August 1992, for example, 88 per cent of full-time but only 54 per cent of part-time employees had superannuation coverage, 91.5 and 33 per cent respectively were entitled to holiday leave, 91 and 33 per cent to sick leave, 78 and 26 per cent to long service leave.34 (Figures derived from the LFS should perhaps be treated with caution, because many workers may be unsure of their legal entitlements until they have occasion to claim them).

Some have speculated or asserted that changing employment practices have tended to 'casualise' labour, presumably meaning that more and more workers are employed under casual contracts. Increasing part-time employment will also appear as increasing casual employment. It is of more interest that from 1988 to 1993 the proportion of full-time workers classified as 'casual' rose irregularly from 6 to 9 per cent of males and 5 to 8 per cent of females, but the movements are not large and appear to have been related to phases of the business cycle.35

Elusive Realities

Tracing trends in part-time employment is easy, because hours of work can be counted, and thinking of explanations for the trends is not too difficult. Figures on casual employment are much harder to interpret because they convey so little of the concrete realities. Unfortunately, statistical series on other types of nonstandard work, when, indeed, relevant statistics exist, have that same limitation or are ambiguous, and are of little help in defining and quantifying the exciting or alarming changes that have been so talked about.

The supposed changes in the labour market would lead one to expect an increasing volume of temporary employment. Periodically, the Bureau of Statistics collects information on experience in the twelve months to interview, and temporary or seasonal work is one of the categories distinguished. Unlike 'casual' work, most jobs are under six months' duration. Figures on temporary or seasonal work as a proportion of all terminations, except retrenchments, from 1988 to 1994 show a rising trend and then a fall, both possibly associated with recession and recovery. Female rates are consistently higher than male, being 10 per cent of terminations in 1994, although the difference may have diminished over the period.36
The important form of temporary employment that involves an agency as third party is hardly distinguished in the statistical series. In Australia, private agencies supplying temporary workers usually discharge the obligations incumbent on employers of wage labour. The main association of private agencies, whose members represent about 85 per cent of the industry, made approximately 372,000 placements in the 12 months to March 1995 which would include repeated placements of individuals but may be compared with the ABS estimate of 1.7 million persons who started a job in the year ending July 1994. A survey of group certificates indicated a median duration of seven to eight weeks. Demand rose in the phase of recovery from recession because employers, unsure it would last, chose to recruit temporary rather than permanent labour. Recognised categories of temporary worker include women with children, students and people whose preferred lifestyles preclude continuous employment.

Another possible indicator of increased occupational mobility is the number of jobs held in a given period. The trend between 1974 and 1994 in the proportion of respondents who, having been employed in the previous twelve months, had changed jobs at least once, is not up, as tentatively predicted, but down: by this criterion mobility decreased. Male and female rates were similar, and practically identical from about 1990, the female rate falling from 16 per cent at the beginning to 11 per cent at the end of the period. Irregularities in the series are clearly related to the business cycle, with downturns in the recessions around 1979, 1983 and 1992. The figures on mobility should be relatively immune from the kind of distortions likely to affect statistics on casual employment, and failure to demonstrate rising trends carries a certain amount of weight.

Growth is also said to have occurred in the overlapping categories of self-employment and employment under fixed-term contract. Once more the statistical series lend no clear support to the prediction of an increasing share for self-employment. Both male and female ratios of self-employed workers to wage and salary earners rose from 1988 to 1993 but then fell. In 1988 there were 7.1 self-employed women for every 100 wage and salary earners workers in primary industry being excluded - in 1993, 7.8 and in 1995, 6.9. The pattern, if any, is very like that for temporary and seasonal jobs, and suggests cyclical movement rather than a secular trend. In August 1995, only 46 per cent of self-employed women worked full-time, but 84 per cent of men. No series exists for employment under fixed-term contract, except for such terminated jobs as might come under 'temporary or seasonal'.

As with casual employment, the significance of any apparent trends in self-employment could be obscured by peculiarities of the definition. If, say, a self-employed plumber with an assistant incorporates his business as a limited liability company or, under some other arrangement, pays himself a
wage or salary, he is an employee, and if not he is an employer, but he cannot be self-employed or, as the category is now called, an 'own account worker'. (Nor can any employee of a company be classified as an employer, whatever his power to hire, fire and promote.)

There are signs of problems even worse than inadequate definitions and missing categories. In the period from 1988 to 1993, growing discrepancies appeared in estimates of wage and salary earners derived from the LFS and the quarterly survey of employment and earnings (SEE), reported in ABS 6248.0, where information on wage and salary earners is supplied by a sample of employers. As explained by the Bureau in that publication for September 1994,

Since the introduction of the SEE series in... 1983, the estimates of the number of wage and salary earners have been lower than those from the LFS. The difference between the two series started to widen during 1989 and has grown to... approximately 610 000.

When making comparisons of... the two surveys it must be borne in mind that SEE draws its sample from the ABS register of businesses [which] can be subject to undercoverage of business units and... affected by delays... This... cannot [affect] a household based collection, such as LFS.\(^40\)

if, as that suggests, the LFS be taken as reliable, the SEE failed to account for more than 9 per cent of wage and salary earners; about 14 per cent of males and 6 per cent of females. The explanation seems unconvincing in view of the progressive divergence between the two series, and there are others, not necessarily mutually exclusive. In one of a series of reports, VandenHeuvel and Wooden suggested that a contributory factor was overcounting of wage and salary earners because of

an increase in the number of former employees now being employed on a contract basis without experiencing any fundamental change in either the type of work or the principal-agent relationship between employer and worker. [They will] consider themselves to be... wage and salary earners when in fact they are not on the company payroll.\(^41\)

They referred to these 'employees in all but name' as 'dependent contractors', as opposed to contractors who regularly provided services to more than one organisation. Using new data, the same authors estimated that 38 per cent of non-farm self-employed contractors were 'dependent'.\(^42\) Creighton explains that the employer who substitutes 'contractors' for 'employees' stands to save not only on employee benefits but also because 'payroll tax is payable only in respect of those who work under contracts of employment. The same is true for superannuation guarantee liabilities... and for the obligation to pay a training guarantee levy.' He suggests that reasons for acceptance of such
contracts include 'the possibility of higher earnings and what are often assumed to be the tax advantages associated with self-employment - for example, the employer is not obliged to make PAYE deductions, and tax liabilities may be minimised through family companies and partnerships.'

The Treasurer, introducing the 1995-96 Budget, foreshadowed legislation to prevent loss of revenue from

Certain labour market practices [which] have entailed the replacement of traditional... employer/employee arrangements with labour or result-based contracts... Some of the new arrangements are purportedly outside the scope of the pay-as-you-earn provisions of the income tax law [which] will be amended [accordingly]. Consequential amendments will also be made [to] related laws; for example, in determining which payments for labour are within the scope of the Superannuation Guarantee legislation.

In other cases, individuals form an entity, such as a company [which] may be used with the intention that ... personal services income, which would otherwise be assessed to an individual, is received by an entity and then alienated. For example, the income is split with family members to reduce overall tax liability ...

The Tax Office acknowledges the difficulty of setting out clear lines of demarcation. It is thought that two things have happened: genuine changes in the use of labour in the interest of efficiency, and a proliferation of arrangements contrived to avoid oncosts of labour by employers who consider they have become excessive, especially perhaps with heavier obligations in respect of superannuation. In administration, regard might be had to such characteristics of the relationship with the employer, as duration and exclusivity, to whether all the income of an interposed entity goes to an individual, and whether it has employees or capital equipment.

**The Known and the Knowable**

The last generation has seen a great historic shift in the social and economic role of women in the industrialised countries. A few more figures can be used to emphasise the importance and growing supply of their paid labour. Between October 1980 and October 1995, the Australian population aged 15 years and over increased by 30 per cent. In the same period, the total number of hours worked each week rose by 27 per cent. However, the proportion of all males aged 15 and over who were in employment fell from 73 to 65 per cent, while the female ratio rose from 37 to 48 per cent, so that total male hours increased by only 17 per cent, much less than the increase in the adult population, while total female hours increased by 52 per cent from 30 to 36 per cent of all hours worked.
Not only households but economies have become heavily dependent on women's paid work, and there is no reason to think the process is complete. The changes so far will have resulted largely from each cohort's behaving somewhat differently from the preceding one, and the next cohort of women to enter the Australian labour market will be not only, in formal terms, the best qualified ever but also, probably, the first to be better qualified than its male counterpart. In broad terms at least, women's place in the labour force has become and is becoming less 'precarious' and more secure, less, marginal' and more central.

The statistical material reviewed here provides no proof that anything more than that has happened: the rest is anecdote and speculation. Lack of proof, however, does not amount to disproof when the material has so many defects built into it, omits so much and is so liable to distortion by contrived arrangements. Again consider the category of self-employment, and the impossibility of quantifying change over time when many people who identify themselves correctly as self-employed will be classified to other categories because of how they manage their finances. According to VandenHeuvel and Wooden, many people who identify themselves correctly as wage earners will be classified as self-employed because of how their employers manage their finances - or identify themselves incorrectly, if you accept contrivance as reality.

Improvement can be hoped for. An article in the monthly labour force survey bulletin for October 1995 announced that the survey questionnaire, which 'has been in use since the late 1970s', would be redesigned. It explained that 'Some aspects of the labour market are now more prominent than [then]. Examples of this are the increase in the number and types of nonstandard work arrangements, and the increasing importance of part-time work... Developments in international... practices have also indicated that some of the current data items should be reviewed. 

The statistics are put to many uses and can hardly be ideal for all of them, but if we are to understand the possibly momentous changes occurring in employment not only are new categories needed but also revision of old ones that have become detached from the realities of working life.

Endnotes

1 Introduction, Full employment in Australia (1945) Canberra, Govt Printer, May.
2 Although the period is often thought of as one of industrialisation, and manufacturing provided 37 per cent of all wage and salary employment in 1957, its share had been 36 per cent in 1939.
By the Bureau of Statistics definition current in 1995, an unemployed person was, essentially, any person who had not been employed during the reference week of a survey but had looked actively for either full- or part-time employment at any time in the four weeks to the end of the reference week.

ABS 6224.0. The Bureau of Statistics has continued to use marital status as the main cross-classificatory variable for women, although presence or absence of children has long had a stronger and more direct effect on their employment. For example, marital status was used in 23 of the 53 tables of the bulletin reporting the monthly labour force survey of May 1995, and presence of dependent children in only three.

Naylor, Kate (1994) 'Part-time working in Great Britain - an historical analysis', Employment gazette p. 102, 473-484.

ABS 6224.0. Figures for tertiary students were included in the tables from June 1987.

ABS 6203.0. All figures are for August. Higher rates of participation in education and high rates of student employment have caused some misperception of rates of unemployment as estimated in the Bureau's monthly labour force survey. For example, in August 1995 that rate was 20 per cent for persons aged 15 to 19, but 42 per cent of the unemployed were full-time students, of whom 90 per cent were looking for part-time work. Non-students not working and looking for full-time jobs constituted only 6.2 per cent of the age group. The same method of calculation would reduce the unemployment rate of 20-24-year-olds from 11 to 7 per cent.

Naylor, 'Part-time working in Great Britain'.

ABS 6224.0.

ABS 6203.0; figures for August.

Women and structural change, p. 63. Definitions of 'part-time' work used in statutory collections vary: under 30 hours in Finland, under 35 in the Netherlands and Sweden (p 75).


P 47.

ABS 6203.0.

Peter Auer, in an article comparing American and European trends ('The American employment miracle', Employment observatory 49, Spring 1995) remarks that in Europe 'part-time, fixed-term and agency work... have expanded disproportionately, and in the 1990s can no longer be considered "atypical"'.


Committee on Employment Opportunities, Restoring full employment (1993) AGPS, Canberra, December, P. 37.

pp 49-50.


Flexible working time: Part-time and casual employment, p. 2-5.

ABS 6310.0.

ABS 6101.0; original source ABS 6254.0.

ABS 6334.0.

ABS 6310.0.

ABS6209.0

Information supplied by Drake Personnel and National Association of Personnel Consultants. ABS estimate of total commencements from 6245.0.

ABS6206.0

ABS 6203.0. The corresponding male ratios are 11.1, 13.3 and 6.9.
For background information on the survey of employment and earnings, and expected differences between that and the labour force survey, see Australian Bureau of Statistics information papers New statistical series: Employment, average weekly earnings, job vacancies and overtime, 6256.0, June 1984, and Comparison of employment estimates from the labour force survey and the survey of employment and earnings, 6263.0, July 1985.


1995-6 Budget statement 4 - Revenue, 7, 8.

ABS 6203.0.

‘Upcoming changes to the labour force survey’, ABS 6203.0, October 1995.
Figure 1: Female employment ratios by age group, Australia, 1961–1994

Source: Labour Report 1964, ABS 6101.1, 6203.0

Figure 2: Shares of employment, Australia, 1972–1994

Source: ABS 6310.0
Figure 3: Part-time workers, August 1995

Source: ABS 6203.0

Figure 4: Persons aged 15–19: Rates of employment and full-time education

Source: ABS 6310.0  All figures are for August
**Figure 5: Parents of dependent children: Employment ratios**

![Graph showing employment ratios for parents of dependent children from 1977 to 1995.](image)

- **Source:** ABS 6224.0

**Figure 6: Parents of dependent children: Share of all full-time jobs**

![Graph showing share of full-time jobs for parents of dependent children from 1979 to 1995.](image)

- **Source:** ABS 6224.0
Introduction

This paper provides a discussion and analysis of recent market research into the demand for more flexible arrangements for both Family and Age Pension payments.

Background

In response to the Minister's statement *Beyond the Safety Net* and his desire to facilitate increased customer choice as to how payments can be accessed and better meet the lifecycle needs of families, the Department of Social Security has been examining the feasibility and desirability of a range of approaches to 'customised' or more flexible Family and Age Pension payments. Such payments would contribute to the Government's social justice objectives by enhancing the customer focus of payments and recognising the diverse arrangements and circumstances of Australian parents and their children.

A primary example of the utility of more flexible arrangements to many families would be assisting their ability to manage or budget, including reducing their reliance on high interest debt arrangements. In the Age Pension area, more flexible payment arrangements could assist older people to utilise their resources more effectively.

As part of the Department's consideration of flexible payment arrangements, market research was commissioned to measure customer attitudes to the concept and to gauge the level of demand for different flexible payment options. This research was undertaken by:

- AMR:Quantum Harris-Flexible Family Payment Arrangements;¹ and
- Brian Sweeney and Associates - Flexible Age Pension Payment Arrangements.²
Structure of the Market Research/Methodology

**Flexible Family Payments**
The Family Payments research involved both qualitative and quantitative phases. The **qualitative phase** involved four focus groups with a sample of Family Payment recipients in order to understand the issues from the customers’ points of view and to develop a detailed questionnaire for use in the subsequent quantitative phase. Recipients were selected to represent a mixture of Basic Family Payment (BFP) and Additional Family Payment (AFP) customers, and families who depend to a greater extent on government support (family income of less than $40 000) and families who depend to a lesser extent on government support (family income greater than $40 000).

The **quantitative phase** comprised 1 000 telephone interviews with a sample of Family Payment recipients around Australia. A balance of demographic characteristics was sought, and ensured inclusion of:

- 20 per cent AFP customers;
- a good mix of family sizes;
- some single parents;
- a range of children's ages; and
- a mix of metropolitan, regional and rural customers.

**Research Findings**

**Flexible Family Payments**

**Research Objectives**

The primary objective of the research was to measure the level of interest in, and support for, receiving Family Payments in different ways. Respondents were presented with different options for receiving payments, including:

- a lump sum in **advance** - with options of the amount of the lump sum offered to be either a set amount available to each family, or a set amount for each child so that the total amount available would increase with family size. Repayment could involve either:
  - forgoing some or all of the regular fortnightly payment until the advanced amount is 'paid' in full; or
  - forgoing some or all of the regular fortnightly payments until the advanced amount and an 'administration fee' are paid in full.

- a lump sum in **arrears** with the amount of the lump sum comprising funds accumulated either by forgoing all or some of the regular fortnightly payment.
• payment of advances and accrued funds in arrears through the mechanism of an independent financial institution.

There were also a number of other specific objectives, including:

• identifying the uses to which customers put their Family Payment, that is:
  - as part of their overall income support;
  - as a saving facility; or
  - to set aside for their children;

• ascertaining the uses to which customers might put substantial lump sum payments.
• determining whether customers could forgo part or all of their regular Family Payment in exchange for a lump sum payment;
• measuring levels of interest in a number of specific payment arrangements including:
  - lump sum advance payments;
  - retrospective lump sum payments; and
  - other variable payment arrangements nominated by individual families;

• identifying who in the family would be responsible for making a decision to change Family Payment arrangements;
• determining the preferred payment arrangements for a lump sum, including the amount, preferred period of time, and preferred time of the year to receive payments; and
• measuring customers' attitudes to debt recovery in the event of lost eligibility.

Survey Variables

Respondents were selected and characterised by a number of indicators. Accordingly, the findings can be analysed having regard to individual indicators (univariate approach) or a combination of indicators (multivariate approach). The indicators were:

• level of income;
• home ownership/renting;
  age;
  number of children; and
  location.
Findings

Interest in Lump Sum Payments in General - Advance or Retrospective

Of all respondents, four in ten (39 per cent) displayed an interest in some form of lump sum payment, while 55 per cent displayed little or no interest primarily because regular fortnightly payments suited their budgeting requirements and they were concerned that they would waste a lump sum. It is interesting to note that market research prior to the introduction of the current BFP advance (currently set at $141) identified a 23 per cent interest in taking up the advance, and the actual take-up in the first year was around 8 per cent.3

All respondents (n=1002) were asked to indicate their level of interest in using a lump sum payment for a range of specific purposes. Analysis of tables provided by the consultants indicated levels of interest in each purpose, as a percentage of the total sample. Table 1 shows that by far the most popular purpose suggested was children's education.

Table 1: Range of Uses to Which a Lump Sum Family Payment Would be Put (Advance and/or Retrospective) Sample Size: 1002 (All Respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children's education</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invest</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large household expenses</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put towards mortgage</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household items</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car maintenance</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family holiday</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As deposit for house</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repair of household items</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towards purchase of car</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: AMR: Quantum Harris, Family Payment: Customisation of Payments Tables, May 1995

Of the 228 respondents who were renting accommodation (and interested in a lump sum), 30 per cent expressed an interest in using the lump sum towards a housing deposit. Of the 495 respondents who were paying off their home, 21 per cent were interested in putting the lump sum towards their mortgage.

Interest in Lump Sum Advance Payments

Forty-two per cent of all respondents displayed an interest in a lump sum paid in advance; 55 per cent were not interested.
When presented with this option alone, 71 per cent of those interested (30 per cent of all respondents) felt they would consider taking up the advance. Interest in the advance option was highest among those who could forgo all their fortnightly payments, and those with household incomes of more than $40 000.

While most respondents felt that any outstanding amount should be repaid if circumstances changed (and they lost entitlement to the payment advanced), a significant 26 per cent believed that the amount advanced should be waived.

**Interest in Retrospective Lump Sum Payments**

The interest in a lump sum payment in arrears drew a less enthusiastic response with 26 per cent of all respondents in favour. Of those interested, 64 per cent felt they would be likely to consider taking up this option (17 per cent of all respondents).

Exactly half of all respondents felt that Family Payment recipients taking the arrears option should be compensated for forgoing their regular payments. There was a perception that money forgone could have earned the recipient interest had it been paid fortnightly. This theme also clearly emerged during the focus group discussions.

While one may suspect that families with higher incomes would be more attracted to retrospective lump sums, surprisingly, the market research showed otherwise. Of the 26 per cent of all respondents interested in a retrospective lump sum:

- 48 per cent had family incomes between $20,000 and $40,000, while 26 per cent had family incomes exceeding $40,000; and
- 43 per cent had partners categorised as blue collar workers, as against 33 per cent with partners categorised as white collar workers (47 per cent of respondents were not in the workforce, hence the use of partner's occupation).

One salient finding on this issue was that interest was very closely correlated to relationship status - 85 per cent of those interested were either married or in a de facto relationship. Another was that despite 26 per cent of all respondents expressing interest in the idea of a retrospective payment, only one-eighth of those interested indicated that they did not rely on their fortnightly payment. This suggested that many families, while interested in the retrospective option, may not be able to take it up in reality.

More detailed analysis of the findings showed that there was a great deal of overlap between respondents interested in advance and retrospective lump sums. Eliminating those who were interested in the advance option left only 7 per cent of respondents who were exclusively interested in the savings option.
An issue with retrospective lump sums is why families would wish to utilise a DSS' savings account' when they could achieve the same result through use of an account with their bank or credit union. An explanation for this could be the general disapproval of financial institutions by respondents, although the initial focus group research found that a DSS account was perceived as being more remote than bank or credit union accounts which many accessed several times a week. The findings of the quantitative phase offered other indicators which supported this view. For instance, a quarter of those interested said the option would be a form of compulsory saving, one-fifth said it would be useful to meet large expenses, and one-tenth said it would be beneficial knowing it was there and could be accessed when needed.

*Interest in the Variable Payment Option*

This option would involve providing customers with the ability to vary the amount they receive over a period of time. For example, customers could choose to receive double their fortnightly Family Payment entitlements for six months, and receive no payments at all for the following six months.

This option attracted the greatest level of interest with 46 per cent of all respondents interested.

Interest in this option occurred reasonably uniformly across all family types, sizes, and income groups, with the lowest interest evident in respondents who owned their own home outright (40 per cent) and the highest from younger parents aged 18 to 35 years (53 per cent). Sole parents also expressed a greater level of interest (51 per cent) than two parent families (45 per cent). These variations may suggest that perhaps those who are more likely to be lower income earners (sole parents, younger parents, non-home owners) may be more likely to support improvements which will allow them greater flexibility in line with their expenditure patterns, and which may give them greater control.

In its Executive Summary, AMR: Quantum noted that respondents preferred arrangements which allowed them '...to specify the time period over which payments were to be withheld and/or allowed payment on request.'

*Amount and Period of Lump Sum*

The 39 per cent of respondents who indicated an interest in lump sum payments generally (i.e. advance or retrospective) were asked to indicate preferences for the size of lump sums and the periods over which regular payments would be withheld:

- more than half of these respondents (58 per cent) wanted lump sums of $1000 or less;
- only around 13 per cent were interested in a lump sum of between $1000 and $3000; and
• 17 per cent were interested in an amount between $3000 and $4000.

Most respondents indicated that they would prefer to receive a lump sum payment relating to a period of six to twelve months (83 per cent). Ten per cent were interested in a period of one to two years, while only 3 per cent were interested in repaying a lump sum over a period of more than two years.

These findings suggest that shorter period flexible payment arrangements could meet the needs of the majority of families and, at the same time, minimise risk from the Commonwealth's perspective (as longer periods involve a higher risk).

December and January were the preferred months to receive a lump sum, not surprisingly corresponding with times of high expense (Christmas and back-to-school). Significant numbers of sole parents (14 per cent) nominated June as the preferred time of year which would assist them to cope with the expense of winter clothing.

The idea of charging administrative fees in relation to lump sum payments met with strong resistance, being unacceptable to 80 per cent of all respondents. Only 12 per cent felt that it was acceptable. Respondents felt there would be less administration and paperwork involved in making one payment compared to fortnightly payments, and that costs could therefore be reduced. The strong opposition to charging administrative fees suggests that if they were to be introduced, their purposes would need to be carefully explained to gain acceptance.

Reliance on Family Payment

The extent of a family's reliance on their Family Payment to meet day-to-day expenses is an important indicator of how far the concept of substantial lump sum advances can be taken.

The research found that almost half of all respondents (47 per cent) used their Family Payments as part of their normal day-to-day household budget. Twenty per cent of respondents indicated that they relied on their payments completely, while a further 21 per cent expressed reliance for special purposes. Despite this, over half (57 per cent) of respondents believed they could manage without their fortnightly payments.

Not surprisingly, day-to-day reliance on payments was closely related to family income and household composition. Those on lower incomes, such as sole parents and widows, were more likely to rely on their payments completely or incorporate them into their normal household budgets (86 per cent compared to 64 per cent of two parent households).

Almost 10 per cent of those earning over $40 000 indicated they did not need their payment at all, while a further 37 per cent of those earning over $40 000
did not need it on a day-to-day basis or only used their payments for special purchases. A far greater proportion (23 per cent) of those earning less than $40 000 relied on their family payments completely, while only 24 per cent did not need the payment on a day-to-day basis or only used the money for special purchases. Only 3 per cent of those earning less than $40 000 did not need the payment at all.

Repayment Arrangements

Over half the respondents (56 per cent) would prefer to receive some of their fortnightly payment rather than forgo the full amount. Thirty-two per cent of respondents were prepared to forgo their total fortnightly payment to repay a lump sum. As expected, those who claimed a greater reliance on their payment were more likely to want to receive a regular payment. Similarly, home owners, those with mortgages and families with incomes above $40 000 were more likely to be able to forgo their total payment.

An important outcome was that, of the respondents who wanted to continue to receive some payment, only 22 per cent had one child, while 78 per cent had two or more children. Therefore, should large lump sums be made available on a 'per child' basis, most families who wanted to would be able to create a balance which would enable a continuation of some fortnightly payments to the family. This would enable low income families with two or more children, i.e. those most dependent on family payments as an income supplement, to still benefit from the availability of lump sum payments for major purchases when required.

In evaluating the research findings, the Department investigated the experience of low or no interest credit providers in Victoria, where a very strong network exists. No Interest Loans Schemes (NILS) and other Community Credit Associations (CCAs) provide loans to pensioners and beneficiaries which banks would normally make available only through credit cards with high interest rates. CCAs are also characterised by having generally strong links with their customers due to their local community focus. Loans are tightly managed regarding their purpose and size.4

The average size of loans in Victoria is around $800 and generally loans are for amounts under $1000. Recent consultations with CCA representatives have confirmed that these amounts have remained fairly constant since 1989-90.5 Less than 5 per cent of loans are for amounts over $2000 and these are usually for car related expenses. Loans are usually repayable over fifteen months (but are often repaid within twelve months) with fortnightly repayments generally varying between around $30 and $60. Chalmers and Prosser, in Credit to the Community: L07V-Cost Lending and Consumer Credit Reform, consider fortnightly repayments of less than $30 to be 'small'. As the rate of Basic Family Payment falls below this amount, it suggests that
repayments of lump sum advances would not cause family hardship. Chalmers and Prosser also note that in the case of a sole parent with two young children, fortnightly repayments of $50 represented about 13 per cent of the pension income in 1989 and that '...such a commitment was only feasible for most sole parents due to the availability of affordable rents in public housing.'

This, together with the research findings, suggests that it would be possible to design variable payment arrangements with a reasonable repayment or recovery rate which would minimise the risk of hardship occurring.

**Involvement of the Financial Sector**

The Department was interested in ascertaining customers' views on the involvement of financial institutions, as this may be one way that large bringforwards of public expenditure (as may have to be funded in advance arrangements) could be facilitated.

While the level of interest in lump sum payment arrangements declined when the notion of financial sector involvement was introduced, the findings nevertheless showed continuing strong interest in the concept. Interest in a lump sum payment declined slightly, from 39 per cent to 32 per cent of all respondents. Level of interest was also affected, with 11 per cent of respondents indicating they would still be very interested and 21 per cent would be quite interested. General distrust of financial institutions was the main reason for this decline, with respondents often mentioning fees and charges as a related reason. Continuing interest was more likely for families with income above $40 000 (39 per cent compared to 32 per cent) and least likely for families who own their homes outright (28 per cent compared to 33 per cent renters and 35 per cent with mortgages). A higher proportion of respondents (11 per cent) were undecided when the involvement of a financial institution was raised.

**Strategic Implications**

AMR: Quantum drew a number of strategic implications from their research findings.

As education was the principal use to which lump sum payments would be put, DSS could use this as an example to communicate the benefits of lump sum options when announcing their availability to recipients.

Although approximately 50 per cent of the Family Payment recipients surveyed claimed little or no dependence on the payments, take-up of the lump sum options could be greater if a part payment scheme were established. This would enable recipients to continue to receive a percentage of Family Payments each fortnight and the remainder as a lump sum.
The lump sum in advance option had greater appeal than a retrospective payment option, and, although it would be used for large items and education expenses, it was likely to be invested by recipients prior to use.

The key benefit of the lump sum in arrears option was the family’s ability to use it as a means of compulsory saving - this being a point to stress in communicating the benefits of this option.

The option with the highest level of interest across all family types was variable payments. This option would give recipients flexibility and control two key factors they are seeking.

**Flexible Age Pension Payments**

A staged research approach was adopted to test the attitudes of current and future age pensioners, and the demand for introducing new payment measures which would provide greater flexibility in Age Pension payment arrangements. Initial phases (1 and 2) were designed to gather data on perceptions of payments generally, while subsequent phases (discussed here) explored specific aspects of payment arrangements. Phase 3 sought the attitudes of people approaching retirement and part rate pensioners on various flexible payment options, while Phase 4 focused entirely on the needs of maximum rate age pensioners.

As with the Family Payment research, respondents were selected with regard to sex, marital status, investment types, and ensuring inclusion of some pensioners assessed under the assets test.

**Phase 3 Research Objectives - Pre-retirees and Part Pensioners**

In this stage of the research, opinions were sought from people approaching retirement and those receiving part Age Pensions, about possible Age Pension options which could result in greater flexibility for retirees, and which would address issues of concern to those age pensioners who have share and managed investment portfolios resulting in less predictable income streams than other pensioners. This was a primary issue identified during the 1994 Independent Review of the Pensions Income and Assets Tests. Accordingly, a number of the options suggested arrangements which could facilitate a predictable income stream. The ideas presented to respondents were:

- **Pensioner Accounts** - this option would set a fixed pension rate at the beginning of each year, which would then not change with income and assets. The amount received by the pensioner would be compared to the actual amount of entitlements for the year, and adjustments would then be made to calculate the rate to be paid for the following year;

- **Guaranteed Contractual Pension** - a rate of payment would be calculated based on past income and asset information and would be set
for an agreed period of one or two years, but unlike the Pensioner Account, there would be no reconciliation at the end of the period;

- **Purchasable Payment/Pension Top-up** - non-pensioners of Age Pension age would be able to purchase an Age Pension and part rate pensioners would be able to pay an up-front sum in exchange for pension payments at the maximum rate for a set period, e.g. one or two years at a time;

- **Revised Pension Loans Scheme** - where there is only an entitlement to a part pension, a pensioner could top-up their rate of payment to the full pension rate, with the loan amount being secured against real estate assets and repayable on death or on the sale of the secured asset;

- **Deferred Pension** - provision of incentives to people approaching retirement to defer claiming age pension, in return for a higher rate of pension and/or a lump sum when the claim is made.

**Methodology**

The consultants were asked to conduct 250 personal interviews with preretirees (50 per cent) and part rate pensioners (50 per cent) in Melbourne (80 per cent) and country Victoria (20 per cent). This approach was considered to be the most effective given the complexity of some of the issues involved and the nature of the target groups.

A cross-section of pre-retirees were selected on the basis of:

- marital status;
- being over 55 years old;
- total assets of between $100,000 and $400,000;
- employment status (mixture of full time employment and semi-retired);
- ownership of shares or managed investments; and
- ownership of real estate other than their own homes.

Characteristics of part rate pensioners included representation according to:

- age group;
- marital status;
- ownership of shares, managed investments or liquid assets;
- real estate holdings; and
- affected /not affected by the assets test.

**Survey Variables**

Demographic characteristics which were recorded and used for quantitative data analysis were:

- sex;
Flexible Pension Options

Table 2 summarises respondents' attitudes to each of the age pension options presented, and shows that the greatest interest was expressed by respondents (pre-retirees and part rate pensioners) for a deferred pension and pensioner accounts arrangement, while a revised pension loan scheme also had majority support.

Table 2: Attitudes to and Interest in Taking Up 'Customised' Age Pension Options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Deferred Pension (n=250)</th>
<th>Pensioner Accounts (n=250)</th>
<th>Revised Pension Loan Scheme (n=250)</th>
<th>Contractual Pension (n=250)</th>
<th>Purchasable Pension Top-up (n= 250)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good idea/interested</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither/don't know</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor idea/not interested</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Brian Sweeney and Associates, Retirement Incomes Initiatives: Phase 3: Customisation of payments, p iv

Interest in taking up each of the schemes was closely related to whether respondents felt it was a good idea, except in the case of the revised pension loans scheme which, while thought of as a good idea by the majority of respondents, only attracted interest from 35 per cent of respondents.

Deferred Pension

Pre-retirees showed a 67 per cent interest in a deferred pension plan, expressing the view that they would like to continue working past retirement age (38 per cent) and make their own choices about the appropriate time to retire (38 per cent). Comparatively, 51 per cent of part rate pensioners supported the idea, while respondents in rural areas were more attracted to the idea (65 per cent) than those in metropolitan areas (56 per cent). Support was consistent between men (59 per cent) and women (57 per cent), while

---

- geographic location (metropolitan or rural);
- level of assets;
- employment status; and
- whether pension was affected by the assets test (pensioners only).
single respondents (66 per cent) were more in favour of the idea than married respondents (54 per cent). The favoured compensation for retiring early was a combination between a higher pension rate and a lump sum (40 per cent of all respondents, 43 per cent of pre-retirees). Respondents also felt that they should receive taxation and superannuation incentives to defer retirement (52 per cent of all respondents, 63 per cent of pre-retirees).

Options Providing a Predictable Income Stream

- **Pensioner accounts**

  Almost three-quarters of respondents interested in pensioner accounts owned assets in excess of $200,000. The main reasons given for interest in this scheme were the ability to plan and budget, and the availability of a regular income without fluctuations. Many of those who were not interested felt that changes in their circumstances may lead to receiving a lower pension, while others thought the scheme was too complex.

  Support for the idea was consistent between men (56 per cent) and women (57 per cent) and also between respondents who were married (58 per cent) and single (55 per cent). There was a marked difference in support based on the level of respondents’ assets - 54 per cent of those with assets below $200,000 supported the proposal, while 73 per cent of those with assets above $200,000 were supportive. This finding is not surprising, as those people with higher resources are more likely to have share and managed investment portfolios and hence are affected by fluctuating investment returns and levels of Age Pension.

  There was also a marked difference in support based on age, with 71 per cent of those aged between 55 and 59 years supportive, while this was true for only 38 per cent of those aged over 70 years. This may suggest that younger respondents have greater share and managed investment portfolios, while older respondents (not surprisingly) may be more concerned with security.

- **Revised pension loans scheme**

  Respondents who supported the revised pension loan scheme option did so on the grounds that it would provide extra assistance to people who could not live within the confines of their existing pension payments. However, only 35 per cent of respondents were interested in accessing the scheme themselves, as they were concerned about bequeathing assets to their families, and were generally reluctant to enter into loan arrangements of any kind. Of those who were interested in obtaining a loan, almost half (49 per cent) had assets exceeding $200,000.

- **Guaranteed Contractual Pension**

  Of the 35 per cent of respondents who considered this option to be a good idea, the major reasons given were the ability to budget accordingly.
and the added stability/security provided. The lack of interest in guaranteed contractual pensions by respondents was based on fears of changing conditions which could result in loss of income.

Support was generally consistent across all respondent characteristics. Pre-retirees and part rate pensioners indicated 30 per cent support for the idea; similarly there was little difference based on age group (29 per cent to 30 per cent support), marital status (29 per cent support from married respondents, 31 per cent from single respondents) or location (30 per cent metropolitan, 29 per cent rural).

The most significant difference in support was found based on assets (28 per cent under $200 000; 37 per cent over $200 000) and sex (33 per cent men; 25 per cent women). This is consistent with the incidence and value of share and managed investment portfolios and who is more likely to have them.

- **Purchasable payment/pension top-up**

  This was the least favoured option with respondents. There were two parts to the question on purchasable payments. The first had to do with purchase of a top-up pension by existing part rate age pensioners, and the second, the purchase of an income stream by non-pensioners of Age Pension age.

  Opinions were divided amongst respondents about whether non-pensioners of Age Pension age should be able to purchase a pension. Forty-three per cent of respondents felt that this should be permitted, mainly because of a feeling that people who have paid taxes during their working lives should be entitled to a pension. On the other hand, 33 per cent of respondents were against this idea, believing that people who do not qualify in the first place do not need this form of income support, and that the pension is specifically for people who do not have other sources of income. Twenty-four per cent of respondents were undecided on the issue.

  Support for non-pensioners being allowed to purchase an Age Pension or income stream from the government was generally consistent across respondent characteristics. Forty-six per cent of pre-retirees were supportive, 40 per cent of part pensioners, 41 per cent of metropolitan respondents and 49 per cent of rural respondents.

  On the issue of existing pensioners being allowed to purchase a top-up to their pensions, support was most prominent from those with assets above $200 000 (37 per cent compared to 19 per cent support from those with assets below $200 000). Against other respondent characteristics (age, sex, location, marital status) support was reasonably consistent between 15 per cent and 28 per cent.
Respondents generally felt that there was no advantage offered to them (13 per cent) by this option, or that they would be better off investing their money elsewhere (15 per cent). Many respondents thought the scheme was too complicated or risky (14 per cent). There was also some resistance to the concept of paying in advance (10 per cent).

**Attitudes to Pensioner Issues**

As part of the Phase 3 research, respondents were also asked about their attitudes to a number of statements relating to key areas of Age Pension policies. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree) against each statement.

Agreement was expressed by most respondents that 'there is little incentive for pensioners to maximise returns from their investments' (89 per cent), 'a pensioner should be able to earn more without it affecting the pension' (85 per cent), and that 'people who save all through their working life are penalised by the system' (82 per cent). However, there was comparatively little support for a return to a universal pension system (36 per cent), except from those with a high level of assets (51 per cent of respondents with assets exceeding $200 000), and a general belief that 'it is important today for people to make provision, or at least contribute, to their own support in retirement' (87 per cent). Most female pensioners found the income and assets tests difficult to understand (62 per cent), while less than half the male respondents (48 per cent) experienced any difficulty.

Most respondents wanted a payment option that would ensure a steady, non-fluctuating, income (71 per cent), but this was of greater concern to pre-retirees (76 per cent) than respondents who had already retired (67 per cent). It was also more important to pre-retirees to have greater choice in the way the Age Pension would be paid (79 per cent compared to 67 per cent). This finding was consistent with views expressed during the 1994 Pension Income and Assets Tests Review.

In support of the qualitative phase of the study, most respondents (73 per cent) thought 'the benefits provided by the pensioner benefit card are excellent'. It is interesting to note that agreement to this statement increased with the age group of respondents, with 60 per cent of those aged 55 to 59 years, 78 per cent of those aged 60 to 69 years, and 87 per cent of those aged 70 years and over expressing agreement.

Participants were well informed about the pension system, the basis for payments, and extra entitlements. They also displayed a general understanding of the income and assets tests. Qualitative data expressing support for Age Pension News and the ability of the Department to keep pensioners informed was also corroborated, with 69 per cent of respondents
receiving pension payments agreeing with the statement' the Department of Social Security keeps people well informed of any changes'.

**Phase 4 Methodology - Maximum Rate Pensioners**

As most of the customisation options in the retirement incomes area investigated in Phase 3 of the research would be of most attraction and benefit to part-rate age pensioners, the Department commissioned Brian Sweeney and Associates to undertake specific qualitative research into the needs and attitudes of maximum rate age pensioners. The essential difference between this and previous stages of research was that specific options were not canvassed.

As a result, a series of five focus groups were conducted in Sydney (2), Melbourne (2) and Warragul (1). Participants were further chosen to ensure both home owners and renters were included and on the following demographic profile:

- married (50 per cent);
- single (50 per cent);
- male (33 per cent); and
- female (66 per cent).

The findings provide a general indication of issues and ideas of importance to maximum rate age pensioners.

**Research Objectives**

The specific objectives of the qualitative phase of the research were to identify:

- how maximum rate age pensioners feel about their Age Pension payments;
- how maximum rate Age Pensioners feel about service from the Department of Social Security generally;
- areas where the Department can improve its level of service to maximum rate age pensioners; and
- new areas where maximum rate age pensioners feel that the Department could be of assistance to them.

**Outcome of Research**

**Lifestyle Changes**

Focus groups discussed the effects of living on the pension on their general lifestyles, their abilities to cope financially, and their criticisms of specific aspects of the Age Pension. The issues that emerged included:
• standards of living declining, so that pensioners felt they must shop around even for basic supermarket grocery items;
• some were critical of the income test, seeing it as penalising any efforts to make life more comfortable by undertaking paid work;
• home owners were seen as better off than renters in terms of security and not outlaying money for rent, but were disadvantaged by the costs associated with house and garden maintenance and rates bills, and because they had foregone rent assistance which reduced the cost of accommodation for non-home owners; and
• fringe benefits were highly valued and appreciated, enabling a basic lifestyle to be maintained. When asked how the pension system could be improved, enhanced fringe benefits were frequently mentioned.

Perceptions and Attitudes Towards DSS

Few pensioners involved in focus group discussions had had any recent or regular contact with DSS, and attitudes towards the Department relied heavily on perceptions or distant experiences.

The majority held the DSS in high regard, which is consistent with findings in earlier phases of the Sweeney research. The payment system was considered efficient with payments accurate and made on time. Those who had made recent contact with DSS had generally found the service pleasant and helpful, and felt that the quality of service and the quality of the office environment had improved.

The DSS service which attracted the most positive comments was the publication Age Pension News (APN). Pensioners felt that this publication kept them in touch with developments and minimised their need for other contact with the Department, such as having to make inquiries, or receiving regular correspondence (which was thought to be intrusive).

It was extremely important to these participants that they were treated appropriately. They expressed fears of being placed in demeaning environments or being poorly treated by government officers. The situations which were resisted included:
• lack of continuity of staff,
• being passed from one officer to another because of lack of training or authority to make decisions;
• staffing by young people who may not appreciate pensioners’ needs or problems as well as more mature people might;
• failure to return telephone calls when promised, or being left on hold for lengthy periods;
• long queues and uncomfortable waiting areas;
• lack of privacy in making inquiries or when providing personal information to staff, and;

• intrusive procedures requiring pensioners to provide information they perceive to be personal and unnecessary for DSS to obtain.

There was also concern expressed that DSS was not secure enough and that 'double-dipping' still occurs through people using false names and addresses.

**Improvements and Innovations**

Although participants had very little contact with DSS offices' either personally or by telephone, they questioned the hours of operation, which they felt were not in keeping with normal business hours.

Focus group participants also felt that the provision of group discussions, including guest speakers and question and answer sessions, conducted at regional offices to acquaint new customers with the pension system, were an extremely valuable service which should be more widely available.

**Adequacy**

The general feeling was the pension was sufficient 'to get by' but life was not comfortable. There was a perception that the pension does not really keep pace with the cost of living, and there was consistent anxiety that they would continue to fall behind. In addition, pensioners who go from married to single status found it difficult to maintain their accustomed lifestyle, given that many expenses remained the same.

**DSS Administered Services**

A number of respondents were aware of the Horne Equity Conversion (HEC) Scheme and Financial Information Service (FIS) but none had used them or showed any interest in doing so. There was little awareness of the Pension Loans Scheme, and no interest in it. These findings are consistent with the nature of maximum rate pensioners' resources and the strong concern expressed not to erode the value of the family home.

**Bank Charges**

The banks were not held in high esteem amongst the pensioners who participated in the focus groups. They were seen as making huge profits, while penalising low income earners who hold small account balances. As maximum rate pensioners, the participants were not interested in bank loans: they felt that banks would be unwilling to lend them money and that they would be unable to afford repayments.
Direct Deduction by DSS for Utilities

The focus groups were asked how they would feel about having direct deductions made from their pensions for utilities bills such as gas, electricity, water and phone. Most were against such a scheme - they felt capable of managing their own affairs and wanted to be able to juggle and prioritise payments when necessary. In some cases their opposition was very strong. It was obvious that many of the respondents wait until their final reminder before paying their bill, which would not be possible under a direct debit arrangement. These types of arrangements may be more attractive to part rate pensioners, i.e. those with higher resources.

Service and Payment Suggestions

When asked how DSS could be of greater help, a number of suggestions were made. Some of these are State or Territory responsibilities and therefore may reflect some confusion amongst pensioners about which levels of government are responsible for which services. The suggestions included:

- financial assistance to home owners for home maintenance;
- enhanced travel concessions for country dwellers;
- the income threshold raised and taxation reduced or abolished to enable improvement to circumstances by earning additional income;
- year round power and gas bill reductions, instead of only during winter months;
- return to a voucher system for Telephone Allowances;
- uniform travel benefits in all States;
- subsidised taxi fares;
- more training for DSS staff; and
- a more proactive role by DSS in educating pre-retirees on relevant issues (e.g. budgeting, home maintenance, organisation of assets).

The measures announced in the 1995/96 Budget for increased financial information and advisory services may help to address this concern.

Strategic Directions

The research reinforced earlier research findings that:

- fringe benefits and concession cards may be perceived to have value beyond their actual financial worth;
- home owners view their home as most important to their' sense of security'. They are very reluctant to erode its value in any way, wanting to leave it to their heirs; and
• retirees want as much control as possible over their own finances. Direct deduction for utilities, rather than being a convenience, would be seen as intrusive and over-managerial.

The research provided some useful indications of where DSS might consider reforming or enhancing its current services:

• pre-retirement education could assist some people to have a realistic expectation of what their retirement income would be and how to arrange their finances to make retirement as comfortable as possible;

• given the persistent comments on the financial straits experienced by people who lose their pensioner partner, the relative financial position of bereaved pensioners is worthy of examination. This issue arose recently during the Pension Income and Assets Tests Review. It has also been raised independently with the Department in recent years by the Council on the Ageing (ACOTA), the Australian Pensioners’ and Superannuants' Federation (AP&SF) and the Association of Independent Retirees (AIR); and

• the issue of direct deduction for utilities raised an important psychological objection. Many pensioners feel that in considering such an initiative the government is suggesting that pensioners cannot cope. They are therefore often strongly offended by it. There are therefore important public relations aspects associated with any initiatives in this area, and arrangements would almost certainly need to be voluntary to be acceptable.

Conclusion

The market research provided a salient measure of customer attitudes and interest in flexible payment arrangements. It identified significant demand for payment arrangements which afford customers greater choice and control.

Recently released findings from the Australian Social Monitor 1994/957 (coincidentally undertaken by AMR: Quantum) indicate that while consumers seek and have obtained greater control over their lives, concern was expressed about excessive change - 60 per cent of the 2,500 respondents surveyed nationwide indicated that they felt they were being confronted with too much choice. The results of the Department's market research and the Australian Social Monitor suggest that there is a dichotomy of consumer thought regarding choice. If the government introduces more flexible Family Payment arrangements, there would need to be a carefully designed and targeted communication campaign to avoid alienating some families and to ensure maximum benefits are achieved from flexible payment arrangements.
Undoubtedly, further debate on the direction of customised payments will occur. Most likely, discussion will centre on who benefits from flexible payments, the compatibility of customised options with moves to simplify the social security system, and tensions with the underlying adequacy of social security payments. Discussion is also likely to focus on the issue of potential hardship for customers were they to be given access to large lump sum advances and, in the absence of ongoing fortnightly payments, later experience hardship as a result of this. The efficiency and intent of flexible payment arrangements is likely to be an area of lively debate.

Endnotes

1 The AMR: Quantum Harris, Family Payment: Customisation of Payments Report, May 1995 and the AMR: Quantum Harris, Family Payment: Customisation of Payment Tables, May 1995 were the results of survey work undertaken for the Department around Australia in April 1995.

2 The Brian Sweeney and Associates, Retirement Incomes Initiatives: Phase 3: Customisation of Payments and the Brian Sweeney and Associates, Possible Measures to Assist Age Pensioners: Phase 4: Maximum Rate Age Pensioners were the results of qualitative research undertaken for the Department in metropolitan and rural areas during the period March to August 1995.

3 These figures were extracted from DSS internal data on the existing lump sum advance of Basic Family Payment and market research conducted for the Department prior to its introduction.

4 See, for example, Chalmers, Jenny and Prosser, Bruce (1990), Credit to the Community: Low-cost Lending and Consumer Credit Reform. The authors focus on the characteristics and effectiveness of the provision of low-cost loans to pensioners and beneficiaries by a group of agencies in the inner metropolitan area of Melbourne.

5 As part of its examination of possible flexible payment options, the Department held a series of meetings with community sector and low income loan providers in Sydney and Melbourne during February and August 1995. Agencies consulted included ACOSS, VCOSS, Brotherhood of St Laurence, No Interest Loan Schemes, and the Carlton-Fitzroy Community Credit Cooperative.

6 In 1994, the Government commissioned an independent review of the Pensions Income and Assets Tests. The consultancy was undertaken by Ageing Agendas, which released a discussion paper Questions of Balance in July 1994 and a final report Targeting for Equity in November 1994. Major findings of the review were relevant to the concept of flexible payment arrangements, specifically options which would produce predictable income streams.
The Australian Social Monitor is a survey of 2500 Australians, charting their values, attitudes and lifestyles. It also includes comments from sociologists, historians, psychologists, community and business leaders and consumers. The Monitor is produced annually by AMR: Quantum Harris.

References


AMR: Quantum Harris (1995), Family Payment - Customisation of Payments Tables, Commissioned by DSS, Canberra, May.


Brian Sweeney and Associates (1995), Possible Measures to Assist Age Pensioners, Phase Three, Commissioned by DSS, Canberra, May.

Brian Sweeney and Associates (1995), Possible Measures to Assist Age Pensioners, Phase IV, Commissioned by DSS, Canberra, August.


Chalmers, J. and Prosser, B. (1990), Credit to the Community, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne.


Introduction

This article details developments in family payments within the Australian social security system over the period 1983 to 1996.¹ This period has seen the family payments program undergo virtually continuous change and reform: new payments have been introduced, rates of payment for low income families have been significantly increased; the program has become more responsive to the needs of families at different stages of their life cycle; different components of the program have been better integrated; and it has progressively come to recognise women as individuals rather than as dependants of their partners and to take account of the work women perform as the main carers of children.

The program's growth and increased responsiveness over this period, however, has meant a greater emphasis on the targeting of payments (for example, Family Allowance - paid universally since its introduction [as 'Child Endowment'] in 1941 - became an income-tested payment in 1987) and, in combination, these various reforms have made the family payments system increasingly complex, both for customers and administrators.²

To set the context for developments occurring since 1983, the article begins with a description of the family payments structure as it existed in that year. A brief history of the then main family payment, Family Allowance, and a description of a major new payment introduced in the first half of 1983, Family Income Supplement, are also provided.

The Family Payments System in 1983

In 1983, Australia's income support arrangements for families with children comprised:
• a universal Family Allowance;
• a Family Income Supplement (FIS) (legislated in 1982, but introduced in 1983) providing income-tested additional assistance to low income working families;
• Additional Pension/Benefit for pensioner and beneficiary families (equivalent to, and paid at the same rate, as FIS);
• a Mother's/Guardian's Allowance for single pensioners caring for children;
• income-tested and non-income tested payments in respect of children with disabilities (Handicapped Child's Allowance) and orphaned children (Double Orphan's Pension); and
• tax relief for taxpayers with dependants, in the form of the Dependent Spouse Rebate and the Sole Parent Rebate.

The family payments structure existing in 1983 could be seen to have a range of objectives (Cass 1986). For Family Allowance, these were:

• support for all families;
• equity for families in the tax/transfer system;
• an increment to wages;
• assistance in protecting families from poverty;
• to direct resources to mothers; and
• to minimise disincentives to parents workforce participation.

For the income-tested Family Income Supplement the objectives were:

• additional payments to low income families;
• to protect families from poverty; and
• to minimise disincentives to parents' workforce participation.

The objectives of tax rebates for taxpayers with dependants were seen as being:

• to provide tax relief to sole parents with dependent children and to taxpayers with a dependent spouse; and
• to provide a higher rebate to taxpayers who had dependent children as well as a dependent spouse.

**Family Allowance**

Child Endowment, the forerunner to Family Allowance, was introduced in 1941 as a non-means-tested payment to families for the 'maintenance, training and advancement' of their children (Bancroft et al 1983: 124). In 1976, it was replaced by Family Allowance which combined Child Endowment and the 'cashed-out' income tax rebate for children.
The main purpose of this change was to assist the 300,000 families whose taxable income had been too low to take any (or full) advantage of the tax rebates (rebates being limited in total to the tax otherwise payable) which had replaced tax deductions for dependants in 1975 (Social Services Amendment Bill (No. 2) 1976 - Second Reading Speech). Some other families (those with sufficient taxable income to make full use of the rebate) suffered small losses as a result of the change (no more than 85 cents a week unless a student child was involved).

A significant feature of the change was that it transferred money from the person claiming the tax rebate (usually the father in a two-parent family) to the mother - a move which has been extended by reforms in subsequent years.

The introduction of Family Allowance was almost cost-neutral, with the estimated full-year cost roughly equalling the savings from abolition of the tax rebates.

Rates of Family Allowance were increased only once between 1976 and 1983 (for the third child and subsequent children in 1981 and for the first and second child in 1982). Given the relatively high rates of inflation experienced in the 1970s, this meant that the real value of Family Allowance payments decreased by about 24 per cent over this period.

Additional Pension and Benefit were also increased only once over the same period (in 1980) and suffered an even greater decline in real value (around 33 per cent) than was the case for Family Allowance.

**Family Income Supplement (FIS)**

Although announced by the Fraser (Liberal/National Coalition) Government in its 1982 Budget, FIS was introduced (as originally scheduled) in May 1983, two months after the election of the Hawke (Labor) Government. FIS was intended as an income supplement for non-pensioner/beneficiary families whose main source of income was full-time, low-paid employment. It was developed after consideration of a similar payment which had operated in the United Kingdom since 1970 (Daprè and Stanton 1981).

FIS was payable to the family's main income-earner (usually the male partner) for children for whom Family Allowance was being paid. It was income-tested on average weekly parental income in the four weeks preceding the claim.

As well as providing additional support for working families, FIS was intended to improve incentives for workforce participation by unemployed people. Such a rationale was referred to by the Minister assisting the Minister for Social Security, Mr Ian Wilson, in the Second Reading Speech introducing the FIS legislation in September 1982:
[The Family Income Supplement] ... not only reflects our recognition of the particular cost burden borne by low income families who are bringing up children, but it also helps to alleviate the unfair and clearly undesirable situation in which an unemployment beneficiary can be better off financially than a person in similar family circumstances who is in employment, but earning low wages. (Social Security Legislation Amendment Bill 1982 - Second Reading Speech)

The rate of FIS was set at the same rate as Additional Pension and Benefit (then $10 a week per child), but the FIS income test was designed to ensure that FIS recipients would always be better off than families on Unemployment Benefit (UB) by setting the income threshold for full entitlement to FIS at $20 a week more than that for the married rate of UB (that is, families on FIS could receive up to $20 more income per week than families on UB before the amount of FIS payable began to be reduced). FIS was reduced at the rate of 50 cents for every $1 of income above this threshold.

**Handicapped Child's Allowance**

Handicapped Child's Allowance (HCA) was introduced as a non-means-tested payment in respect of severely disabled children in January 1975. An income-tested payment for substantially disabled children was added in November 1977.

**Double Orphan's Pension**

Double Orphan's Pension (DOP) (known since 1991 as 'Double Orphan Pension') was introduced in October 1973. It was payable, free of income test, to a guardian or institution in respect of children whose parents were both dead or where one parent was dead and the other was unavailable (for such reasons as being in prison or a psychiatric institution long-term) to care for them.

**Developments in Family Payments Since 1983 - Early Budget Measures**

In its first three Budgets, the Hawke Government went some way towards addressing the fall in value of Additional Pension/Benefit which had occurred over the previous several years, with increases in these payments (and consequently FIS) from $10 to $12 a week per child from November 1983, a further increase to $14 in November 1984 and to $16 in November 1985. As well, from March 1984, as a consequence of a liberalisation of the income test on UB and other benefits, the FIS income limits were also increased.

From May 1984, Mother's/Guardian's Allowance (known since 1991 as 'Guardian Allowance') was set at a uniform rate of $8 a week for all single
parent pensioners (previously a lower rate of $6 was payable except where the recipient had a child under six years or who was disabled) and was extended to single beneficiaries with children. From November 1984 and May 1986, the rate was increased to $10 and $12 a week respectively.

Multiple Birth Payment (known since 1992 as 'Multiple Birth Allowance') was announced in the 1985-86 Budget and introduced in November 1985 in recognition of the extra costs and workforce barriers (particularly in relation to child care) faced by parents with three or more children born at the same time. The payment ceases when the children turn six.

**An Income Test on Family Allowance - 1986-87 Budget and May 1987 Economic Statement**

Following these early, relatively low-key changes, one of the first major steps taken by the Hawke Government in family payments reform was in the targeting of payments. This began with an announcement in the May 1985 Economic Statement that, from November 1985, Family Allowance would no longer be payable to dependent students aged 18 and over except for those in respect of whom Additional Pension/Benefit, FIS, HCA or DOP was being paid.

More significant moves in changing Family Allowance from a universal to a targeted payment were to follow just over a year later.

In its Issues Paper, *Income Support for Families with Children*, released in October 1986, the Social Security Review had argued for the maintenance (and indeed increasing the level) of universal family payments on the grounds of maintaining the principle of horizontal equity (Cass 1986: 3-7, 103-105). Submissions to the Review by welfare, trade union and academic bodies also argued in favour of maintaining Family Allowance as a universal payment.

Arguments against imposing an income test on Family Allowance were along the following lines:

- while consistent with the principle of vertical equity, it would be inconsistent with the principle of horizontal equity;
- it would amount to an increase in taxes solely on families;
- it would raise effective marginal tax rates for (some) families at a time when the direction of tax reform was to reduce marginal rates particularly at higher levels of income; and
- there would be significant administrative difficulties involved in introducing an income test on a payment going to two million families (including 1.7 million non-pensioner/beneficiary families).
However, given the broader economic imperatives of the time and the Government's consequent desire to restrain expenditure generally, as well as its plans to improve significantly assistance for low income families, the Government ultimately was not persuaded by such arguments. In the 1986-87 Budget, it announced that Family Allowance paid for student children aged 16-17 would be income-tested from January 1987. In its May 1987 Economic Statement, (along with a broad range of significant savings measures affecting other Social Security programs), the income test was extended to Family Allowances generally from November 1987.

When introducing the legislation for the general income test, the Minister for Social Security, Mr Brian Howe, referred to the Government's primary focus on vertical equity in the social security system and the use of targeting to help achieve this:

> The Government retains its deeply-held commitment to disadvantaged people and children in poverty. In order to protect and improve their living standards we must ensure that social security payments are well targeted. (Social Security and Veterans' Entitlements Amendment Bill 1987 Second Reading Speech)

The general income test comprised a joint parental income threshold (based on taxable income in the previous financial year) of $50,000, plus $2,500 for second and subsequent children (both amounts to be indexed to the Consumer Price Index [CPI] in subsequent years), with a 25 per cent 'taper' (that is, for each $1 of income above the threshold, the Family Allowance would be reduced by 25 cents).

The concerns of those opposed to income testing were addressed to some extent by setting the income test threshold at approximately twice 1987-88 Average Weekly Earnings, including an increment for additional children and providing for indexing of both the threshold and the increment.

The income test threshold was also set high enough for high single-income families to still derive some net benefit from the combination of the income-tested Family Allowance and the July 1987 tax cuts, although some two-income families received very little benefit and some were net losers.

In the event, the income test excluded around 10 per cent of families from receiving Family Allowance.

**The Prime Minister's Child Poverty Pledge and the 1987 'Family Package'**

In his election policy speech for the July 1987 federal election, the Prime Minister, Mr Hawke, made the following commitment regarding child poverty: 'By 1990 no Australian child will be living in poverty.' (Hawke 1987: 6)
The main means of achieving this goal would be a package of measures designed to provide significant additional assistance to low-income families, the central element of which was a major new payment - Family Allowance Supplement (FAS) - designed, in Mr Hawke's words, to 'lift more than 1 million Australian children into security and to help the more than half a million Australian families in greatest need' (p 6).

The details of how FAS and the other measures comprising the Family Package would operate were subsequently provided in the 1987-88 Budget. The measures were largely consistent with proposals for restructuring assistance to low-income families made in the previous year by the Social Security Review (see Cass 1986:107-108) and subsequent community consultations on these proposals.

Underlying the Review's proposals was a range of concerns which, in its view, the Government needed to address in the process of restructuring family assistance. These were that:

- the total amount of assistance provided for a child was adequate and reflected the higher costs required for the care of older children;
- the higher costs faced by low-income families who are renting were taken into account;
- assistance was provided for all children on a uniform basis with the low income of the parents being the only criterion for its provision;
- work disincentives associated with income-tested assistance were minimised;
- take-up, particularly among low-income working families, needed to improve; and
- the levels of assistance provided for children were not allowed to decline in real terms over time.

In the Government's view, the Family Package went a long way towards addressing these concerns. According to the Minister for Social Security, Mr Howe:

The measures outlined in this Bill demonstrate this Government's firm commitment to ensure that no Australian child need live in poverty by 1990.

The package takes the first step towards constructing a new system of public support for children which stresses the need for adequate payments - targeted to those families which need help the most.

This Bill represents substantial gains for our most disadvantaged families which have suffered from the impact of sickness or unemployment.
It also highlights the need to support working families bringing up children on low incomes...

The structure of this historically important payment aims to encourage people to stay in the workforce, where there is potential for them to build a decent standard of living on the basis of an independent wage.

The Family Package will increase the disposable incomes of working families - making them much better off than comparable families living on unemployment benefit. (Social Security and Veterans' Entitlements Amendment Bill (No 2) 1987 - Second Reading Speech)

FAS was to replace FIS from 17 December 1987 and to provide payments of $22 a week for each child under 13 and $28 a week for each child aged 13 to 15, compared with $17 a week under FIS. (The rate for dependent students aged 16 and 17 not receiving AUSTUDY remained at $17 a week.)

As well as the higher rates, the FAS income test was substantially more liberal than the income test for FIS. The threshold was set initially at income of $300 a week plus $12 for each child after the first (compared with the FIS threshold of $257 a week) and was to be increased at the time of subsequent pension and benefit indexation increases by the same CPI factor used for pensions and benefits (also more generous than existing arrangements for increasing the FIS threshold).

Families dependent on mainstream income support payments also benefited from the package because Additional Pension/Benefit payments for children were brought into line with the FAS payment rates. This represented a first step in a process leading to the eventual full integration of FAS and Additional Pension/Benefit into a single low-income child supplement (which had also been proposed by the Social Security Review and foreshadowed in the Prime Minister's 1987 election policy statement).

Further measures consistent with eventual integration were that the payment of Additional Pension would be transferred from the father to the mother from 24 December 1987 and, where ex-pensioners or ex-beneficiaries claimed FAS within six weeks of last receiving Additional Pension/Benefit, they would be eligible for FAS - subject to complying with the FAS income test from the date of their last Additional Pension/Benefit payment.

Other important elements of the Family Package were:

- the establishment and maintenance of 'benchmarks' of adequacy for family payments;
- the extension of Rent Assistance to FAS recipients (along with the removal of the separate waiting period for Rent Assistance for families on UB and Sickness Benefit); and
- the replacement of HCA with an income test-free Child Disability Allowance.
**Family Payment Benchmarks**

FAS was to be indexed indirectly through the establishment (and maintenance over time) of family payment 'benchmarks' of adequacy. The aim was that, through real increases in the rates of FAS over the following three years, the value of total family payments for a child in a low income family (that is, the first child rate of Family Allowance together with FAS) would reach, by January 1990, specified percentages of the combined married rate of pension (15 per cent in the case of a child under 13 years and 20 per cent for a child aged 13 to 15, compared with the existing 11.9 per cent for both age groups). From that date, the benchmarks (which were actually attained ahead of schedule in July 1989) were to be maintained by annual increases in FAS rates sufficient for the purpose.

The benchmark targets of 15 and 20 per cent went a considerable way towards meeting the adequacy benchmarks proposed by the Social Security Review on the basis of Australian and overseas research on the costs of children. This suggested that 'couples with children require at least 20 to 30 per cent more income than couples without children to achieve a similar living standard' (Whiteford 1985, cited in Cass 1986: 70).

**Child Disability Allowance**

The new Child Disability Allowance (CDA) removed both the distinction which HCA had made between 'severely' and 'substantially' disabled children and the income test for the latter group. The initial payment rate for CDA was $112 a month compared with a maximum HCA rate of $92 a month.

**Family Allowance and FAS Combined - May 1988 Economic Statement**

In its Economic Statement in May 1988, the Government announced further moves towards the eventual full integration of Family Allowance and FAS. From 29 December 1988, these payments were to be combined into a single fortnightly payment to be made on what had been 'FAS paydays'. (Up to that date, Family Allowance was paid monthly.) The other monthly child-related payments (CDA, DOP and Multiple Birth Payment) were also changed - from the same date - to fortnightly payments to be made on the same payday.

**An Assets Test and New Income Test for FAS - 1988-89 Budget**

In its 1988-89 Budget, the Government announced new FAS means tests measures intended to more strictly target FAS and also to improve take-up.

From 29 December 1988, receipt of FAS was to be made subject to an assets test, with entitlement ceasing once assessable family assets - with the exclusion of the family home - exceeded $300 000. The income test applied if the value of assets was $300 000 or below.
The introduction of an assets test was seen as improving targeting by denying access to FAS by people with considerable assets (such as the self-employed) who were able to arrange their financial affairs in such a way as to avoid the income test. It was also seen to be consistent with the existing assets-testing of pensions and benefits.

Reasons for setting the assets threshold at a 'fairly generous' $300 000 rather than at lower levels (such as those applying to pensions and benefits) included:

- consistency with the threshold for the assets test then being proposed by the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) for AUSTUDY;  
- the inappropriateness of an unduly harsh assets test on a payment intended for children in families with generally moderate means and which would penalise, in particular, farming and other self-employed families with non-liquid assets and low incomes; and  
- recognition of the political sensitivity of introducing an assets test, in particular one with harsh conditions.

New, simplified income-testing arrangements (similar to those applying to Family Allowance) were to be introduced at the same time as the assets test with the aim of increasing take-up and reducing administrative complexity and costs. Previously, entitlement to FAS was based on joint parental gross income for the four weeks ending on the date of lodgement of the claim. Under the new arrangements, entitlement to FAS would be granted for up to one calendar year on the basis of joint parental taxable income in the financial year ending in the previous calendar year (known as the 'base year of income').

The income test threshold was set at $15 600 (to be indexed annually from January 1990) and increased by $624 for second and subsequent children. Every $1 of parental income above the threshold would reduce the FAS payment by 50 cents. Entitlement could be reviewed during the course of the year of grant if the family experienced a 25 per cent (or more) increase or decrease in their current taxable income compared to their base year income.

To remove the incentive for people to distribute part of their income to their children to enable them to qualify for FAS, and as a savings offset for other Family Package measures, entitlement to FAS was removed in respect of any child accruing unearned taxable income (according to the 'unearned income of minors' provisions of the *Income Tax Assessment Act*) in the base year of income. The Tax Assessment Act provisions applied to unearned income of over $416 a year, with exemptions for income from compensation, deceased estates and for children attracting CDA or DOP.
In its Economic Statement in April 1989, the Government announced both a restructuring of, and substantial increases in, rates of Family Allowance along with the introduction of annual indexation of Family Allowance and all other child-related payments. Also announced were increases in the Dependent Spouse Rebate and the Sole Parent Rebate - the first since November 1982 - in the context of significant personal income tax cuts.

This group of measures was an important component of a tax and social wage package which formed the basis of an agreement between the Government and the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) announced at the same time - on award restructuring and wage restraint (Keating 1989).

More specifically, the family payment measures (described in more detail below) were designed to complement and build on those contained in the 1987 Family Package which had represented the Government's response to the vertical equity issues and other priorities for assisting families identified by the Social Security Review. The new measures were consistent with the Review's horizontal equity concerns and associated recommendations on tax/transfer policies, which had the aim of improving and maintaining disposable incomes of families with children relative to those without children.

The Government did not consider that, on their own, the personal income tax cuts announced in the Statement would provide sufficient additional long-term assistance to low- and middle-income families. The family payments system was seen as a more effective vehicle for targeting such assistance to these families and for ensuring that the main carers of children received it.

**Family Allowance Rates Restructured and Increased**

From July 1989, the existing four-rate Family Allowance structure (with fortnightly rates ranging from $10.50 for the first child to $21 for fifth and subsequent children) was to be replaced with a simpler two-rate structure of $18 a fortnight for each of the first three children and $24 a fortnight for the fourth and each subsequent child.

The real value of Family Allowance payments had continued to decline between 1983 and 1989. The new rates applying from July 1989 improved their value substantially, with the value of the newly-increased payment for the first child rising to slightly more than its 1983 level. However, the increased rates for other children, in particular for third and subsequent children, succeeded in restoring them to only around 80 per cent of their 1983 value.
Indexation of All Family Payments

Family Allowance, CDA, DOP, Mother's/Guardian's Allowance and Multiple Birth Payment were to be indexed each year from January 1990 (based on the increase in the CPI in the previous financial year) at the same time as FAS payment rates would be increased to maintain the adequacy benchmarks established for them.

The indexation of family payments brought them into line with most other social security payments already subject to regular indexation.

Targeting Measures

Some Family Allowance targeting measures were also announced in the Economic Statement. They were that:

- from November 1989, Family Allowance was no longer to be payable in respect of children receiving Formal Training Allowance (paid by the Department of Social Security (DSS) on behalf of DEET); and
- from January 1990, it would not be payable for children under age 16 in full-time employment earning more than $100 a week.

Compliance Measures and Changes to the FAS Income Test 1989-90 Budget

In the area of family payments, the 1989-90 Budget was concerned mainly with compliance and savings measures and also with reforms to the FAS income test.

Compliance and Savings Measures

The compliance and savings measures (which, except for the first, were to operate from January 1990) included:

- selected reviews of Family Allowance recipients to ensure compliance with the income test (from October 1989);
- a requirement that Family Allowance recipients notify DSS of changes in circumstances that were likely to result in an increase in income which might affect their entitlement (similar to existing requirements for FAS recipients);
- a requirement that applicants for FAS advise DSS of any 'notifiable event' - such as starting a new job - that occurred before their application for FAS. (This was in addition to the existing requirement to notify DSS of such an event after FAS had been granted); and
- a provision that family payments would cease to be paid on the sixteenth birthday of a student child except where the child was not entitled to AUSTUDY or another Prescribed Education Scheme payment. This was to prevent possible overlaps of family payments and education allowances.
**FAS Income Test Changes**

In regard to the FAS income test, the Government announced a number of refinements to deal with certain anomalies which had come to light following the changes implemented in December 1988. The more significant of these were that, from January 1990:

- entitlement to FAS would not be reduced as a result of increases in income unless the increase was greater than 25 per cent;
- entitlement to FAS would be reassessed where there was a drop in income in the current year of less than 25 per cent as long as total income for the year was expected to be below the income test threshold;
- families receiving FAS under the '25 per cent rule' would retain current entitlement where this would make them better off than under an assessment based on their taxable income in the previous year; and
- low-income student parents receiving AUSTUDY or similar payments who were currently excluded from receiving FAS because of the FAS income test would be entitled to maximum rate FAS from December 1989, subject to the FAS assets test.

**Income and Assets Tests Changes - 1990-91 Budget**

A **More Stringent Income Test for Family Allowance**

In its 1990 Budget, the Government announced that, from 1 January 1991, the existing income test on Family Allowance would be simplified by abolishing the existing 25 per cent taper with a 'sudden death' loss of entitlement once parental income exceeded the income test threshold.

This option had been considered when the income test was first introduced in 1987, the perceived advantages at the time being savings in both outlays on the Allowance and in administration, that it would be less intrusive and that it would not impose higher effective marginal tax rates over a broad range of incomes.

An **Assets Test for Family Allowance and a More Stringent FAS Assets Test Announced (and Later Withdrawn)**

The Government also announced further intended savings and targeting measures (also with a starting date of 1 January 1991) in the form of an assets test on Family Allowance with a net assets threshold of $300 000 and a tightening of the existing FAS assets test threshold from $322 750 to $200 000.

Some months after the Budget announcement, the Government decided (for the time being) not to proceed with either of these measures, but indicated it would reconsider them in the lead-up to the 1991-92 Budget. The assets tests measures (especially in relation to Family Allowance) had provoked a
considerable amount of criticism, particularly in rural areas, with claims that they would cause severe hardship for many ‘assets rich/income poor’ farming families then caught up in a rural sector downturn.

A less stringent Family Allowance assets test was subsequently announced in the 1991-92 Budget.

The Integration of Family Payments and a New Family Allowance Assets Test - 1991-92 Budget

Several family payments measures, in addition to the revamped Family Allowance assets test, were announced in the 1991-92 Budget.

The most significant of these was that, from 1 January 1993, Family Allowance, FAS, Additional Pension and Benefit and Guardian Allowance were to be combined into a single, integrated family payment.

Other measures included:

- from 1 January 1992, the date for back payment of family payments, where a claim was lodged after the birth of a child, was extended from four weeks to three months;
- from the same date, CDA was to increase by $2.15 a week to restore it to its original value, in real terms, when introduced in 1987; and
- from 1 April 1992, there was to be an increase in the FAS income test threshold ($18,500) to bring it into line with the AUSTUDY threshold ($20,700). As well as increasing the numbers of families eligible for FAS, this change improved rates of assistance to all existing part-rate FAS recipients.  

Revamped Assets Test on Family Social Security

The less stringent Family Allowance assets test announced in the 1991-92 Budget was to have an assets threshold of $600,000 (excluding the family home) (that is, twice the threshold of the assets test announced the previous year) and to be introduced from January 1992. To address the particular concerns of farming families affected by the rural crisis, special 'hardship' provisions were to apply in the case of families with very low incomes, as follows:

- families could retain their Family Allowance even if their net assets were greater than $600,000, provided current year income was less than job Search Allowance for a married couple (then $13,078 a year) plus $624 for each child, and their available funds were less than $10,000; and
- families with net assets below $600,000 but above the FAS assets test threshold (then $347,500) would become eligible for FAS provided they also met the above conditions in regard to income and available funds.
The assets tests for both Family Allowance and FAS (the asset threshold for which was not changed in this Budget) would be applied to total family rather than just parental assets (as had been the case for the FAS assets test) from January 1992. According to the Government, this would close off the 'possible avenue of avoidance' whereby some families could rearrange assets among family members to ensure parental assets fall below the test threshold' (Social Security Legislation Amendment Bill (No 3) 1991 - Second Reading Speech).

The Integration of Family Payments - January 1993

As indicated previously, the Government's intention to integrate family payments had first been announced in Prime Minister Hawke's 1987 election policy statement in the context of the promised Family Package aimed at meeting his 1990 child poverty pledge (Hawke 1987). As with other Family Package measures, it had been recommended by the Social Security Review in 1986.

The Government recognised from the start that a substantial amount of computer systems-related work would be required for the introduction of integrated family payments and that this would necessitate a staged implementation process, initially set for completion by 1990.

A number of measures preparing the ground for integration had been announced as part of the 1987 Family Package (for example, the transfer of Additional Pension from fathers to mothers in December 1987) and in the May 1988 Economic Statement (moving Family Allowance and the other child payments to the same fortnightly payday as FAS from December 1988). However, it was not until the 1991-92 Budget that the Government finally announced that the full integration of family payments would occur from January 1993.

When integration was originally conceived, it was considered that it would bring a number of benefits (Cass 1986: 107,111-112):

- it was expected to remove existing anomalies and help create a simple and readily accessible family payments system;
- take-up of child-related payments by eligible families would be improved through the amalgamation and streamlining of admission procedures for FAS, Family Allowance, pensions and benefits and the development of other administrative links between these payments;
- continuity of entitlement would be ensured for families moving in and out of the pensions and benefits systems; and
- work disincentives for pensioners and beneficiaries with children would no longer exist following the removal of the poverty traps associated with loss of Rent Assistance and child payments on returning to work.
The new arrangements would also ensure that all child payments were directed to the Family Allowance recipient, usually the mother. Child payments were already directed to the mother in married pensioner couples and Rent Assistance would be similarly paid to mothers from the date of integration. For social security allowees, integration was to lead to the effective splitting of payments between spouses, with the mother receiving the child payments and Rent Assistance. For all pensioners with children and most allowees and beneficiaries with children, integration would result in more frequent (that is, weekly) receipt of social security payments, which was expected to assist some families in budgeting.

The integrated family payment was to comprise a basic rate ('Basic Family Payment' [BFP]) equivalent to Family Allowance and a higher rate ('Additional Family Payment' [AFP]) equivalent to FAS and Additional Pension/Allowance/Benefit, plus Rent Assistance (for families renting privately) and Guardian Allowance (for sole parent families).

Additional Family Payment was to be paid:

- automatically to pensioners, allowees and beneficiaries with children and on an income- and assets-tested basis to low income working families;
- to the children's principal carer (usually the mother) as was the case for Family Allowance and FAS; and
- on what had been the Family Allowance payday (in alternate weeks to the pension).

Payment of AFP would continue automatically during pension/allowance/benefit waiting and deferment periods and during periods where these payments were reduced to nil (for example, because of the receipt of casual income) but not cancelled or suspended, because of the possibility of continuing eligibility.

All people claiming AFP who had children eligible for child support (mainly sole parents) were to be subject to both 'reasonable maintenance action' requirements and the maintenance income test, which would be applied only to AFP and not the main income support payment. The inclusion of Guardian Allowance in the AFP was designed to help compensate sole parents whose payment was affected by the maintenance income test.

The payment of BFP would cease at the end of the year in which a child turned 18 or finished secondary school, whichever was earlier. This was an extension of the previous arrangement whereby Family Allowance ceased at the time the student turned 18, which was often part way through the year.

People with children who had been receiving an income support payment for 12 months or more, and who started paid employment, were to be sent an AFP application form on termination of their income support payment. They
would be guaranteed back payment of AFP to the date of termination if they applied within six weeks of that
date and were otherwise eligible.

DSS was to use data matching with income tax records to try to identify families with taxable incomes within
the AFP income limits who were not receiving AFP. They would then be contacted and invited to apply.

Effects of Family Payments Integration

For many families, the integration of family payments resulted in a considerable change in the distribution,
between parents, of social security payments for their children. The biggest intra-family transfer occurred in
the case of families receiving Job Search, Newstart or Sickness Allowances (JSA/NSA/SA), with male
partners receiving substantially less following integration (that is as a result of 'losing' Additional Benefit and
Rent Assistance from their Allowance payment) and female partners considerably more (with AFP being
added to what had been relatively small Family Allowance payments).

Integration also involved a change in the timing of the payment of these components for most of these
families, with Family Payment being paid fortnightly on a Thursday and JSA/NSA paid fortnightly on any
weekday (that is, the same day of the week on which recipients had originally registered as unemployed with
the Commonwealth Employment Service). Accordingly, only about one in ten of these families would have
Family Payment and Allowance paydays that coincided, with the remainder receiving these payments either
on different days in the same week or in alternate weeks.

For pensioner families, the changes were less dramatic given that, prior to integration, pensioner wives were
already receiving pension in their own right as well as Additional Pension and half of any Rent Assistance
being received by the family. The only change in the distribution of payments between parents in these cases
was that, after integration, all the Rent Assistance was now paid to the female partner as part of AFP. There
was also a change in the balance of payments from week to week, with a reduced pension amount paid to the
mother in one week and an increased Family Payment amount the following week. For sole parent pensioners
and other pensioner families not receiving Rent Assistance, this latter timing change was the only one to
affect them.

In the February 1992 One Nation Economic Statement, the Prime Minister, Mr Keating, announced a one-off bonus payment to all Family Allowance recipients and ad hoc increases in FAS rates.

The amount of the Family Allowance bonus, to be paid on 2 April 1992, varied according to the number of children for whom Family Allowance was being paid - ranging from $125 for a family with one child to $250 for a family with five or more children.

According to the Government, the bonus was paid partly in recognition of the difficulties being faced by many families as a result of the recession. The Government also expected that most of the $317 million being paid to families via the bonus would be spent quickly by them, thus providing an immediate boost to the economy (Keating 1992).9

Also contained in the One Nation Statement was a $3 a week increase in FAS and Additional Pension/Allowance rates to take effect from the first payday on or after 3 April 1992.

As part of the legislation introduced to provide for the family payment measures in the Statement, the Government also raised the family payment adequacy benchmarks from 15 per cent to 16.2 per cent of the combined married rate of pension for children aged under 13, and from 20 per cent to 21.2 per cent for children aged 13 to 15. This was required to preserve the ongoing value of the ad hoc rate increase to FAS and Additional Pension/Allowance.

In the 1992-93 Budget, the Government followed up the April Family Allowance bonus measure with an announcement that, from January 1993, families would be able to request a lump sum advance of part of their Family Allowance (BFP) entitlement. The advance could comprise up to half the first-child rate of Family Allowance for up to a maximum of six months (a value at the time of around $136 every six months). The balance of the entitlement would continue to be received as a fortnightly payment. The Government saw this measure as a means of helping families cope with lump sum expenses such as the return of children to school at the beginning of the year or to assist with the purchase of winter clothing, while maintaining fortnightly payments to assist with regular household budgeting.

A family payment targeting measure was also announced in the 1992-93 Budget. From January 1994, the value of certain employer-provided fringe benefits (such as low interest loans, housing and health insurance) in excess of $1000 would be counted as income for the purposes of the BFP income test.
This measure was also introduced into income-testing arrangements for student payments such as AUSTUDY, where there was considerable pressure for such a change. The purpose of the change was to ensure that all families were treated equally, irrespective of whether they received remuneration from employment solely in cash or as a mix of cash and fringe benefits.

**Home Child Care Allowance and Savings and Targeting Measures - 1993-1994 Budget**

During the 1993 election campaign, the Prime Minister foreshadowed the introduction of a major new family payment, the Home Child Care Allowance. Further details of this new Allowance were announced in the 1993-94 Budget, including an implementation date of 29 September 1994. This Budget also contained a number of targeting and savings measures involving Family Payments, most of which were also to be introduced during 1994 (the International Year of the Family [IYF]).

**Home Child Care Allowance**

When first announcing the Home Child Care Allowance (HCCA) in his 1993 election speech, the Prime Minister explained that the new payment was intended to provide 'some source of independent income' for women who remain out of the workforce to care for children (Keating 1993: 8). It would be created by cashing out (and increasing the amount of) the Dependent Spouse Rebate (DSR) for families with children and paying it direct to the spouse at home caring for the children.

The concept of such a payment was first mooted by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs in the 1992 report of its inquiry into equal opportunity and equal status for women (the 'Lavarch Report'). Arguing that the DSR was 'perpetuating a stereotype of dependency' on the part of homemaker parents, the Committee recommended that DSS and other relevant Commonwealth agencies undertake work leading to the replacement of the DSR with a direct payment to the homemaker (Lavarch 1992:105-106).

In the 1993-94 Budget, the Government announced that HCCA would be paid at a maximum rate of $60 a fortnight (compared to just under $56 provided through the DSR) direct to the family's primary carer, in addition to the Family Payment.

In the Second Reading Speech introducing the HCCA legislation to Parliament in December 1993, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social Security, Mr Con Sciacca, stated that the new Allowance would provide

... more direct recognition of the considerable time, energy and personal support devoted to children by parents, generally mothers, who decide to
stay at home to raise their children. For the first time, this support will be provided to the parent caring for children, rather than to the other partner as a tax concession. *(Social Security [Home Child Care and Partner Allowances] Legislation Amendment Bill 1993 - Second Reading Speech)*

Details of how the Allowance would operate were set out in the explanatory memorandum accompanying the proposed legislation. The HCCA would:

- be payable to a person who was a member of a couple with a dependent child or children, until the end of the calendar year in which the youngest child turned 18, or until the child ceased secondary schooling, whichever happened first;
- not be paid where the child was a prescribed student child except where the child was qualified to receive payments under the Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme;
- be tax free and indexed annually to the CPI;
- be subject to an income test based on the income of the person receiving it, with income in excess of $282 per annum reducing the rate of the allowance by 25 cents for each dollar of excess income. Any income of the person's partner would not be taken into account; and
- not be subject to an assets test.

The Government estimated that around 840 000 families would be eligible for the HCCA at any one time. Of these, the Government expected that around 55 000 families whose tax liability was previously too low to benefit fully or at all from the DSR would be, on average, $20 a week better off via the HCCA *(Baldwin 1994a)*.

HCCA would also be more responsive to the needs of families than the DSR had been. A parent leaving the workforce at any time during the year (for example, on the birth of a child) would be able to claim the HCCA immediately instead of having to wait to re-establish entitlement in the following financial year (as the DSR had an annual income limit on the nonearning spouse's income) *(Baldwin 1994b)*.

When introducing the legislation in Parliament, the Government announced that the DSR for couples without dependent children and the Sole Parent Rebate would not be affected by the introduction of the HCCA. It also foreshadowed legislation abolishing the DSR for couples with children to prevent dual eligibility.*

The situation for JSA/NSA/SA couples with children in the wake of the abolition of the DSR was, however, more complex and necessitated the introduction, also from 29 September 1994, of another new allowance 'Partner Allowance' - to cater for their circumstances. Previously, the DSR in combination with the beneficiary tax rebate had meant that recipients of JSA,
NSA, SA and Special Benefit were protected from paying tax on their payments. Replacing the 'with child' DSR for families with HCCA would have removed this protection for allowee/beneficiary couples. To prevent this, the Government decided to split the allowance/benefit between members of such couples, with the 'dependent' spouse's share being paid direct to her/him in the form of a non-activity-tested Partner Allowance. Each member of the couple would also receive an individual beneficiary tax rebate sufficient to ensure that they did not have to pay tax on their basic income support allowance.

In the event, HCCA and Partner Allowance - as originally implemented - had very short lives, with both getting caught up in, and undergoing, metamorphosis as part of the major reforms arising from the Government's May 1994 White Paper on Employment and Growth, Working Nation.

**Family Payment Targeting Measures**

The most significant of the targeting measures announced in the 1993-94 Budget comprised changes to the income and assets test thresholds applying to BFP. From 1 January 1994, there would be reductions in:

- the income test threshold for BFP from $64,938 to $60,000 a year;
- the BFP assets test threshold from $607,250 to $550,000; and
- the child disregard for each child after the first from $3249 to $3000.

Other savings measures announced in the Budget, including several also involving the Family Payment income and assets tests, were:

- from January 1994, student parents receiving Prescribed Education Scheme Allowances such as AUSTUDY, ABSTUDY and Postgraduate Awards would become newly subject to the Family Payment income and assets tests;
- from the same date, income received by families from overseas which was not taxed in Australia would be treated as income for the purposes of the Family Payment income tests (as was already the case for other social security payments);
- from January 1995, taxable income deductions for negatively-geared properties would be treated as income in the BFP and AFP income tests; and
- time limits would apply to the payment of arrears to Family Payment recipients who failed to advise DSS of a change of address. This change was to apply from January 1994.

In *Working Nation*, the Government put forward its blueprint for labour market and other reforms aimed at reducing long-term unemployment. Prominent among these were significant changes to the system of income support for unemployed people including:

- changes to income-testing arrangements intended to encourage greater workforce participation; and
- the replacement of combined entitlements for couples with individual entitlements for which both partners would need to qualify in their own right.

One such new payment was Parenting Allowance (PgA), which would also subsume HCCA and be introduced from 1 July 1995. PgA was intended to complement the other White Paper income support reform measures designed to improve full-time work incentives for unemployed couples with children, as well as providing to low-wage working couples with children a choice about the level of their workforce participation. According to the Government:

> The Parenting Allowance is essential for improving the incentive for one member of an unemployed couple to accept a low paid job. The Government, through the Parenting Allowance, will provide additional income to the partner who is caring for children, and continue to provide some level of payment when his or her partner takes a low income job...

> The Parenting Allowance will ensure that a family will receive a higher income where one partner is working than if both individuals are relying on income support. (Working Nation: 151)

PgA would be payable to the member of a couple with dependent children under 16 who had a low personal income or whose partner was an income support recipient or low income-earner. It would be subject to income tests on the income of the recipient and the recipient's partner and to a combined allowance assets test, but would not be activity-tested.

The maximum rate of PgA would be equivalent to half the previous married rate of JSA/NSA and would be payable as long as the income of the recipient's partner was below $462 a fortnight (the cutout point for the partner's allowance after income testing). The PgA would be reduced by 70 cents for every dollar of the partner's income above this amount, but only down to a minimum non-taxable PgA rate of $60 a fortnight (the equivalent of the subsumed HCCA). At this point, only the recipient's personal income test would be able to reduce the base payment below that level.
The PgA personal income test (like the new JSA/NSA income test) would consist of a $60 a fortnight free area, a 50 per cent taper for income between $60 and $140 a fortnight and a 70 per cent taper thereafter.

Maximum rate AFP would be extended automatically to people receiving more than $60 a fortnight in PgA.

Complementary changes involving Wife Pension and Partner Allowance were also set out in the White Paper. Wife Pension would be phased out with no new grants from 1 July 1995. From 1 January 1996, grants of Partner Allowance would be restricted to older JSA/NSA /SA and pensioner spouses (those born before July 1955) with no dependent children and no recent workforce experience. People who would formerly have qualified for either of these two dependency-based payments would have to qualify in their own right for another payment such as PgA, JSA/NSA etc. 13

The Government's commitment to introducing PgA was reiterated in the 1994-95 Budget papers available in the week following the release of the White Paper.

**Family Payment Measures - 1994-1995 Budget**

Other family payment-related measures announced in this Budget involved an ad hoc increase in the rate of AFP and the continued payment of AFP during parents' temporary absence overseas.

AFP would be increased by $1 a week (in addition to the normal indexation increase) from 1 January 1995. This ad hoc increase came as a result of negotiations between the Government and the minor parties in the Senate over the 1993-94 Budget and was intended to offset increases in the wholesale sales tax announced in that Budget. In order to maintain the real value of the increase over time, there was a flow-on increase in the Family Payment benchmarks from 16.2 per cent to 16.6 per cent for children under 13 and from 21.2 per cent to 21.6 per cent for those aged 13 to 15.

Also from 1 January 1995, there was to be some relaxation of the restrictions on the continued payment of AFP during the temporary absence of parents overseas. Before that date, AFP could be paid for up to 13 weeks if one parent was overseas but only if the other parent and child/children remained in Australia. The effect of this on sole parents was that they lost AFP as soon as they left Australia. In the case of a couple, it also precluded payment of AFP when both parents were out of the country. The Budget measure meant that payment of AFP would continue for 13 weeks when one or both parents (but not their child/children) left Australia temporarily.
Maternity Allowance and the Government's Agenda for Families - 1995-1996 Budget

Several family payment and related measures were announced in the 1995-96 Budget, most of which were the result of the work of an Interdepartmental Committee (IDC) on Assistance to Families established by the Government in August 1994. The IDC's main objectives were to:

- review the family payments system and develop options for its improvement and for reducing its administrative complexity; and
- develop options for a Maternity Allowance.

The first of these objectives was prompted by Cabinet's recognition of the increasing complexity for customers of the family payments system as a result both of a range of new payments and of tighter targeting measures introduced over the previous several years. The second objective followed from the Government's commitment to the ACTU in June 1994 in the context of negotiations over a revised wages and incomes accord (Accord Mark VII) to consider the introduction of a Maternity Allowance in this Budget.

The new family payment measures and the background to them were spell out in some detail in An Agenda for Families, a Budget-related paper which provided the Government's main response to IYF.

The Agenda summarised the results of consultations conducted by the National Council for the IYF in regard to people's expectations of the Government's role in supporting families. It explained the Budget measures as, in large part, the Government's response to these expectations and to associated recommendations contained in the November 1994 report of the National IYF Council, Creating the Links: Families and Social Responsibility.

The Agenda also placed the Budget measures in the context of the prevailing achievements of the existing family payments system (p. 26):

- Direct Government assistance to families totals $12.6 billion in 1994-95, or almost 11 per cent of total outlays
- Over 80 per cent of families with dependent children receive direct financial assistance
- 65 per cent of assistance is received by families with incomes of less than $400 per week, with average assistance of $210 per week
- One-earner families and sole parents, who have lower average incomes than two-earner families, receive a higher level of assistance:
  - two-earner families (over 44 per cent of all families with dependent children) receive around 12 per cent of total Government assistance to families, at an average rate of $24 per week
  - one-earner couples with children receive on average $83 per week
- low-income sole parent families receive an average of $214 per week

Against this background, the Agenda went on to provide an insight into how the Government viewed the role of the family payments system - listing the ways (including through the 1995-96 Budget initiatives) in which it would continue to support the system (pp 28-29):

- We will maintain a strong family payments system targeted particularly to low income families.
- We will continue to index all family payments.
- We will support in practical ways the choices families make in caring for their children when they are young.
- We will continue to provide assistance to families to recognise and support their caring role whether they are caring for children or other family members.
- We will work to make the family payments system easier for families to understand.

**Maternity Allowance**

The concept of a maternity (or 'parental') allowance was first raised in contemporary debate by the National IYF Council in its March 1994 discussion paper, *The Heart of the Matter: Families at the Centre of Public Policy*, released as a basis for consultations which it intended conducting during the course of IYF. The Council suggested that Australia might follow the example of 'most OECD countries' and introduce a 'parental allowance' for twelve weeks paid through the social security system and available to all parents 'conditional only on the full-time care of a child, with no reference to previous labour force status' (pp 50-51).

Making the point that paid maternity leave was available to only a minority (around 17 per cent) of Australian women (mainly those employed in the public sector), the Council suggested the rationale for such a payment as offering 'effective choice to parents caring for babies to leave the workforce to care for their child' (P. 50).

The Council's maternity/parental allowance proposal was subsequently taken up by the ACTU in its negotiations with the Government over Accord Mark VII. At the conclusion of these negotiations on 1 June 1994, the Prime Minister announced that it had been agreed that for next year's Budget, the Government will have further negotiations with the ACTU about ways to assist families, and in that context give consideration to introducing a maternity allowance paid through the Social Security system in the spirit of ILO [International Labour Organisation] Convention 103 (Maternity Protection). (Keating 1994b)
Some weeks after this announcement, in an answer to a question in Parliament, Senator Evans (Leader of the Government in the Senate) confirmed that the Government intended introducing such a payment, indicating that its purpose would be somewhat different from, and its scope broader than, what was envisaged in the maternity leave provisions of ILO 103: 16

The Government is introducing this payment to assist families at the time of the birth of a baby, when families need assistance with extra costs. The allowance will be payable whether the mother was at home or in the paid workforce prior to maternity leave. It is proposed that the allowance will be paid through the Social Security system so that mothers can receive the payment directly into their bank accounts, as is the case with other family payments. (Senate Hansard, 20 June 1994:1704)

The National IYF Council incorporated this approach in its November 1994 report to the Government, Creating the Links, recommending that the Government proceed with its stated intention to introduce a maternity/parental allowance through the social security system. Such an allowance should cover the first 12 weeks after birth or adoption of a child and be paid where no other employment-related benefit is currently received. This allowance would be universal (that is paid without income or assets test on the income of the carer and partner) to recognise and support, as a matter of principle, the intensive need for care in early infancy (p. 41).

In the event, the Maternity Allowance announced in the 1995-96 Budget turned out to be somewhat different in its terms and conditions from what the National IYF Council had envisaged. The payment would be smaller and would be (generously) income- and assets-tested, but would be available subject to the income test - to women who were also receiving an employment-related maternity payment (although the numbers who could gain access to both would be small). It also came with the promise that the Government would ‘review the Allowance in the Accord context, with the aim of improving it when economic circumstances permit’ (An Agenda for Families, p. 30).

A number of objectives for the Allowance were identified by the Government at the time it was announced. In An Agenda for Families, it was explained in terms of providing a source of independent income support to women at the time of the birth of a child in recognition of the 'hard work and commitment' which that required (p. 30). As well, the Allowance would complement the existing range of targeted payments aimed at assisting families with children and would also provide 'extra help to families when they have a baby - at a time when they face major one-off costs and often experience a drop in income' (Baldwin 1994: 2).
As announced in the Budget, the Allowance would be paid in a lump sum equal to six times the maximum weekly rate of PgA ($816 at June 1995 rates) for each child (including each child in a multiple birth) born after 1 February 1996. It would also be paid for newborn adopted children, stillborn children and for children who died soon after birth. It would be indexed to the CPI each March and September.

The Allowance would be payable to families meeting the Family Payment residency requirements and income and assets tests, and families would have 26 weeks following the birth in which to apply for it.

The Government expected the Allowance to benefit around 85 per cent of women giving birth.

Other Family Payment Measures in the 1995-96 Budget

The other family payment-related measures announced in the 1995-96 Budget can be grouped broadly under the aims of simplifying the family payments system for customers and of increasing the adequacy and responsiveness of the payments. Some minor ‘compliance'/savings measures were also announced.

Simplifying the Family Payment System

In An Agenda for Families, the Government acknowledged that many people had expressed concern during the IYF consultations over the complexity of the family payments system and had asked that it be simplified, that payments be better coordinated and that guidelines on payments eligibility be clarified.

Budget measures (the more noteworthy of which are described in more detail below) in response to these concerns included:

- the amalgamation of BFP and AFP into a single Family Payment;
- streamlining the application and assessment process for Childcare Assistance 17 and Family Payment;
- transferring to DEET responsibility for assistance to 16-17 year old students living at home;
- aligning income and assets levels and indexation arrangements for Family Payment and AUSTUDY; and
- replacing the AUSTUDY Dependent Spouse Allowance with PgA.

Amalgamation of BFP and AFP

From 1 January 1996, BFP and AFP will be combined into a single Family Payment (FP) with a rate structure dependent on the age of the child. Maximum rates (to be indexed to the CPI on 1 January each year) will be:
Child aged 0-12: $93.10 per fortnight
Child aged 13-15: $121.10 per fortnight
Student aged 16-18: $58.20 per fortnight (until 1 July 1996 when responsibility for students aged 16+ will be transferred to DEET)

Amalgamation will thus reduce the existing five rates of BFP and AFP to (eventually) two age-related rates of FP after July 1996.

The minimum FP will be $22.70 per fortnight per child. An additional Large Family Supplement will be paid to families with four or more children at the rate of $7.50 per fortnight for fourth and subsequent children to protect the higher rate of BFP provided to larger families. The additional components of Multiple Birth Allowance, Rent Assistance and Guardian Allowance will continue to be added, as appropriate, to the rate of FP.

There will be one tapered income test for FP: any dollar of income over the income free area (i.e. the former AFP income limit of $2650 plus $624 for each child after the first) will reduce the payment by 50 cents. Families whose income would reduce their payment to below the minimum will still be paid this minimum if their income is below an income ceiling (equivalent to the BFP income limit of $63 766 plus $3189 for each child after the first).

The minimum payment will also be payable if net assets are below the BFP assets limit of $584 500 (higher if hardship provisions applied). The minimum will also be payable where the family is temporarily overseas for up to three years. The FP will be subject to the maintenance income test but will not be reduced to below the minimum payment by the action of the test.

Streamlining the CA and FP Application and Assessment Process

The application and assessment process for Childcare Assistance (CA) and FP will be simplified in a number of ways including (from late 1995) combining the CA and FP annual review processes and (from 1 April 1996) having an integrated CA and FP application and assessment process and single advice to families explaining their entitlement, greater parity in the definition of income used for both forms of assistance and closer alignment of the reassessment rules and processes where income changes.

Transferring Responsibility for 16-17 Year Old Students to DEET

From 1 July 1996, responsibility for full-time secondary students aged 16 and over will be transferred to DEET, thus reinforcing the link between income support and participation in education and employment-related training activities for people in this age group.

FP will be abolished for students from their 16th birthday. BFP previously paid for those who did not qualify for at least the minimum AUSTUDY.
entitlement of $1000 a year will be replaced by two lump sum AUSTUDY payments of $250 each in January and July. The lump sums will be payable to students aged 16 and 17 in families with incomes below the income limit for payment of minimum FP.

To simplify the transition from FP to AUSTUDY, from 1 January 1996 DSS will send FP recipients with children about to turn 16 an AUSTUDY claim form with relevant information, held by DSS, printed on the form. This will reduce the amount of duplicate information claimants need to supply to DEET at this time.

**Increasing the Adequacy and Responsiveness of Family Payments**

The background to this group of measures, also elaborated on in An Agenda for Families, included calls during IYF for the family payments system to respond more quickly to drops in family income and for benefits to be paid at higher rates to low income families, particularly sole parent families and families reining privately. The more significant of these measures announced in the Budget included:

- from January 1996, increasing the responsiveness of the FP income test;
- from March 1996, increasing Rent Assistance by $5 a fortnight for families with children; and
- from September 1996, increasing Guardian Allowance by $4 a fortnight.

**Increasing the Responsiveness of the FP Income Test**

The FP income test will be made more responsive to both decreases and increases in family income than under the former arrangement where family income had to change by at least 25 per cent before the rate of FP was recalculated. With eligibility for FP assessed on income details that may be up to eighteen months old, this '25 per cent rule' had been criticised as being too harsh and inflexible for families whose income had since decreased but by less than 25 per cent and, conversely, as too generous for those whose incomes had increased but also by less than this amount.

Under the measure announced in the Budget:

- families whose incomes fall after their eligibility for, and rate of, FP has been assessed can be reassessed on the basis of an estimate of their income in the current financial year, regardless of how small the reduction in income; and
- families whose incomes increase and who have had a notifiable change of circumstances will have their FP reassessed if their estimated income is 10 per cent higher than their base year income and 10 per cent above their income-free limit.

148
Families will be allowed a smaller margin for error on their FP income estimates. Only families whose actual income turns out to be at least 110 per cent of their estimated income will incur an overpayment.

This measure will also apply to CA from April 1996.

The Government estimated that, as a result of this measure, over 62 000 families would receive additional amounts of FP and over 26 000 families increased CA. There would also be considerable numbers of losers, with an estimated 20 000 families having their FP reduced and a further 17 500 families on part-rate payments losing all but their minimum rate of FP. An additional 19 200 families receiving only minimum rate FP would lose entitlement to this payment.

Summary

Like most other payments in the social security system, family payments have been the subject of considerable (and virtually continuous) change in the period since 1983.

Major themes in this process of change and development have included:

- tighter targeting of payments, with, for example, income and assets tests being imposed on the formerly universal Family Allowance;
- substantially higher rates of assistance for low-income families and for families with older children with, for example, the replacement of Family Income Supplement with the much more generous Family Allowance Supplement in 1987;
- increases in family payment rates through the establishment of adequacy benchmarks in 1989 and maintenance of the value of all elements of the family payments program through indexation since 1990;
- the integration of family payments in 1993 with a view to increased take-up, a greater share of family income support going to the main carer of the children and the maintenance of work incentives for those working in (or likely to be working in) low-paid jobs; and
- the phasing out of dependency-based payments and the development of an individual entitlement to social security through, for example, the HCCA in 1994 and then Parenting Allowance in 1995.

One of the unintended (and probably unavoidable) outcomes of this process of continuous change over the past decade has been increasing complexity in the family payments program with its range of payment types, eligibility conditions and means tests.

The family payments program has, of course, not been alone in this, with all other social security programs undergoing a similar level of reform and consequent increase in complexity over this period.
The undesirable nature of an overly complex social security system from the point of view of both customers and administrators has been recognised and addressed by the Government in recent times: A major project aimed at reducing complexity in the social security system as a whole is currently under way within DSS; and substantial moves towards simplifying the family payments system were announced in the 1995-96 Budget.

Endnotes

1 For the purposes of the article, 'family payments' essentially comprise those currently included under Program 4 ('Income Security for Families with Children') of the Social Security portfolio. In addition, brief reference is made to Child Disability Allowance (known originally as 'Handicapped Child's Allowance') which is covered under Program 2 ('Income Security for People with Disabilities and the Sick'). The Dependent Spouse Rebate and the Sole Parent Rebate in the personal income tax system are also referred to, as they provide assistance to families analogous to that provided by family payments in the social security System.

The article does not address developments in payments made specifically to sole parents - those included under sub-program 4.3, 'Assistance to Sole Parents and their Dependent Children'. An examination of payments and services provided under this sub-program and of issues affecting sole parent pensioners is provided in Stanton and Herscovitch (1992) and Stanton and Heyworth (1992).

2 The Government announced measures in the 1995-96 Budget aimed at simplifying the family payments system. The Department of Social Security is also currently examining ways of reducing the complexity of all social security programs.

3 Income tax rebates for children did not disappear permanently. In November 1982 some recognition of parents' reduced capacity to pay tax was reintroduced with the provision of a higher Dependent Spouse Rebate for taxpayers with dependent children as well as a dependent spouse.

4 This arrangement was changed in May 1984 when payment of FIS was transferred to the Family Allowance recipient (usually the female partner). The change marked a shift in emphasis away from the objective of maintaining incentives for family breadwinners to stay in low-paid employment and towards the objective of helping families meet the needs of their children (French 1984: 41).

5 In the context of family payments, a concern with 'horizontal equity' implies recognition that families with children incur greater costs and have greater needs than do people without children at the same level of income. A concern with 'vertical equity' implies that lower income families should
receive greater levels of assistance than those on higher incomes to protect them from poverty (Cass 1986: 3-4).

6 The Labor Party's election policy statement, released at the same time as the Prime Minister's speech, reiterated his commitment regarding child poverty, but in the following (slightly less explicit) terms: 'We pledge that by 1990 no child will need to live in poverty.' (Australian Labor Party 1987:19). This form of words has generally been used by the Government in subsequent references to Mr Hawke's commitment (see e.g. House of Representatives Hansard, 13 April 1988:1449).

7 AUSTUDY is a means-tested income support payment administered by DEET for students in secondary and tertiary education.

8 At the time of this change, the AUSTUDY threshold was indexed annually according to movements in Average Weekly Earnings (AWE). This would also have applied to the new FAS threshold had not the Government changed indexation arrangements for the AUSTUDY threshold, from annual AWE to annual CPI movements from January 1993, to keep it (and FAS) in line with the indexation arrangements applying generally in the family payments program. This was essentially a savings/targeting measure, with DSS estimating that, over the four-year period 1992-93 to 1995-96, it would reduce FAS recipient numbers by around 12 800.

9 According to a survey of recipients of the bonus, carried out by DSS in May 1992, this expectation turned out to be largely accurate, with 88 per cent of respondents reporting that they had spent all or some of their bonus by the time of the survey. There was also a noticeable jump in retail sales around this month.

10 An article by David Rowlands, 'Home Child Care Allowance', describing the development and implementation of HCCA was published in the December 1994 edition of the Social Security Journal.

11 The DSR is a horizontal equity measure in the tax system which recognises that the cost of supporting dependants reduces a person's capacity to pay tax compared with a person without dependants. In 1994-95, it was worth $1452 (or $55.85 a fortnight) to a couple with one or more children, with the income test reducing it by 25 cents for every dollar by which the spouse's income exceeded $282 a year.

12 The Government's legislation intended to abolish the 'with child' DSR was amended by the Senate. The effect of the amendment (sponsored by the Opposition and Australian Democrats and agreed to by the Government) was that the 'with child' DSR will be phased out over a number of years rather than abolished immediately (Senate Hansard, 16 November 1994: 3201-3208). This means that, in the short term, families retain the option of continuing to claim the DSR rather than HCCA. However, the 'with child'
DSR will no longer be indexed and will be abolished when its value falls below that of the 'without child' DSR (Baldwin & Gear 1994).

13 On 17 October 1995, the Government announced that wife pensioners and mature age partner allowees born after 1 July 1955 would not have their payments cancelled from 1 January 1996.

14 The National Council for the IYF was appointed as an independent advisory body to the Minister for Family Services early in 1994. Its Terms of Reference included the provision of advice to the Minister and the Commonwealth Government on 'national priorities for the International Year of the Family and on issues affecting Australian families' (National Council for the IYF 1994b: 1).

15 A Maternity Allowance was previously introduced in Australia in 1912 as a very early component of the then embryonic social security system. This original Maternity Allowance was payable to a mother on the birth of a child in a non-means tested and untaxed lump sum of £5 ($10). It was abolished in 1978, at which time the rate of $30 (for the first child) had remained unchanged since 1943.

16 According to ILO Convention 103, women in the workforce should be entitled to at least 12 weeks' paid maternity leave and the payment rate should be sufficient to maintain the health of the mother and newborn child (its concern thus being solely with women who are in the workforce prior to childbirth and with a specific focus on maternal and child health rather than family income support more broadly).

17 Under the Childcare Assistance scheme, which is administered jointly by DSS and the Department of Human Services and Health, approved family day care and child care centres are subsidised to provide reduced fees to low and middle-income families. Eligibility is based on the family's income, the number of children in the family and the number of these in child care.

References

Australia, House of Representatives, Debates, 13 April 1988.

Australia, Senate, Debates, 20 June 1994.

Australia, Senate, Debates, 16 November 1994.


Hawke, R. J. L. (1987), *ALP Election Campaign Policy Launch, Speech by the Prime Minister, Sydney Opera House, 23 June.*


Keating, P. J. (1992), *One Nation*, Statement by the Prime Minister, AGPS, Canberra, February.


Keating, P. J. (1994b), *Agreement with the ACTU to Implement Accord Mark 7*, Statement by the Prime Minister, Canberra, 1 June.


SOcial Security Notes

Manny Palma, "Where We've Come From and Where We're Going: The Key Directions for the Department of Social Security in Access and Equity"

Bob Dapre, "The Concept of Take-up"

Philip Brown, "Evaluation of Home Child Care Allowance: Findings from Pre-implementation Survey"


Robyn Bedford, "The Preparation of Replies to Ministerial Correspondence in the Department of Social Security"

Social Security Journal
December 1995
WHERE WE'VE COME FROM AND WHERE WE'RE GOING: THE KEY DIRECTIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SECURITY IN ACCESS AND EQUITY

Manny Palma
Migrant Services Section, Client Service Program Branch, Family Programs and Services Division, Department of Social Security

Introduction

Two key social justice objectives of the Commonwealth Government are to ensure that:

- all Australians can access its programs and services with equal ease; and
- all Australians receive a fair share of the resources delivered through Commonwealth programs.

In the past, government departments and agencies have not always communicated effectively with many of their clients who may not speak, read or write English well enough to find out about, and use, entitlements and services on a par with other Australians. Those responsible for program design and delivery did not always consider the fact that many overseas-born Australians not only did not speak English, but also lacked understanding of the role of government.

The Access and Equity Strategy began in 1985 as a policy response to service provision for people of non-English speaking background (NESB). In 1989 it was extended to include all groups who may face barriers of race, religion, language or culture, including Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. The strategy forms part of the Government’s Social Justice Strategy which seeks to redress broader disadvantage across Australian society.

All Commonwealth portfolios were required to publish a three-year Access and Equity Plan in 1988 and again in 1991 to provide a broad framework for detailed planning within programs and at different levels of the organisation. The most recent changes to the Department of Social Security’s Access and Equity Strategy have resulted from a major evaluation of access and equity across all portfolios which was carried out in 1991-92 by the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.
The first DSS Access and Equity Plan for the three years ending 1990 was generally implemented successfully. The evaluation of this first Plan examined reports and suggestions from regional, area and national administration and from public submissions. The public submissions received were strongly supportive of departmental directions for improving access and equity for the target populations.

The second Social Security Portfolio Access and Equity Plan for 1990-91 to 1992-93 was published in January 1991. Strategies for this second three-year Plan were identified from the recommendations of the evaluation of the first Access and Equity Plan and also incorporated consideration of the expanded policies announced in 1989. The strategies in the Plan were predominantly customer-focused and applied across the Department's five income security programs. A major evaluation of the plan was commenced in 1993-94. The findings were published in an evaluation report entitled *Continuous Improvement*. The evaluation was the basis for the development of the *Blueprint for Continuous Improvement* which outlines key directions in access and equity for the current three-year period (1994-95 to 1996-97).

The Department's strategies correspond with the Government's focus on social justice in the 1990s which is aimed at achieving a fair distribution (if economic growth and making the system more responsive to people's needs, that is, growth with equity and focusing on outcomes.

**The Meaning of Access and Equity**

Access and Equity is defined in the OMA Access and Equity Evaluation Summary as ‘a policy to ensure that equitable access to government programs and services by all members of the Australian community is not impeded by barriers related to language, culture, race or religion.’ Before 1989 the policy related to immigrants only. Since then, it has been extended to include Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders and Australian-born children of migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds.

The Policy's strategy seeks to ensure that these people have:

- equal life chances and enjoy equitable access to and an equitable share of the resources which the Commonwealth Government manages on behalf of the community; and
- the opportunity to participate fully in society and in the decisions which directly affect them.

The concept of *access* implies that all who are entitled to a public service should face no barriers which render their situation inequitable compared with others so entitled.

*Equity* implies that all who are entitled to government service provision should be equally likely to receive it if eligible.
Access is a relatively easy concept to understand and initial efforts in the implementation of the Access and Equity Strategy have concentrated on removing barriers to access. There was a recognition, however, that the concept of equity was not well understood and OMA commissioned research to further advance this concept.

The research found that differential treatment is sometimes needed to achieve equity both for migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds and the Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders. Equity can be best addressed through mechanisms which ensure the participation of disadvantaged groups in decision making and by means of special policies and practices to meet varying needs and wants.

**Access and Equity Target Groups**

The following definitions have been ascribed to the two access and equity target groups:

i) **Aboriginal People and Torres Strait Islanders:**
The use of this term acknowledges the special status of the indigenous people of Australia and the diversity of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and cultures. The self descriptive term 'Koori' is also used by Aboriginal people in South-Eastern Australia. Similarly the word 'Murri' is used in North-Eastern Australia. Many other words are used around Australia such as 'Anangu' in Pitjantjatjara.

it is important to note that Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders may also be from a non-English speaking background and face both cultural and language barriers.

ii) **Migrants from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds:**
The term 'migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds' refers to:

- migrants who come from countries where the first language is not English; and
- their Australian-born children.

**Access and Equity in DSS**

The active implementation of access and equity principles has changed the way the Department does business, resulting in service delivery that is attuned to the individual needs of customers and ensures that they do not face barriers of race, language or culture. Such changes have resulted not only in better service to customers but a greater level of staff satisfaction, knowing that they are providing equitable access for all customers of the Department's various programs and services.
In general, DSS's main process for implementing the Government's Social Justice Strategy is through its Access and Equity program which ensures that all Australians have equal access to the Department's income security programs and services.

Improved access and equity outcomes are achieved through mainstream services and a comprehensive range of specialist services designed to facilitate access for people disadvantaged by remoteness, language and cultural barriers. These specialist services are described below.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services**

Special efforts are made to ensure that the Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders have full access to Social Security advice, information and entitlements. Services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers are provided mainly through the Department's network of 220 regional offices.

There is also an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services section (ATSISS) in the Department's National Administration in Canberra, which is responsible for policy development and overall management of the Department's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services.

Several initiatives have been introduced to improve services offered by the Department of Social Security to the residents of communities and towns with predominantly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations. These initiatives are:

**Support Network for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Parents (SNAP)**

This program was established as a result of a 1989-90 Budget initiative and is aimed at addressing child poverty in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The program arose from concerns that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents may not be receiving the full range of assistance to which they are entitled in respect of their children. SNAP officers work from regional and area offices in locations with significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations.

The specific tasks of SNAP officers are to:

- ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families are receiving their correct DSS entitlements;
- assist families to gain access to other government agencies' family/childrelated programs and services; and
- assist families to identify and use relevant existing community resources in ways which will effectively meet the health, nutrition and other needs of their children.
The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Liaison Officer (AILO) Scheme

The scheme was established in 1975 to provide a link between the Department of Social Security and Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders. The role of the AILO is to promote access by Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders to their social security entitlements and to obtain feedback on DSS programs and services. Their duties involve extensive field work, including helping Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders claim and maintain their correct entitlements, promoting awareness of Department of Social Security programs and, within Regional Offices, providing assistance to other staff in more complex dealings with Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Interpreter Service

In 1989, DSS made a commitment to provide language services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers who have problems understanding English or who speak it as a second language. The service enables DSS to give information to and obtain information from Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders in their own language.

The provision of interpreters aids communication and thereby ensures that customers maintain their full entitlements and fulfil their obligations as DSS customers.

Remote Visiting Teams

The primary objective of the remote visiting teams (RVTs) is to visit people in remote and isolated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to improve their access to DSS information and to ensure that all eligible people are receiving their correct entitlements. An RVT consists of two people, an AILO and another DSS staff member with a specialist knowledge of DSS payments. The RVT usually spends a number of days in each community to handle all DSS matters for that community.

Community Agent Program

Many Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders who live in remote communities experience significant difficulties in claiming their correct entitlements because of the distance they live from the nearest DSS office. In response to these problems, the Department embarked on a pilot program where, by 1987-88, 11 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations were funded to employ a person to look after social security matters in their local community. The agent assists with the provision of basic DSS information, forms completion and lodgement, speedy reporting of problems and the minimisation of incorrect or delayed payments.
Recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Within the DSS Network

The Department places considerable importance on recruitment and employment opportunities for its own Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. DSS has a comprehensive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy which aims to highlight career options for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff through the use of recruitment and training programs, career development initiatives and support mechanisms.

It is indicative of the Department's commitment in this field that there are approximately 740 people employed by DSS or 3.8 per cent of total staff who have identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (the actual number would be larger). This is well in excess of the minimum 2 per cent target set by the Australian Public Service. Where possible, the DSS network aims for more substantial representation than the minimum 2 per cent in areas/regions with a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers. For example, some 25 per cent of DSS staff in Area North Australia are Aboriginal people or Torres Strait Islanders.

DSS supports the career development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff through the provision of Aboriginal Undergraduate Study Awards (AUSA). There are currently nine DSS staff in receipt of AUSA awards.

Ethnic Community Services

DSS aims to ensure that all Australians, including migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds, have equitable access to the Department's programs. This is a large responsibility since, in 1993, 786,000 customers (about 18 per cent of all DSS customers) were from non-English speaking countries.

The migrant services section (MSS) in the Department's national administration co-ordinates the Department's programs for people from non-English speaking backgrounds throughout its extensive network of Area and Regional Offices. The key roles of the section are to help set a national vision, focus and direction for the Department's policy, programs and services to people from non-English speaking backgrounds and to develop and monitor the DSS national Access and Equity agenda. The section also has a role of promoting an awareness and understanding of migrant services issues within the Department and providing advice on specialist issues.

The MSS is supported by the migrant services units (MSUs) in each State which are responsible for providing feedback on the impact of departmental policies, programs and services and undertaking consultations with peak and local ethnic organisations. MSUs consult with peak and local ethnic organisations as well as other government agencies and service providers to improve the effectiveness of the Department's and inter-agency services to migrants.
Specific services for people from non-English speaking backgrounds are identified by national monitoring of services for these customers and reporting to the Secretary, executive area and regional office management and migrant service unit managers on their operation.

The Department has developed a comprehensive range of language services and consultative mechanisms to ensure that access and equity barriers are reduced. They are as follows:

**Language and Information Services**

Interpreter and translation services are provided by permanent full-time and part-time interpreters employed by the Department and supplemented by a pool of on-call and sessional interpreters and translators who work under contract.

The employment of staff with language skills is actively encouraged by the Department as part of its quality customer services strategy to people from non-English speaking backgrounds. At September 1995, approximately 845 departmental staff received a Linguistic Availability Performance Allowance (LAPA), which is now known as the Community Language Allowance (CLA).

Documents which relate to customer eligibility for assistance are translated free of charge by the Department into languages other than English. All pamphlets, brochures and posters are considered for translation.

The most important information products are translated into the 15 languages of the customer groups most represented in the particular program. With products which are not translated, the Department has adopted a policy of printing a 'language block' which advises readers in 15 languages that information on the particular program or service is available through the multilingual telephone information (MTI) service.

The MTI service was set up to assist migrants seeking information and advice about social security in community languages. People who have a limited understanding of English can call a toll free number from anywhere in Australia and speak to an operator in their own language. Calls can be answered in about 50 different languages.

Since the inception of the second Access and Equity Plan, there has been a greater focus on the use of the ethnic media to disseminate information to people from a non-English speaking background. All departmental media releases are distributed to selected ethnic media outlets. Media releases of particular relevance to overseas-born customers, for example, those dealing with assurance of support or reciprocal agreement arrangements, are translated into community languages. The Department's publication *Age Pension News* appears in 15 community languages and is available on request.
from the MTI service. Paid advertising in ethnic newspapers and on SBS television and ethnic community radio stations is used extensively.

*Migrant Liaison Officer (MLO) Program*

The purpose of the program is to disseminate information about the Department's programs and services to ethnic communities and to obtain feedback from ethnic communities about the information needs and the impact of initiatives on migrant customers from non-English speaking backgrounds. This is considered essential to the planning and development of service delivery in the Department. MLOs also play a key role in facilitating local level liaison to increase ethnic community involvement in service delivery.

*Consultations with Migrant Communities from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds*

At the national level, the Minister and/or senior officers of the Department consult with the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA).

Each State and the Northern Territory also has a Migrant Advisory Committee (MAC) which meets approximately four times a year. The MACs provide a formal forum for the ethnic community to raise service delivery issues with the Department. Committee members represent a broad range of migrant communities and organisations.

Special community seminars are also arranged to explain changes in social security programs. Examples of such exercises include those arranged as part of the international agreement program and before the integration of family payments.

*The Evaluation of Access and Equity Strategies in DSS*

The 1993 Portfolio Evaluation Plan called for a full scale evaluation of the second DSS Access and Equity Plan for 1990-91 to 1992-93, with the aim being to:

- assess the extent to which the measures contained in the Plan had been met and how effective they had been in improving access to the Department's services and achieving more equitable outcomes for the Department's customers;
- assess the extent to which the overall outcomes of the Plan were consistent with the Government's overall access and equity policy objectives; and
- to make recommendations on measures that should be taken in the next three years to improve access and equity across the Department's programs and services.
The evaluation addresses a number of issues relating to the aims and objectives of the DSS Access and Equity Plan and, more broadly, the operation of access and equity in the Department generally. It examines performance against the broad strategies relating to information provision, language services and community consultation and against other program specific strategies.

Following from this, the Evaluation makes thirty recommendations for the next three years which are intended to help the Department further improve the way in which its approach to access and equity is integrated into its planning and policy development processes as well as its delivery of services. These recommendations centre around the fine tuning of existing programs and services, and increasing the awareness of staff of the functions of specialists such as the Aboriginal and Islander Liaison Officers (AILOs). The recommendations cover issues relating to the planning and management of Access and Equity in the Department, special programs for Access and Equity target groups, language and information services, special client groups such as refugees, and consultations with Access and Equity target groups.

Each recommendation includes a supporting rationale which also embraces ways in which the recommendation can be implemented and performance measured.

The Evaluation also includes an attachment (Attachment A) which provides a comprehensive review of the ninety-six strategies contained in the DSS Portfolio Access and Equity Plan, 1990/91 to 1992/93, and the implementation process that was adopted. Outcomes are also reported upon for each strategy.

**How the Evaluation was Performed**

The evaluation of the second Access and Equity Plan involved consulting with migrant and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups and carrying out surveys of DSS staff, including counter officers and Area and Regional Managers.

The consultations with Migrant Advisory Committee members and participants were carried out in all mainland States and Northern Queensland. Topics covered in the consultations included general aspects of the Department's access and equity strategies, ethnic community interaction with DSS, and possible future directions.

Consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities (ATSIC) were coordinated through the 60 ATSIC Regional Council Chairpersons who were formally informed of the evaluation and advised of the consultations which may be taking place in their region.
The ATSIC Regional Council chairpersons were also sent a structured questionnaire to assist with the presentation of their views on a range of topics including access to services and products, consultation mechanisms and any perceived disadvantage experienced by any groups of customers. This approach was based on methods previously used successfully by the Department's former North Australia Development Unit.

A mail survey of all 20 Area Managers was used to collect information on issues such as management and monitoring practices, program issues, language and information services, and future directions.

In providing responses, Area Managers consulted widely with Program Delivery, Migrant Services Units (MSUs), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services Units (ASU) and other Managers.

Structured mail questionnaires were also distributed to a sample of 30 Regional Managers in regions identified as having high to medium concentrations of migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations.

The evaluation also reviewed a large number of existing internal and external research and evaluation studies of access and equity in DSS, including those conducted by OMA.

**Access and Equity - DSS Achievements to Date**

DSS has been recognised as being at the leading edge of implementation of Access and Equity, with the evaluation conducted by the Office of Multicultural Affairs in 1992 being very complimentary about its initiatives. OMA regards DSS as 'leading the way' in its approach to implementation of Access and Equity.

The OMA report noted that 'DSS was far in advance of other departments in its understanding and implementation of access and equity principles' with the commitment of senior staff being noticeable by their presence at every consultation staff use of the series of consultations as additional opportunities for meeting community representatives and the publicising of their own initiatives with cards and pamphlets was also commended.

OMA found that DSS's use of interpreters, translated materials, bilingual/bicultural staff, cross-cultural training and targeted information all facilitated, and contributed to, improved access. According to the report, 'DSS is well placed to be a role model for, and provide assistance to, other departments which are tardier in coming to grips with the concept of access and equity'.
OMA noted that DSS had directed considerable efforts towards Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Liaison Officer network and monitoring and examining the information needs of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders. DSS has also been developing the use of radio to provide information on services to Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders. It has distributed culture-specific material to communities for Broadcasting to Remote Aboriginal Communities (BRACS).

DSS was also found to have demonstrated strong links with community groups and support networks and was one of a few departments monitoring, through community consultations, whether Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers were experiencing access problems.

DSS Area Outreach officers had made an effort to ensure Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander representation on Area /Regional Office community consultative committees in offices with high concentrations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers. The community consultative pilots in Regional Offices were also found by OMA to be noteworthy in this respect.

Full details of how DSS has undertaken implementation of Access and Equity initiatives are contained in The Review of Strategies Contained in the DSS Portfolio Access and Equity Plan 1990/91 to 1992193 at attachment A of the Evaluation.

The Future

DSS is looking at ways of better addressing the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and this is reflected in moves towards simplification of claim forms for remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Further expansion of services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers will occur in the 1995-96 financial year. This expansion will include the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Liaison Officer Scheme, the Support Network for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Parents Program and the Community Agent Program.

DSS has an ongoing commitment to providing information to migrants and other customers from a non-English speaking background in their own language. The information needs of migrants are taken into account at the development stage of each publicity campaign through the consultative arrangements between the DSS Information and Public Relations Branch and the Migrant Services Section. The Department will undertake further research in 1995-96 into the information needs of people from non-English speaking backgrounds. Results from the study will further enhance the Department's ability to target information strategies accurately.
The Parliamentary Secretaries for the Department of Social Security and the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) have agreed on closer cooperative arrangements for services to people of non-English speaking backgrounds. The agreement on closer co-operation includes:

- joint community consultative arrangements between DSS/DEET through the Migrant Advisory Committees in all States (in New South Wales there are separate but coordinated committees).
- DSS provision of on-site interpreter services for DEET Regional Offices on a user-pays basis; and
- inter-departmental co-operation in the location and service delivery planning of each Department's MLO; these will include joint outreach seminars, joint publicity campaigns, etc.

From 1994-95, key access and equity objectives have been incorporated into all corporate planning processes, including the Strategic Plan Supplement and each of the Department's Program Plans. Furthermore, the development of the *Blueprint for Continuous Improvement* highlights key access and equity issues and directions to assist managers in the formulation of their Business Plans. The 'Blueprint' replaces the previous access and equity plans developed by the Department as part of the Government's access and equity policy.

**Conclusion**

The Evaluation has, in general, confirmed the findings of earlier studies and projects such as the *OMA Access and Equity Evaluation 1992, and Rhetoric or Reality? Report of the Inquiry into the Implementation of the Access and Equity Strategy* that DSS is well advanced in implementing access and equity principles. In addition to implementing an extensive range of specialist services designed to facilitate access for customers, the mechanisms established for consulting with relevant community organisations and representatives of customers groups ensure that equity concerns are addressed by the Department. The evidence obtained during the evaluation suggests that the DSS access and equity strategies are well targeted and meet their objectives. The challenge for the future is to improve the level and consistency of service delivery and equity particularly for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, refugees, emerging migrant groups and people in remote areas.

While current policies and service delivery practices have made significant progress in addressing the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers, the effects of the historical legacy of previous policies still continue to be felt. The Evaluation highlighted the need for improvement in the coordination of feedback to Area Management and National Administration on access and equity issues.
The Evaluation found that improved outcomes for customers could be brought about by a greater focus on planning for cultural diversity at an early stage of policy and program development. General access and equity principles need to be translated into a comprehensive planning system built around the Department's program plans. Key program and cross-program strategies could thus be linked to implementation strategies through strategic and operational planning and the associated reporting and evaluation cycles.

To date, the monitoring of take-up and participation by the target groups within programs has generally suffered from a lack of accessible data and availability of guidelines for managers.

For the formal planning processes to be translated to effective service delivery, staff at all levels need to be aware of the objectives of access and equity principles and processes. In this context, the evaluation identified a need for departmental cultural awareness and language services training programs to be redeveloped in the context of a broader access and equity program to further improve staff sensitivity to the disadvantages faced by the various target groups and to alleviate confusion about the differences between access and equity and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policies.

*The Social Security Portfolio Access & Equity 1990-91 to 1992-93 Continuous Improvement: Evaluation Report and Access & Equity 1994-95 to 1996-97: A Blueprint for Continuous Improvement* will be released for sale to the public through the Australian Government Publishing Service to coincide with the publication of this article.

**Endnotes**

1 Office of Multicultural Affairs Access and Equity Evaluation Summary 1992, page 2

2 See North Australia Development Unit *Where to Now? Department of Social Security Payments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities in North Australia* September 1990
THE CONCEPT OF TAKE-UP

Robert Daprè
Director, Divisional Coordination and Planning, Family Programs and Services Division, Department of Social Security

Introduction

The level of take-up of a social security payment is an important measure of the effectiveness of a social security program. The issue of take-up is of particular interest to the 'Income Security for Families with Children' program and especially in respect of 'additional Family Payment' for which the Department of Social Security (DSS) has developed a model for estimating take-up. There has been a major debate in the UK concerning the take-up of income-tested family payments since the 1970s.

The purpose of this paper is to explain the concept of take-up. The term is frequently used in an inaccurate or loose fashion. In particular, 'take-up' is often confused with 'coverage'. It is also sometimes used incorrectly to reflect no more than movements in numbers on a payment.

Definition of Take-up

Numeric Take-up

Take-up is most frequently thought of in terms of the number of persons taking up a payment. Numeric take-up can be defined as 'the proportion which eligible recipients of the payment comprise of the total number of persons eligible for the payment', that is:

\[
\text{Number of Eligible Recipients} \times 100 \\
\text{Number of Eligible Recipients} + \text{Number of Eligible Non-recipients}
\]

Monetary Take-up

The definition of take-up can be extended to money paid rather than to people. Monetary take-up can be defined as the 'sum of the entitlements of all eligible recipients expressed as a proportion of the entitlements of the eligible population'. The equation for monetary take-up is:

\[
\text{Entitlements of All Eligible Recipients ($)} \times 100 \\
\text{Entitlements of Eligible Population ($)}
\]

While it is customary to concentrate more on 'numeric' rather than monetary' take-up, the latter can be a useful indicator of program effectiveness. For means-tested social security payments, monetary take-up is usually expected.
to be higher than numeric take-up because persons entitled to a higher rate of payment (that is, those with the greatest need) are thought to be more likely to take it up than those with low entitlements.

**Definition of Coverage**

'Coverage' is often confused with 'take-up'. Coverage in relation to a social security payment is usually measured by the proportion of a given category of the population who receive the payment. The concept of coverage is not concerned with 'eligibility' in respect of the denominator of the equation. Thus the proportion of the population of Age Pension age who are in receipt of the Age (or some alternative) Pension as shown below is an example of coverage:

\[
\frac{\text{Population of Age Pension Age Receiving Age or Equivalent Pension \times 100}}{\text{Population of Age Pension Age}}
\]

Another example of a coverage ratio is the proportion of families with children who receive basic Family Payment. For some payments, for example, disability or unemployment payments, the 'population' category in the denominator of the equation can be quite difficult to establish.

As some of the population in a particular category will invariably not be eligible for a payment (for example, because of means-testing), coverage will be lower than take-up.

**Estimation of Take-up**

The estimation of take-up is often fraught with difficulties. It is for this reason that 'coverage' is sometimes used as a surrogate measure for take-up. Estimation problems are discussed below for both the numerator and the denominator of the equation. The issue of overlapping payment types is dealt with separately.

**The Numerator of the Take-up Equation**

In principle the numerator, representing the number of recipients of a payment, is the easiest half of the take-up equation to fill in. In practice two particular difficulties may arise:

- in the first place administrative statistics of payment recipients at a point of time may be inaccurate for a number of reasons. For example, because of payments in arrears, the number of Jobsearch/Newstart Allowance payments made on a particular day may not reflect the number of recipients who are being (or will be) paid for that day;
- secondly, the specification in the definition that recipients must be I eligible'means that, to the extent that there are incorrect payments due to fraud or administrative error, the numbers on payment could be
incorrect. This factor on its own would overestimate the real take-up level. Generally when calculations of take-up rates are made, the numbers on payment as given in administrative statistics are used with no adjustment made for possible incorrect payments.

The Denominator of the Take-up Equation

Estimating the denominator of the take-up equation, that is, the population eligible for a payment, usually presents the greatest difficulty. The extent of the problem depends primarily on the eligibility criteria for the payment and on the availability of relevant, comprehensive and timely data.

Estimation issues are considered separately for three types of payment: universal payments; means-tested payments made to clearly defined categories of the population; and payments (usually means-tested) which have eligibility criteria requiring detailed individual assessment. It will be shown below that take-up estimates are more difficult when payments are meanstested and still more so to the extent that eligibility criteria require detailed individual assessment. Data availability problems are also examined.

The following section briefly discusses the problems of estimating take-up for a number of Australian social security payments.

Universal Payments

The most accurate estimates of take-up are usually possible for universal payments (that is, payments made on a non-means-tested basis to all persons within a broad community group). A fairly accurate estimate of the target group can usually be made from Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data. In fact the administrative ease of getting to the target group means also that take-up is usually very high and often approaches (and cannot be distinguished from) 100 per cent. Payments are rarely completely universal, but the Family Allowance in Australia before the first stage of general meanstesting commenced in November 1987 is an example of what was a broadly universal payment.

Means-tested Payments Made to Clearly Defined Categories of the Population

For payments with means tests (as applies to almost all payments in Australia), estimation of take-up is usually difficult. However, where the payment is made to clearly defined categories of the population, a reasonable estimate may be possible. Take-up calculations require information, usually from ABS surveys, to enable the population in the target category, excluded from eligibility by means tests, to be estimated. The suitability of ABS surveys, which will rarely if ever have been conducted primarily for the purpose of measuring take-up, is a major factor here.
For take-up estimation purposes, a number of problems may arise with ABS surveys. These can include too small a sample size; insufficient closeness of categories in the survey to payment categories; inadequate data quality (for example, survey respondents may understate their income); differences in survey definitions of income or of the income unit and those used for social security eligibility; and the suitability of the time period to which the surveys relate. Ideal or even nearly ideal data is just about never available. While take-up estimates could always be improved by the conduct of large, detailed and specially tailored surveys, such surveys are not usually regarded as justifiable on grounds of cost.

DSS has developed a microsimulation model which adjusts and ‘updates’ data from ABS surveys. The model can be used among other things to estimate take-up for basic Family Payment, additional Family Payment and Sole Parent Pension.

For payments such as Age Pension and Sole Parent Pension, in the absence of precise take-up estimates that allow for the effects of means tests on numbers eligible, 'coverage' figures, if carefully interpreted, may in some circumstances provide a rough indication of the level of, and trends in, take-up:

- for Age Pension the fact that, despite the significant number of persons who would be excluded from eligibility on the basis of the income and assets tests, more than three-quarters of the population of Age Pension age are in receipt of an Age or equivalent pension is usually accepted as an indication that take-up of Age Pension is high;
- similarly for Sole Parent Pension, the fact that even with income and assets tests more than 80 per cent of sole parents receive a pension is also evidence of high take-up.

In the case of Age and Sole Parent Pension, it can be stated at minimum that the actual level of take-up would exceed the coverage levels.

Payments (Usually Means-Tested) Where the Eligibility Criteria Require Detailed Individual Assessment

For payments in the above category, take-up estimates often present insurmountable problems and coverage estimates are likely to be almost as difficult. This is because, over and above all the general problems which were noted in ABS surveys, it is difficult to identify with any degree of accuracy the composition of the eligible population. Examples of such payments are Disability Support Pension, eligibility for which is assessed for many applicants by means of detailed individual medical examinations and consideration of the effect of their disability on capacity to work; and job Search Allowance/Newstart Allowance, where eligibility is based on an applicant complying with the individually-assessed activity test. In these
cases it is doubtful if even costly and specially tailored surveys could ever provide a precise figure of coverage, let alone take-up.

For groups such as recipients of disability and unemployment payments, the only rough guide to take-up may be to look at trends in numbers in receipt of the payments over time. In the absence of other explanations of increases or decreases, take-up may be an explanation for part or all of a trend. In these analyses it is not possible to put a figure on the level of take-up but merely to draw (usually only tentative) conclusions about whether it is increasing or declining. Carer Pension is a specific example of a payment for which trends in numbers have been used to make assumptions about the direction of take-up.

**Overlapping Payments**

The above analysis does not take account of the fact that, although they are eligible for only one payment at any given time, many social security recipients may satisfy the eligibility criteria for more than one payment. If no allowance is made for this fact meaningful measures of take-up cannot be made as the take-up for each individual payment will always be understated.\(^4\)

**Summary**

This paper defines payment take-up and notes that there are often difficulties in measuring it. In the absence of precise estimates of the take-up rate, useful information about take-up may be gained from examining coverage figures or even from examining trends in payment recipient numbers over time. The important message which the paper seeks to convey is that details of coverage do not constitute estimates of take-up but at best are likely to be no more than indicative of take-up levels. An analysis of trends in numbers of payment recipients over time can never provide an estimate of the level of take-up but at most an indicator of the direction in which take-up is moving.
Endnotes


3 A separate issue which is not considered here is the extent to which greater complexity in eligibility criteria tends to lead to reduced take-up. This lower take-up may be related to a number of factors such as administrative difficulties, ignorance of the benefit and its eligibility criteria among potential clients, possible stigma associated with receipt of a means-tested benefit and unwillingness of persons to deal with government agencies.

4 An alternative approach to measuring take-up, designed to overcome this problem, is to identify broad categories of the population (for example, single persons, married couples, sole parents) eligible for social security payments and then seek to determine how many in the categories are receiving payments. This is sometimes akin to estimating coverage. This approach may remove some of the problems identified with take-up estimates generally.
EVALUATION OF HOME CHILD CARE ALLOWANCE: FINDINGS FROM
PRE-IMPLEMENTATION SURVEY

Philip Brown
Home Child Care Allowance Section, Parenting and Child Care Branch, Family Programs and Services
Division, Department of Social Security

Introduction

Some interesting information about families with children has been revealed by a recent survey of partnered
Family Payment recipients that was undertaken by a private contractor for DSS as part of the evaluation of
Home Child Care Allowance (HCCA). Most notably, the findings relating to workforce participation,
workforce intentions, child care, financial decision-making, awareness of the dependent spouse rebate, and
initial reactions to the introduction of HCCA, provide useful contributions to further analysis and
development in family and labour market policy spheres.

Background

Analysis of the data collected in the pre-implementation survey has recently been finalised by the private
contractor who undertook the work. This research consisted of a survey of 1453 randomly selected partnered
Family Payment recipients, undertaken in June and July 1994. The survey was undertaken by both Computer
Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) and face-to-face methodologies. Generally, the information obtained
from both survey methods was very similar, with the split methodological approach ensuring that the survey
could be conducted on a national basis and include people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and
non-English speaking groups. The selected Family Payment recipients for the telephone component of the
survey were drawn from all States and Territories. The face-to-face component of the survey included people
in Sydney and Melbourne, as well as some regional and rural centres.

For the purposes of the survey, secondary income earners were defined as partners who receive the lower
amount of income (including no income) in a two parent family. In 97 per cent of cases, this was the female
partner.

Characteristics of Two-parent Families Getting Family Payment

- Only 32 per cent of secondary income earners work in paid employment. A further 19 per cent receive
  some form of Social Security payment other
than Family Payment (e.g. a pension or allowance). The remaining 49 per cent report no income either through paid employment or income support. This latter group are dependent upon their partner, Family Payment and/or other sources (e.g. investments) for income.

• Secondary income earners are predominantly female, with only three per cent of secondary income earners identified as males. This correlates with the partner who identified as having main responsibility for the care of children, with 97 per cent of primary carers identified as female.

• On average, two-partner families receiving Family Payment have an average of 2.3 dependent children. Non-metropolitan families tend to have larger families.

• Families where the secondary income earner was born overseas tend to be slightly smaller (average of 2.1 children) than where they were born in Australia (2.3 children).

- By contrast, in families where the secondary income earner is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, the average number of children is higher (2.5) than in other families (2.3).

Employment

Workforce Participation - Characteristics

Labour market attachment for most secondary income earners in Family Payment families appears to be moderate.

• About 44 per cent of secondary income earners are in the labour force, with 32 per cent being in some form of paid employment, and 12 per cent not in paid employment but seeking paid employment. The remaining 56 per cent are not in the paid workforce and are not looking for work. The majority (three quarters) of those looking for work are seeking part-time or casual work.

• The level of employment for secondary income earners in non-metropolitan areas is higher (35 per cent) than in metropolitan areas (28 per cent). Age is also related to the likelihood of secondary income earners being in paid employment. Those aged 18 to 24 are the least likely age group to be in employment (21 per cent), while those aged 35 to 44 are the most likely to be in employment (38 per cent). This may indicate that older people usually have older children, and therefore have greater flexibility in balancing work arrangements and family responsibilities than younger carers, with generally younger children.

Most of those working in paid employment are employed in part-time or casual roles.
• Of all secondary income earners in paid employment, only 19 per cent are in full-time work, while around 44 per cent have part-time working arrangements, and 38 per cent are in casual work.

• The comparison with secondary earners of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent is more marked, with only 23 per cent of such people in paid employment, compared with 32 per cent generally. This group is also less likely to be looking for work, compared with the non-indigenous population.

• The average amount of time worked per week by secondary income earners in paid employment is 20.3 hours. The principal variation in average hours worked occurs between those from a non-English speaking background (average of 29 hours per week) and those from an English speaking background (19 hours).

Workforce Intentions

Fifty-six per cent of all secondary income earners do not intend to be in the labour force within 12 months of the survey. The remaining 44 per cent of all secondary income earners intend to be in some form of paid employment within 12 months of the survey.

• The majority of those currently in paid employment intend to maintain their current arrangement. However, nearly a quarter of those in full time employment intend to reduce their level of labour force participation within 12 months, through part-time work, study, or by not working.
• Those in part-time employment appear to be more likely to continue with their current status, with 75 per cent intending to remain working part-time, and 5 per cent intending to reduce their participation.
• Generally, those working part-time or casually are not looking to increase the level of their labour force attachment by working more hours per week.

• Only 6 per cent of the entire population of secondary income earners want to increase their working hours.

Satisfaction with Current Working/Non-working Arrangements

The majority of secondary income earners appear to be satisfied with their current working or non-working arrangements.

• Seventy-eight per cent of those in paid employment consider their arrangements to be ideal, with 21 per cent indicating their arrangements were not ideal. Those who were working part-time for an employer were the most likely to indicate that their current arrangement was ideal (at 81 per cent).
The reasons given by those in paid employment who felt that their current working arrangements were ideal tended to focus on the nature of the working arrangements in terms of hours worked or flexibility of the hours. Other factors identified included the financial benefits, only having to work in school hours, and being able to combine work with caring for, and spending time with, children.

A smaller proportion (64 per cent) of those who are not in paid employment are satisfied with their current working arrangements, with almost one-third indicating that their current arrangement is not ideal.

Those who are not working and consider that their arrangements are ideal focus on the importance of being available for children, and the enjoyment of caring for children.

Other common responses included notions that 'mothers should look after their own children', 'it is important that children are with their mothers'. These notions were commonly expressed during the face-to-face discussions.

Those who viewed their arrangements as not ideal appeared to focus on the level of 'house duties' (e.g. shopping, cleaning) that impact upon the time available to be with their children.

Overall, 32 per cent of all secondary income earners considered that their current working arrangements were not ideal.

Of these, approximately 65 per cent indicated that they would prefer to stay at home with their children some of the time, and work some of the time.

This reflected a common perception that such an arrangement would 'provide the best of both worlds' - being able to care for children, while also obtaining the financial benefits of working.

A further 22 per cent would prefer to stay at home and care for children on a full-time basis.

**Barriers to Ideal Working or Non-working Arrangements**

Seven per cent of all secondary income earners are in paid employment and consider that their circumstances are not ideal. Within this group, the most commonly identified (34 per cent) barrier to pursuing an ideal arrangement is a financial one. That is, they would prefer to reduce their working hours, or stop work altogether, but cannot afford to do so.

A further significant proportion (31 per cent) held that a lack of suitable jobs prevents them from pursuing their ideal arrangement.

In other words, they are currently working, and would like either to increase or maintain their current level of hours in another employment.
setting, but cannot due to a real or perceived lack of suitable jobs, or a lack of employment opportunities generally.

Other types of barriers identified were child care responsibilities, the type of work they were currently engaged in, and the problems associated with self-employment.

A wider range of barriers were identified by people who were not working, and felt that their current arrangements were not ideal.

- The most commonly cited barrier was a lack of suitable jobs. Other barriers identified included children being too young or requiring care, child care being too expensive, and a lack of skills and experience.

- The age of secondary income earners may be related to the likelihood of working or looking for work, with those with older children experiencing or perceiving less barriers to workforce participation.

**Child Care**

A large proportion (41 per cent) of Family Payment recipients use only informal child care to meet their child care needs (regular or occasional). Only around 13 per cent use formal types of child care, while 8 per cent use a mixture of formal and informal child care. Thirty-eight per cent of respondents indicated that they had no need for any type of regular or occasional child care.

- The amount of child care used in terms of hours per week in total and hours per week per child is much higher for families using formal child care in comparison to families using informal child care. This may suggest that the pattern of usage for families who use informal care is more ad hoc and infrequent relative to those using formal care.

- Secondary income earners born in countries other than Australia are considerably less likely to use formal or informal child care, compared with Australian-born secondary income earners. Age of the secondary income earner is inversely related to the need for child care - this may reflect the ability of older children either to look after themselves while their mother is at work (that is, after school), or provide care for younger siblings.

- Those using informal types of care rather than formal care indicate they do so for reasons of safety, the trust they hold in the carers, convenience, and low (if any) cost. Reasons for using informal care include work, sport, social events, appointments and study. The average time used for informal care was 7.4 hours per week.

- Those using formal types of care do so primarily for work or study commitments. The most common reason given for using formal care
instead of informal care centred upon the developmental benefits for their children from the interaction with other children, as well as the activities and educational programs offered by the child care service. Lack of availability of informal child care (as a result of the absence of family or friends nearby) was also identified as a reason for using formal child care. The average time used for formal child care was 15.3 hours per week.

Expenditure Within Families

Decision-making

The majority (74 per cent) of secondary income earners indicated that decisions surrounding expenditure were made jointly by themselves and their partner. A further 22 per cent of secondary income earners indicated that they were the person mainly responsible for expenditure decisions. Only 4 per cent of cases reported that the main income earner was the person who made expenditure decisions 'most of the time'.

- Non-metropolitan and older secondary income earners were slightly more likely to take primary responsibility for expenditure decisions than those who are younger or in metropolitan areas. Decision-making patterns for families where the secondary income earner is from a non-English speaking background generally mirrors those occurring within other families. However, there is a tendency for the main income earner to be more involved in these families, with 84 per cent of secondary income earners indicating joint financial decision-making.

Expenditure on Children and Secondary Income Earner

- Family Payment recipients estimate that they spend on average $285 per fortnight on clothing, feeding and educating their children.

- Only 29 per cent of secondary income earners indicated that they allow themselves money to spend on themselves which they consider is theirs. The average amount of money these people allow as theirs is $50 per fortnight.

Knowledge of the Dependent Spouse Rebate (DSR)

Forty-three per cent of secondary income earners indicated that they had not heard of the DSR.

- However, among these, a significant proportion did know that their partner was taxed at either the 'married person’s rate' (47.2 per cent), or, single person's rate' (21.3 per cent).

- In one way or other, 70 per cent of secondary income earners could identify how the DSR was received by the main income earner.
- The level of awareness of the DSR is higher among non-metropolitan than metropolitan families.

- Awareness was lower among families from non-English speaking or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

Only 21 per cent of secondary income earners could identify the actual dollar value of the DSR to the family over a year.

- However, the importance of the DSR to families was generally rated as being very high.

- Significantly, 86 per cent of those who were aware of the DSR indicated that the family as a whole was the main beneficiary of the DSR. Only 3 per cent of respondents felt that the main income earner was the main beneficiary.

**Reaction to Home Child Care Allowance (HCCA)**

The reaction to the (then) foreshadowed introduction of HCCA was generally positive.

Overall, 43 per cent of secondary income earners felt that they would be better off, following the introduction of HCCA.

- The most common reason for viewing HCCA as making the family better off was the increase in value, and the regular nature of the payment. Around 10 per cent identified additional autonomy as being an advantage.

Around one-third felt that they would no better off (that is, about the same).

- With combined finances and joint decision-making, these families saw their situation as being largely unchanged by HCCA.

Only ten per cent felt that they would be worse off as a result of the introduction of HCCA.

- Those who felt that they would be worse off most commonly gave reasons associated with a preference for a lump sum amount that the DSR offered.
SOCIAL WORK INFORMATION
SYSTEM: INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY RECORDING SOCIAL WORK ACTIVITY IN A
PUBLIC ORGANISATION

Mauveen Waller
Senior Professional Officer Social Work, Customer Service Programs Branch, Family Programs and Services Division, Department of Social Security

Introduction

For the past 50 years, the Social Work Service in the Department of Social Security (DSS) has been providing a professional service to customers within a Commonwealth organisation that administers income support legislation. The role of the social worker is to assist customers with their income support and other needs and contribute to the departmental aim of promoting holistic and comprehensive customer service programs. The task of coordinating a statistical profile of the Social Work Service has been given to the Social Work Information System (SWIS). Its job is to measure the activity of approximately 586 social workers who assist customers in 287 Regional Office (RO) outlets throughout the country.

SWIS is Information Technology (IT) that was implemented nationally in July 1994. It had initially been piloted in August 1993 and was introduced incrementally from April 1994. In its initial design, it was a PC-based system. In April 1995, a revised version was distributed throughout the network. The newly-designed program loaded SWIS on to the national server and linked it to the Local Area Network (LAN), ccMail and the Corporate Suite of Lotus products, thus aligning it with other systems operating within the Department. The redesign simplified many of its functions and one of the major changes with the most impact was the automation of data return. The information that is being collected was collated into a National Report in April 1995.

The redevelopment of SWIS, taking into account the advances in IT, had to relate to the purpose of the program, which is to record the work undertaken by social workers and to provide specific information about the assistance given to disadvantaged customers. So what is SWIS able to tell us and how does it give us this information? Related questions are where does it fit in with case management and other similar systems and where does it go from...
here? One way to answer these queries is to look at the functions of the Social Work Service and how these are recorded in the database.

**SWIS and the Social Work Service**

SWIS is IT that collects statistics on the activities of social workers in the RO, the Social Security Office (DSSO) and the Youth Service Units (YSU). It is divided into two distinct components which record casework undertaken with customers and non-casework duties such as management, community and professional activities.

Through the Social Work Service, DSS pays particular attention to those customers who are especially vulnerable to hardship and marginalisation because of major changes in their economic, personal and social circumstances. The primary function of the social worker is to assist customers with a variety of issues such as financial, personal and family problems, social assessments and advice on determinations, appeals and reviews. They do this via a range of intervention strategies to help promote and facilitate customer access to the Department's services, provide them with short-term crisis counselling and assistance and refer out to other government and community agencies. The non-case work component of their duties includes being a member of the Regional Office Management Team (ROMT); contributing a welfare perspective to the overall management of the RO; providing feedback on the impact of the Department's policies and procedures; liaise with other government and community services to promote departmental programs; gather information about regional social trends and undertake professional activities that are essential to maintaining professional standards. Information about these functions forms the basis of the database.

**Casework**

For many years statistics on social work activity had been manually recorded on paper forms which went through traditional data processing into spreadsheets. During the developmental phase of the original computer program design, the structure of this paper instrument was transferred to the new program tables. The redevelopment streamlined some of the information requirements but was constrained by time and consequently confined to minor changes within the same framework. The casework record therefore is specific to the Social Work Service in DSS.

SWIS records the number of referrals, the number of contacts that are made with the customer in connection with each of those referrals and the main actions taken by social workers to assist the customer during each contact.

The referral initiates the social work activity with the customer. The referral details include the customer's personal details, income support either being
received or applied for, the source of the referral and the reasons why the referral was made to social work. A new referral is recorded when: a customer sees the social worker for the first time; where the customer has not contacted the social worker for a period of over one month; and where the same customer sees the social worker for an entirely different matter.

The details are stored against the customer identity in the data base at the RO and referred to for all contacts that are undertaken in the course of finalising the outcome of the referral. For each new referral for this same customer, a new set of referral details has to be recorded which updates all of the information but in particular the reasons for the new referral.

A feature of the referral record is that details of individual customers do not leave the RO. Privacy measures ensure that individual details can only be accessed by social workers in that office. There is also the provision to record social work contact with customers who are inquiring about income support entitlements. A limitation of the system is that a customer registered in one office is able to access the same service in another office whereupon a new referral will be registered against a new social work customer.

SWIS is not a means of recording an individual customer's case profile. This is the main feature that distinguishes it from other mainframe systems in the Department which keep a record of customer information.

A contact is recorded when action is taken against the referral. This may be in the form of an interview with the customer, contacting service providers, providing reports for determining officers or consulting with administrative staff in the RO. A contact is defined as a summarised record of the casework intervention which has been undertaken in association with the relevant referral.

The record of contact is divided into two parts. The first covers both personal contact with the customer such as an interview and actions that the social worker takes on behalf of the customer. The second part is a record of the three main actions taken in the course of that contact.

An action taken is a record of the social work assistance given to customers. Two assumptions determine the quality of the actions taken. The first assumption is that a social worker performs the basic professional functions such as an initial social work assessment within the course of his or her work. The second assumption is that the social worker will inform the customer about the relevant aspects of DSS programs and procedures. Consequently these do not have to be recorded separately.

SWIS restricts the record to a maximum of three main actions taken. The restriction is essential to enable the statistics to be manageable. Previous practices of recording all actions taken had the effect of flattening out the data which on such a large data base became meaningless. By grouping into
specific categories it is able to provide information that can be used as an indicator of the nature of the work undertaken. Two specific examples are: a referral out to another service provider is a single record that includes all the telephone calls and accompanying paper work associated with the referral out; and a counselling session includes the provision of DSS information and/or counselling to assist the customer with a personal issue.

A database of this type is not able to record a complete picture of the interactions and tasks involved in social casework with customers. The record of actions taken is an abbreviated profile of the type of assistance provided.

SWIS is a record of DSS customers who are referred or refer themselves to social work for specialist assistance with a range of personal issues relating to their Social Security entitlement. The statistics profile the specific needs of customer groups and summarise the social work intervention undertaken.

**Non-Casework**

Two other functions of social work in DSS are those which contribute to management and community work referred to in SWIS as 'non-casework'. Capturing the range of activities on a database and collating the information in report form are not easy if meaningful conclusions are to be drawn. In SWIS, these are recorded under four broad headings: regional management; research and policy; training and professional development; and community work.

The statistical measurement is limited to the broad outlines of activities. In the aggregate database, it records the non-casework functions and produces them in a report format that gives a profile of social work involvement in these activities.

More detailed information about the activity undertaken is recorded in text. This enables a description of the function and its objectives to be inserted into the database. However, measuring this detail via a statistical analysis of the aggregate database is a task not yet accomplished. This would require the well-defined use of key words such as 'youth', 'domestic violence' or 'management meetings'. When looking at the record and the wide range of activities that social workers undertake, it appears that this would be impractical and indeed infeasible. Although as a statistical measurement the benefit of this information is curtailed by its complexity, the usefulness of this information has been proven at the Area and local level. Here all the information can be printed into a document that outlines the activities and then presented as a report of the non-casework duties carried out in each individual RO.
Additional Programs

Three other specific functions of the system assist the social workers to manage their casework. The first is a review function that enables registration of future activities to assist with forward planning procedures. The second is the notes function that allows casenotes to be kept with the statistical record. The third function is the reports module. All the information collected and stored can be accessed via a report function and the statistical data can be produced in both table and graphic format. This can also be electronically transferred into the Lotus 123 spreadsheet application whereupon it can be organised into specialised reporting procedures. Linking SWIS to the corporate products encourages the use of its information with other applications.

Systems Design

SWIS was developed as a joint project between the Social Work Section and Systems Division in DSS. An effective alliance was established between the Information Technology Team and the Project Team in Social Work to oversee the redevelopment that changed the program and linked it to other DSS systems.

Initially SWIS was designed as a stand-alone PC system that meant that all records were stored in individual personal computers at each separate RO. Monthly data were downloaded on to diskettes before being redirected first to the Area Office and then on to National Administration in Canberra for importation into the national database.

The method of collection was cumbersome and impractical. One of the first problems identified was that the social work users had, in the main, little or no experience with computer technology, and needed to be able to carry out functions that required more than the basic level of knowledge and skills in the use of personal computers. This emphasised the fact that despite an extensive training program, all of the technical skills required for the introduction of such a program had not been adequately acquired throughout the network. Also, the timely return of diskettes from so many sites was difficult to manage; when they arrived, data integrity was compromised by a complicated extraction process. Concomitantly, other problems with the program design were being recognised and, consequently, shortly after the national implementation, a redevelopment of the system was under way.

At the same time, the Department was seeking to record information about the operation of the Commonwealth/State/Territory Protocols for homeless youth. As the social workers have a central role in the administration of the Youth Protocols, they took responsibility for recording the information.
through the Social Work Information System. Request for inclusions such as this and the need to improve a number of aspects of the program resulted in a major redesign that was released in April 1995.

SWIS provides information from data which is stored in a Paradox database. With approximately 20,000 referrals per month and on average 1.5 contacts per referral multiplied by all the categories to be recorded, a voluminous set of data is being kept in the National database. A lower volume of data is stored in each of the twenty Area Offices that maintain an aggregate record of their own group of ROs which in turn have access to their own local data. These smaller databases are managed by the runtime version of Paradox that is distributed to the Area Office and RO outlets. In effect there are three separate versions of SWIS; the National, Area and RO versions. It is a Windows-based system with a Graphical User Interface and is designed to be as user-friendly as possible.

SWIS is loaded on to the Network Servers and is incorporated into LAN at the RO. It has been mainstreamed into the systems network via its links to the corporate products and ccMail. Social workers at the RO input the data that is extracted at random on a 20-day cycle and sent via ccMail simultaneously to the Area Office and National Administration. Each extraction scans the complete set of data and updates the record each time it is imported into the separate databases. This process eliminates human error during the extraction process and the records held in the different sites are all consistent with those held in the national database. Only the office that is not served by LAN has to return data via diskette. The LAN offices always hold at least 18 months of data.

Automation of the extraction process was the major problem addressed during the redevelopment. In the original stand-alone version, extraction was carried out manually at the end of each month and was fraught with difficulties relating to the timely return of data and accuracy of data received. Data is entered at 287 separate sites and the process had to be streamlined. The program is not linked to the mainframe so an alternative method of transporting the data had to be explored. The most efficient method routes it through ccMail. The social worker in the RO is periodically asked to initiate the extraction process that forwards the data to its destinations; at those destinations, the user is asked to initiate the import function. The data is extracted and imported automatically.

The timing of the release of the revised version in April 1995 occurred during the same period the national network was still undergoing Network Replacement (NWR). Problems with the Software Distribution System to several sites delayed the introduction of the new version and network problems caused the loss of data and files. This compounded the difficulties for the social work users, many of whom lacked technical systems skills.
As the system stabilises and technical skills of social workers increase, the focus is on the product and whether it is serving its customers and how it serves the Department and its customers. From a systems perspective, the ongoing review is of how appropriate the current product is in managing such a large database and what direction enhancements will take.

**Future Direction**

IT is changing rapidly and the Department is looking at different ways of utilising the information collected in the SWIS data base. One example of this is the move towards case management. As a way of assisting many of its customers, SWIS records may be amalgamated via a common platform with other systems in order to track customers throughout their period of involvement with specialist services.

As a professional service, social work is bound by professional ethics which pivot around the essential requirements of privacy and customer confidentiality along with a duty of care. If mismanaged, they all have the potential to become a legal matter. Any application of IT has to fit with the principles relevant to customer service. In the longer term, the results obtainable from SWIS should also be comparable with other welfare statistics such as those produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Institute of Health and Welfare. As a statistical collection instrument, the future development of SWIS will be challenging.

**Conclusion**

The Social Work Service is recording its activities in a relational database that enhances the Department's knowledge of the customers who have special needs. IT continues to develop rapidly and introduction of new technology into the Department's programs will ensure the evolution of SWIS. For the social worker, competency in computer technology is now an essential component of professional practice in DSS.
THE PREPARATION OF REPLIES TO
MINISTERIAL CORRESPONDENCE IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL
SECURITY

Robyn Bedford
Ministerial and Parliamentary Services Section, Corporate Services Division, Department of Social Security

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to explain the processes involved in preparing responses to letters to the Minister for Social Security or the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social Security.

The Ministerial Correspondence Unit in the Department of Social Security is responsible for coordinating the processing of all replies to Ministerial correspondence. The Unit is part of the Ministerial and Parliamentary Services Section located within the Corporate Services Division.

Letters to the Minister or the Parliamentary Secretary provide valuable feedback to the Department on its programs and their delivery.

The preparation of high quality and prompt responses reflects the Department's commitment to customer service.

Ministerial Correspondence

The Minister for Social Security receives letters on a wide range of matters including customer entitlement and service delivery issues, suggestions for changes to programs and possible abuses of the social security system.

Members of Parliament, both State and Federal, and Senators make personal representations to the Minister on behalf of constituents on similar matters. The Prime Minister and other Ministers raise issues of policy, legislation or administration, as well is making personal representations on behalf of their constituents.

The Minister receives letters from major welfare and lobby groups, such as the Welfare Rights Centre, the Australian Council of Social Service, the Australian Superannuants' and Pensioner Association, the Australian Association of Independent Retirees and the National Brain Injury Foundation, in relation to policy and administrative matters or on behalf of individuals.
Preparation of Replies

The Department's National Administration has an Executive and nine Divisions. The responsibilities of Divisions include strategic policy development and research, resource management, legislation, reviews and appeals, fraud and control, corporate services, network operations and the application of policy in relation to the Department's various programs - an organisational chart is shown below. Each Division contains Branches and Sections and is headed by a First Assistant Secretary who reports to the Executive.

Letters to the Minister which relate to the responsibilities of the Divisions are referred to them by the Ministerial Correspondence Unit for reply. Draft replies are prepared within particular sections and cleared by Branch or Division Heads.

A separate correspondence unit is located within the Family Program and Services Division for the preparation of replies to the large proportion of letters which relate to policy issues. These cover the program responsibilities of both the Family Programs and Services and Labour Market and Retirement Programs Divisions. This unit is also responsible for the preparation of responses to other letters to the Department including those to the Editor of the Department's publication, Age Pension News.

Letters to the Minister or the Parliamentary Secretary from customers about their social security payments are referred to the Department's Area Offices for investigation and the preparation of draft replies. Correspondence may also cover service delivery and local accommodation issues. In some Area Offices, responsibility for the preparation of draft replies is devolved to the Regional Offices or to the TeleService Centres.

Draft replies are forwarded to the Ministerial Correspondence Unit electronically for review and editing. Replies are checked for clarity and accuracy and to ensure that all the points raised by the correspondent have been covered. An important element in this process is reviewing replies for readability and relevance so that the response will be readily understood.

Final replies are then printed and collated and referred to the offices of the Minister and the Parliamentary Secretary. The replies are then reviewed and cleared by Ministerial advisers or departmental liaison officers before being referred to the Minister or the Parliamentary Secretary for signature. Some letters are responded to by the Director, Ministerial and Parliamentary Services on the Minister's behalf.

The Ministerial Correspondence Unit also takes any necessary follow-up action such as referral of the correspondent's case to a Social Worker, a Financial Information Service Officer or an Authorised Review Des.
The privacy of the Department's customers is an important consideration when replies are prepared to persons other than the customers themselves. In this case, provisions of the Privacy Act and section 1312 of the Social Security Act 1991 are closely followed. These provisions prevent the disclosure of information to a third party about any person who may or may not be a client of the Department without their consent or unless other special circumstances exist. Where a customer asks a Member of Parliament or Senator to make a representation to the Minister on their behalf, it is accepted that the member is acting with the implied authorisation of the customer.

**Other Responsibilities of the Ministerial and Parliamentary Services Section**

The Ministerial and Parliamentary Services Section provides a central point of contact between the Department and the Offices of the Minister for Social Security and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister. Apart from the processing of Ministerial correspondence, the Section is responsible for the coordination of all Ministerial briefings and speech notes, including briefing for Question Time; the coordination of all Cabinet papers and Parliamentary Questions; arrangements for official openings of DSS offices; and other parliamentary processes such as the tabling of documents in Parliament including the Department's Annual Report. The Section also coordinates arrangements for various honours and awards.

The Section maintains the Appoint system for the Department. This system provides data for the measurement of progress in the appointment of all equal employment categories to Commonwealth bodies.

In addition, the Section provides secretariat support for the Social Security Advisory Council. This Council provides broad strategic advice to the Minister on issues relating to the development and administration of social security policy and its impact on the Department's customers.
50 Years After Beveridge

Unemployment -
An Overseas Perspective

Trends in the Australian Bureau of Statistics...

Finding the Way Through the
Survey Maze
In December 1942 a queue - said to be a mile long - formed outside the government stationery office in London as people waited to buy *Social Insurance and Allied Services: Report by Sir William Beveridge* (Cmd. 6404). In total some half a million copies of the Report were sold, fifty thousand of these in the United States. According to the British Ambassador in Washington, the Report was the most effective British propaganda for American consumption, showing the 'everlasting stamina of the British people'. In Germany, the release of the Report was greeted with headlines in the official National Socialist Party newspaper: 'Plutocratic fraud on the English people confirmed: England half a century behind socially. British capitalists expect continuing unemployment of millions'. Documents from Goebbels' personal archives found in Hitler's bunker in August 1945 suggested that German propaganda should argue that the Beveridge plan was an obvious example of enemies taking over national-socialistic ideas (still a popular ploy), although a secret assessment for the German Foreign Office described the plan as being 'of remarkable simplicity... superior to current German social insurance in almost all points'. A shortened version of the Report was published in Tel Aviv in Hebrew in June 1943, inspiring plans for the establishment of the Israeli welfare state later in the decade. In Switzerland, the exiled economist, Wilhelm Röpke, along with von Hayek, one of the founders of the neo-liberal Freiburg School, described the Beveridge Report in 1944 as 'another questionable step towards collectivisation and socialisation of society and the paralysis of the market economy' and one of those books whose 'mixture of well-meaning idealism and a sociological and politico-economic lack of understanding make such a desolate impression'.

These and other contemporary reactions testify to the influence of the Beveridge Report on later thinking about social security and social policy, to say nothing of the enormous practical significance of the reforms implemented in the United Kingdom and other countries after the War. There are few authors of official reports whose names become synonymous with
the whole direction of social policy for half a century. The alternative paradigms for social policy are the 'Scandinavian model' - five countries rather than a single author - and the Bismarck model - a single progenitor, but one better known for more warlike pursuits.

The two volumes under review contain many but not all of the papers given at the Conference to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Beveridge Report held at the University of York in September 1992. The conference was organised by the Social Policy Research Unit and the Department of social policy and social work of the University of York and the Welfare State Programme of the Suntory-Toyota International Centre for Economics and Related Disciplines at the London School of Economics.

At the outset I should say that I attended the conference and co-authored one of the chapters in the Baldwin and Falkingham volume. However, as one of those assisting in the running of a conference I was more attentive to the filling of water jugs, the placing of direction signs, checking whether the overhead projectors were working, and ensuring that paper givers and discussants were in the right rooms at the right time, than in taking in the substance of the enormous variety of papers. I will say no more about my own joint contribution except that I have since changed my mind about the appropriateness of the methodology.

The two books differ substantially in content, but complement each other well. Seven chapters of Hills, Ditch and Glennerster are largely historical, including two of the plenary addresses at the conference; one by Brian AbelSmith on the origins and outcomes of the Beveridge Report and the other by Peter Baldwin on Beveridge in the *longue durée*. (This is the historian Peter Baldwin, author of *The Politics of Social Solidarity*, not the Australian author of *Beyond the Safety Net*.) The remaining chapters deal with the reception given to the Report in Germany, pensions policy in Poland since 1945, social security in the Netherlands, the development of the Israeli welfare state, the Swedish pension model, and the relation between social security and full employment in Australia, by Bettina Cass and John Freeland.

The Baldwin and Falkingham volume is more concerned with contemporary problems not envisaged or adequately dealt with in Beveridge's framework. These include the original assumptions of female dependency, changing gender roles within the family and in the workforce participation of women, the growth in the number of lone parent families and changing work patterns - the resurgence of high levels of unemployment, casualisation and the growth in self-employment, and the exclusion of persons with disabilities and their carers. The focus is largely on the UK, although there are comparative chapters on the growth of disability benefits, social security in Belgium, and long-term care for older people in the United States. The chapter by John Blackwell on changing work patterns and their implications
for social protection is a particularly useful summary of labour market conditions in OECD countries in the early 1990s.

Baldwin's historical essay starts with the avowal that he comes neither to bury Beveridge nor to honour him. One could be forgiven, however, for seeing both volumes as graveside readings, although more in the spirit of good riddance than respectful sorrow. The subtitle of the chapter by Glennerster and Evans is 'The Incompatibilities of a Flawed Design'. Veit Wilson charges Beveridge with responsibility for 'the invisibility of poverty' in the UK between the 1940s and the 1960s. Webb argues that a contributory basis for benefits did serve a historical purpose, but is now ill-suited to assisting the poor. Ruth Lister notes that Beveridge privileged the citizenworker over the citizen-mother. Ginn and Arber state that the British pension system has failed women. Writing in the Hills, Ditch and Glennerster collection, Lowe describes Beveridge as 'a prophet dishonoured in his own country', with the subtitle 'The Rejection of Beveridge in Britain'. This characterisation may seem at odds with those of other authors who argue that Beveridge's basic framework was deficient. If the scheme was never introduced as conceived, then it is difficult to argue that it failed. This conflict is reconciled somewhat by Lowe's arguments that this rejection is itself a consequence of the inconsistencies in Beveridge's recommendations and underlying philosophy.

The harshest critics are Johnson and Falkingham, who ask whether there is a future for the Beveridge pension scheme. They conclude that it has failed in all three of its main goals - financial soundness, adequacy of benefits and incentives for self-provision:

'The multiple failure of the Beveridge pension scheme in terms of structure and performance makes the continued support for the scheme by many welfare state apologists somewhat surprising. Despite half a century of palpable inadequacy, there is still widespread faith in the potential of the flat-rate NI pension scheme. We believe that this faith is misplaced, that few worthwhile elements can be salvaged from the public pension system, that future social and economic change will further undermine any lingering functional coherence, and therefore that a fundamental restructuring... is required.'

This tone of pessimism is continued into the discussion of very differing social security systems. Gründger's chapter on 'Beveridge meets Bismarck' rather abruptly concludes that overall reform of the German social security system is not only unaccomplished, but has become more urgent than ever. The decline of the birth rate is jeopardising the generational contract, the costs of health insurance are 'exploding', the finance of unemployment insurance is in a 'critical' state, growing numbers of social assistance recipients are 'emptying municipal treasuries', and there is a need to reorganise the social security network in the former Democratic Republic.
The chapter on the Netherlands suggests that the Dutch system is a Bismarck building with a Beveridge facade, but one that needs both structural underpinning and overall refurbishment. The shrinking of the labour force and the increase in the number of pensioners and disability beneficiaries requires drastic reform. The time has come for a new blueprint for social security, but one also mindful of the need to adjust to European integration and reduce labour costs. The discussion of the Swedish pension system comes to some rather similar conclusions to Johnson and Falkingham's critique of the UK system: Swedish pensions are under pressure as the low earnings related component of the system fails to deliver desired benefits to the middle class. Whatever the level of future economic growth there will be irreconcilable expectations about benefit levels. Reform proposals would reduce the redistributive element, disadvantaging migrant workers and those working part-time. While not covered in these volumes, we also know that the welfare arrangements of Italy and France have been under even stronger pressure for reform since 1992.

Is there therefore a general crisis of the welfare state? Some would argue that the critique of Röpke and the neo-liberals was correct in the 1940s and the current crisis of social protection reflects the inevitable results of well-meaning but mistaken interference in market mechanisms. The tone of pessimism about the prospects for social security in Europe may also reflect the fact that this 50th anniversary coincided with the worst unemployment performance since the War in virtually all OECD countries, although neo-liberals would argue that current unemployment is a consequence of well-meaning but mistaken interventions in markets. But perhaps this is too pessimistic. The welfare state has been said to be in crisis since the middle of the 1970s, and like Mark Twain's death, reports of its demise have been greatly exaggerated. Most reform programmes have built on existing systems, rather than trying to reformulate social security from the foundations up.

Given that most of the articles in these two books are about the UK situation it is also worth noting that the UK situation differs from that of Europe more generally. What is unusual about the United Kingdom's social security system is the relative weakness of the contributory principal, or rather the strength of the social assistance principle. Just over 15 per cent of the UK population were receiving means-tested benefits in 1992. This is in a country supposedly relying on principles of universality and contribution as the basis for social protection. When we compare this with the 18 per cent receiving means-tested benefits at the same time in Australia - a country explicitly relying on selectivity and targeting - the strength of institutional commitment to Beveridge's apparent universalistic principles appears questionable.
When reading the first chapters of the Beveridge Report one cannot help but be struck by his concentration on the first of the 'five giant evils' of Want, Ignorance, Disease, Squalor and Idleness. It is Want that is clearly the main enemy to be vanquished, and it is clear that Want is his term for poverty, as he identifies the extent of Want with estimates of poverty by Rowntree and others. It is poverty alleviation that is the main goal of the Beveridge Report, with poverty to be alleviated through flat rate contributory benefits at subsistence levels, supplemented by child payments for those in work and separate benefits to cover housing costs.

The difficulty in the application of these principles is that most basic social assistance benefits in the UK are paid at a higher rate than the flat-rate contributory benefits. Thus, the contributory system does not provide subsistence benefits, supposedly the cornerstone of the Beveridge edifice. Moreover, proposals to go 'back to Beveridge' or to increase the inadequate level of the contributory benefits means that nearly none of the extra spending goes to the poorest who are already receiving higher income-related benefits. The coexistence of meagre contributory benefits with somewhat more generous but very tightly means-tested social assistance means that there is a very substantial problem of take-up, with around three-quarters of a million retirement pensioners receiving less than official subsistence levels because they do not claim their relatively small additional payments. These groups would benefit from an increase in contributory benefits, but so would the more numerous pensioners whose current resources place them outside the means-tested system.

Such conflicts are inevitable in any social security system, however. Given the scope of social, economic and family changes since 1942 it would be staggering if Beveridge had all the answers to current problems requiring social protection. The value of these volumes is in reminding us that, ultimately, all social policy frameworks require reform if they are to remain relevant. This will be true in the future as in the half century since the Beveridge Report.

*Dr Peter Whiteford is currently a Consultant in the Office of the Minister for Social Security. He has published widely on social security and income distribution issues.*
UNEMPLOYMENT - AN OVERSEAS PERSPECTIVE


Reviewer: Kate Rodgers

Since the OPEC oil crisis of the early 1980s, unemployment has become a significant and increasingly intransigent problem for most OECD countries, with long-term unemployment in particular emerging as a very worrying phenomenon for its economic and sociocultural implications. Naturally this has formed the subject of much debate, both at the political and academic level, and the publications that are the subject of this review are two such examples.

*Long-Term Unemployment* is a collection of essays written by various European academics, is part of a series examining social change in western Europe. With each chapter focusing on the unemployment situation in a particular country, it is the editors’ intent that the book inform the process of social policy development in the lead-up to a European Union.

The chapters in the first half of the book tend to concentrate on the form and structure of unemployment (and long-term unemployment) and an analysis of its causes, while the second half explores its psychological and sociocultural consequences. The countries featured in this first half are Great Britain, France, Italy, Spain and the former West Germany (the former East Germany is not included as unemployment did not officially exist under communist rule).

While these chapters may provide informative reading for those interested in labour market developments in Europe during the 1980s, their relevance to contemporary developments in Australia is debatable. Firstly, the empirical data in these chapters (with the exception of some Spanish data) does not extend beyond 1990, and thus is disappointingly out-of-date. Quite apart from the sometimes devastating effect the recent recession has had on unemployment rates, anyone familiar with the vagaries of labour markets will be aware that change can be quite dramatic over a period as short as six months. Reading this book in 1996, it is difficult to gain any useful insights into the current state of unemployment in Europe.
In addition, all the countries discussed in the book have unemployment benefit systems that are (at least in part) insurance-based and of limited duration, a situation which presents a set of problems not shared by the fully government-funded, inalienable Australian social security system. Nevertheless, the substantial amount of information provided in these chapters, combined with the various analyses of the causes of long-term unemployment, can provide interesting opportunities to compare and contrast the unemployment experience of some European countries.

For example, in Great Britain and Ireland men more frequently face unemployment, including long-term unemployment, than women; in all the other countries discussed, the contrary occurs. All the authors point to age as being one of the main factors determining a person's employment chances, but the nature of its effect varies from country to country. In Great Britain, France and Italy, young people are most at risk of becoming long-term unemployed, while in Spain and Germany, unemployment duration levels are longest among older people. The concentration of unemployment among manual workers is particularly significant in Great Britain and Ireland, somewhat so in France, but much less in Germany and still less so in Spain.

The first half of Long-Term Unemployment is peppered with the standard statistics of unemployment rates and duration, disaggregated by gender, age and skill groups, as one would expect in any publication on this subject. However, the chapter on Germany stands out in that the author, Helmut Rudolph, makes an interesting foray into definitions of long-term unemployment. In Germany, the official definition of long-term unemployment relates to the last continuous period of registration at the Federal Work Bureau. If this is broken into by short spells of work, bouts of sick leave or periods of training, the duration of unemployment is reset to zero, thereby underestimating the real length of long-term unemployment.

According to results from various poll surveys conducted in Germany, Rudolph maintains that the social dimension of unemployment differs widely from the official measures, thereby suggesting that the 'burden of unemployment can appear for some to be much more oppressive than the length of the last spell of unemployment allows'. While there are measures in Australia that allow recipients of unemployment benefit to maintain their registration for a certain period while they are engaged in activities such as casual work or training, I think Rudolph's point is pertinent to any future development of labour market assistance to the long-term unemployed.

Exposing the sometimes substantial differences in the experience of unemployment across western European countries is central to one of the editors' premises - that an en bloc analysis of the problem of long-term unemployment is deficient in that it fails to take into account the disparate, social constituents' of unemployment. Another feature that is common to all
the book's chapters is the exploration of the relationship between short and long-term unemployment, and as one of the editors concludes, long-term unemployment as a problem is both related to and distinct from short-term unemployment, with most authors agreeing that the former is not simply an extension of the other. In the chapter on Italy, for example, the author demonstrates that long-term unemployment tends to respond weakly to improved conditions in the labour market; in other words, it does not follow that a fall in the short-term unemployment rate will automatically cause a commensurate result in long-term unemployment. However important this observation may be, I doubt that it would be revelatory for any follower of unemployment in 1996.

Underlying much of the discourse in Long-Term Unemployment is the question of whether the persistence of unemployment has created a social and economic 'underclass'. The last three chapters and the conclusion focus particularly on this question, through an exploration and assessment of the financial, psychological and sociological consequences of unemployment in Great Britain, Ireland and the Netherlands. All the authors agree that unemployment is a major cause of poverty, and that financial worries are in turn one of the major causes of psychological distress. Interestingly, Duncan Gallie, in his chapter on the social consequences of long-term unemployment in Great Britain found little evidence among existing survey data that the experience of financial deprivation grew very much sharper for the long-term unemployed.

Another aspect common to these last three chapters is an exploration of the dynamics of families with regard to unemployment - the effect of one couple member's employment status on his/her partner, and the inter-generational effect of unemployment. In his examination of various studies of the impact of unemployment, Gallie establishes that unemployment leads to substantially higher levels of psychological distress for the unemployed person and his/her family (compared to an employed person), with one study finding that the psychological impact was more negative for the wife of a newly-unemployed breadwinner than for the breadwinners themselves. Gallie also provides some interesting data on the social and political effects of unemployment, which point to a growing isolation of the unemployed from mainstream society and from each other.

De Graaf and Ultee (Netherlands), on the other hand, found that while a person's mobility from employment to unemployment (and vice versa) does depend on his or her partner's labour market position, the effect was not always negative. They found that women whose partners are employed, for example, tend to find a job more quickly than women with unemployed partners, although the reasons for this are not entirely clear.
While most of the authors of *Long-Term Unemployment* are definite in the view of the unemployed population as being worse-off in every sense compared to their employed counterparts, the consensus is that this does not constitute an, underclass'. As much of the analysis is based on data derived in the early to mid-1980s, however, the authors' conclusion may well be different today. Nevertheless, the significant financial and social gaps between the employed and the unemployed described as existing up to ten years ago provides thought-provoking reading. There are some fleeting references to possible solutions to long-term unemployment in this book, but in the main it is concerned with an analysis of the problem, rather than strategies for improvement.

The Canadian publication, *Improving Social Security in Canada*, on the other hand, deals almost exclusively with strategies aimed at overhauling the Canadian social security system for people of working age and for children. Reforming social security is one of four key components of the Canadian Government's jobs and growth agenda, which Prime Minister Jean Chretien outlined in September 1994. However, *Improving Social Security in Canada* is not a policy blueprint or White Paper; rather, its main purpose is to act as the catalyst for a nationwide debate and discussion. In fact, this paper launched one of the biggest consultation processes in Canadian history, with hundreds of thousands of individuals and groups participating in various fora. Apparently policy reform began with the 1994-95 Budget, but I have not been able to ascertain any specific details.

While the Canadian Government is at pains to emphasise the value it places on consulting with the public, it also makes it clear that any future social security policy must operate within certain parameters. Not surprisingly, cost is the most restrictive parameter. Any new program or service would need to be cost-neutral, with the Government proposing a reform of the unemployment insurance system as the main source of additional funds. Consequently, any substantial paradigm shift such as introducing a form of Guaranteed Minimum Income is ruled out, with the Government electing to remain very firmly within the bounds of a targeted social welfare system.

Besides affordability, the other main objective that the Canadian Government establishes is the need to move away from a passive income support system towards more active employment strategies, while maintaining a safety net for the more vulnerable in the community. This includes the notion of reciprocal obligation: while the Government recognises that it must provide active assistance to its clients, unemployed people must also contribute by helping themselves to a certain extent. In this sense, *Improving Social Security in Canada* is almost identical to the Australian Social Security Review of ten years ago, whereby the 'active society' philosophy became a defining element of the welfare system of this country.
The discussion paper opens with a brief outline of the context for change, which describes labour market changes that are familiar to most OECD countries: the changing nature of work, the persistence of unemployment and the globalisation of the economy. Long-term unemployment and high rates of youth unemployment are of particular concern. The paper then continues with an analysis of the inability of the current Canadian social security system to cater for this changed world, thus establishing the need for change.

The ideas for reform outlined in the paper are grouped around three core elements: working, learning and security. The section on working is in turn divided into two parts - suggestions on how best to structure income support for the unemployed, and proposals for active employment measures. The latter section notes that while a system of labour market programs already exists, certain improvements need to be made, and this part of the paper is perhaps of most interest to Australian readers. The paper makes a number of observations:

- that the key to finding people jobs is flexibility - programs must adapt to individual needs and local circumstances;
- that training programs that involve employers directly tend to work better than those that are exclusively classroom-based;
- that subsidised work placement for the long-term unemployed is far more effective than short-term job creation; and
- that training programs that require the student to put in some of their own money work better than when students make no investment of their own.

The paper also emphasises the importance of case management and the need for business and industry to be partners in assisting the unemployed back to work. However, it does not clarify what groups would be targeted under such enhanced services, although it does suggest specialised initiatives for those people with severe barriers to employment. In addition, the paper recommends that people with disabilities should be encouraged to access employment services, and proposes a number of strategies to assist working parents.

The second section of the paper, 'Learning', covers such areas as funding strategies for tertiary education, and improving the transition between school and work and/or further education, within the broad objective of 'lifelong learning'. The third and final section discusses reform of the income support system. In this context, one of the main challenges the Government identifies is the alleviation of child poverty. One common estimate is that as many as one child in five lives in poverty in Canada. Suggested reforms include adjustments to government-funded income support, improving access to child care and the availability of other social services. Another area identified
in this chapter is the need to provide funding to enhance the independence of people with disabilities.

To anyone familiar with social security developments in Australia over the last decade, *Improving Social Security in Canada* will not provide any surprises or innovative ideas; we've more or less 'been there, done that'. Nevertheless, it can provide a useful perspective on the current state of play in the Canadian welfare system.

*Kate Rodgers works in the Labour Market Section of the Department of Social Security, specialising in long-term Unemployment trends.*

**References**


Are you a public servant needing prompt access to credible demographic and social statistics, or a student in a rural area completing a degree by distance education, and not sure where to turn for information? If you have been in these, or similar situations, you should be aware that the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) places a high priority on identifying the particular needs of existing and potential customer groups. As a result of this the range of products and customer services has expanded and you may find your task as a researcher a little easier.

However, this review is written from the perspective of a public servant whose duties include assisting officers in the Department of Social Security (DSS) with various aspects of evaluation. While many public servants in policy areas wait anxiously for the ABS bulletins on labour force statistics, balance of payments and the Consumer Price Index, many will be unaware of the range of materials released by the Bureau which provide analysis and interpretation of demographic statistics.

The type of overview presented in 'Australian Social Trends 1995' and 'The Australian Women's Year Book 1995' should be standard resource material for students and researchers of Australian society. For those involved in policy development and review, and program evaluation, the volumes serve as valuable background information, as an indicator to broad emerging trends, and as a plumb-line to check the reliability of their own research.

Both publications provide valuable insights into the changing nature of Australian society and a general introduction to detailed survey data which can take the reader further into the area under investigation. They have some small shortcomings in the referencing of individual tables, which is surprising given the role of the ABS. For example, referencing under each table, sufficient to enable isolated and/or unexperienced researchers and submission writers to quickly identify and obtain source materials would
serve the ABS and its customers much better. On the other hand there are a number of features which direct the reader to further information, but more about those later in the examination of each book.

The books being discussed here raise many more questions than they answer, being far more suited to scanning than probing, prompting the reader to investigate further, but this is as it should be. By providing accessible and readable statistics about a wide range of parameters highlighted by complementary text, the ABS brings the numbers to life in a way which opens up social statistics for people who do not deal with them on a daily basis. While it would not be appropriate for the ABS to descend to lurid pictorials, perhaps the inclusion of appropriate photos or artwork at the commencement of each chapter, and at other strategic places, may suit the purpose of both publications.

'Australian Social Trends' has chapters on topics which are central to understanding society - population, family, health, education, work, income and housing. Different years feature additional aspects of Australia life. In 1994 it was religion, while the 1995 edition contains a feature on culture and leisure.

Within DSS, planners must work with a knowledge of many social indicators, including population projections, the number and distribution of Australians from a non-English speaking background, projected age distribution and trends in family formation, to name a few. 'Australian Social Trends' is a marvellous resource in bringing much of this information together in a form amenable to the completion of informative background and research papers.

It is also more engaging than the somewhat glib and anecdotal overviews of social trends that appear in newspapers and magazines from time to time. While it is not the purpose of the books to entertain, the provision of factual information or 'hard data' in an inviting and readable format on many facets of Australian society is certainly to be welcomed. It is also useful for people working on specific aspects of social policy to look at wider developments within the community. 'Australian Social Trends 1995' incorporates useful secondary analysis which considers connections and relationships, between variables, such as ethnicity and industry concentration. The text expands upon information contained in the tables, for example:

‘...some industries have greater numbers of Greek and Italian born than second generation Greeks and Italians. For example, 17 per cent of those employed in the concreting industry were Italian born compared to 7 per cent of Italian second generation Australians. Similarly 6 per cent of those employed in fish shops, take-away food or milk bars were Greek born compared to 3 per cent Greek second generation Australians’. (p. 9.)
Usefulness is increased by the detailed list of definitions of key parameters in each chapter, as well as summary statistics which lead the reader to key sections within the text. International comparisons of population, health and employment complete the volume. The comparison illustrates a disturbingly high unemployment rate in Australia. On a more positive note, Australians enjoy one of the highest life expectancies. However, here too, 'Australian Social Trends 1995' reminds us of areas needing attention, indicating that while census accounts of Australia's indigenous people are incomplete, the life expectancy of indigenous people is estimated to be several years less than for the remainder of the population.

In summary, the combination of readable overview, and guides to more detailed information make 'Australian Social Trends 1995' a core resource for inexperienced researchers as well as program planners and policy analysts.

'The Australian Women's Year Book' is the child of collaboration between the ABS and the Office of the Status of Women. Its format engages the reader's attention and enables the text and tables to provide a statistical outline of the position of women in Australian society by presenting information about their participation in the workforce, health and life expectancy, family formation, how they spend their leisure hours and where the challenges still lie.

Like 'Australian Social Trends', it condenses a range of resource material into one volume, for those of us who wish to maintain an informed awareness of trends in Australian society. While the core topics of the Australia Women's Year Book should remain the same from year to year enabling comparison and analysis of trends over time, other information may change depending upon the sources which the ABS has to draw from in any one year. For example, the 1995 edition contains data from the first National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey.

Many of the subjects covered would be of value to DSS officers. These include population projections, immigration statistics (due to the Department's need to provide information to people from a non-English speaking background), the changing shape of families, housing stock statistics (in relation to housing related payments and housing related poverty), labour force participation, and many more. By its nature, the level of detail provided is not sufficient for detailed policy research. Rather, the book is designed for use as a 'statistical profile' and it works well on that level.

Much of the information provided in the Australian Women's Year Book uses the conventional method of comparing men and women against specific social parameters, meeting international guidelines for gender-based analysis. However, this can have some drawbacks. It leads one to compare the rates for males and females at the expense of illuminating the experiences and needs of women. For example, the chapter dealing with labour force...
participation is titled *Employment and Unemployment*, and addresses labour market issues, as one would expect. One might then expect the unpaid work of women to be detailed in the *Working Life* chapter. One would be disappointed. This chapter also has a strong focus on labour market issues such as trade union membership, employment-related benefits and child care. The 'working life' of women and men comprises far more than paid employment. The section 'Work and Family' (P. 109) highlights the fact that women with children have a much lower participation rate in the paid workforce than men with children and on page 83 there is a reference to women's' greater caring responsibilities' but little more. While one does not expect a feminist critique of the division of labour to be part of such a publication, surely some mention of the other aspects of our working lives would be a worthy addition. By contrast, 'Australian Social Trends 1995' does include such information and, in some detail.

The major components of the section on child care are a comparison of the use of formal child care by women and men and a description of the growth in child care places. This does not really help if I want to gauge the difficulty that women are facing obtaining childcare services, to assist their labour market participation. It does tell me what is being done to increase services, and that is good, but it leaves more direct concerns unanswered.

Overall, the style of presentation is informative of the position of women in comparison to men, rather than the position of women as women. An alternative mode of presentation would be to describe the circumstances of women in respect of each indicator, and then at the end of each chapter have a section contrasting the situation for men. For this reader, such flexibility would be welcome, at least in the text, if not the tables. Perhaps gender analysis is now sufficiently established to allow more latitude and creativity in presentation while still meeting international norms.

Nonetheless, the titles of the chapters are sensible and predictable to a large extent, facilitating rapid access to points of interest. The inclusion of a chapter on women's participation in decision making in this year's edition is to be welcomed, even if it highlights the lack of available data on the level of decision making by women in the private sector. This is clearly an area which would justify further research.

Several features of the format of the Australian Women's Year Book 1995 enhance its user friendliness. Each chapter commences with an overview of the policy background, Government actions and initiatives and information on ABS publications and activities relevant to the chapter's topic. A page entitled 'Definitions and data references' at the end of each chapter contains definitions of key words, with the definitions followed by a reference to an ABS or other publication. This method of referencing has the advantage of enabling the reader to scan the page and identify the main ABS data sources.
In combination with the simple referencing provided under each table, it provides the reader with a guide to the main resources dealing with the chapter's topic. The tables in each chapter are clearly set out, and complemented by a two page spread of summary indicators for the key chapters. However, the table references would be clearer for the uninitiated if ABS publications were clearly identified and the year of publication given.

Despite some qualifications it is hoped that the Australian Women's Yearbook becomes widely known, as a useful source of information, not only for the current year, but as a useful indicator and descriptor of change as succeeding volumes are published.

The combination of ideas and talent produced by linking the Office of the Status of Women and the ABS in the production of the Australian Women's Year Book has resulted in a worthwhile publication, building on the success of introducing the Women's Budget Statements in the 1980's. But is it possible that the ABS may find other organisations, both public and private, who would be valuable collaborators for future efforts?

The one area where both 'Australian Social Trends 1995' and 'Australian Women's Year Book 1995' underutilise ABS resources is a surprising one. Experienced researchers will be aware of the ABS Catalogue of Publications and Products (Catalogue No. 1101.0) and the possibility of using ABS CD-ROM data in tandem with published survey data. The ABS is selling itself short by not ensuring that newcomers to the statistical panorama available are not fully informed about the possible options that are open to them. In this context, both publications would benefit from detailed appendices which outline the scope of material available through census data, regular survey products, indices and help desk services. If you show people a new road they will travel further if it is well signposted.

Despite the qualifications, those involved in research, evaluation, policy development and, indeed anyone interested in broad trends in Australia, would be well advised to obtain the books discussed here. While the two publications reviewed have particular relevance for the writer, the ABS also produces an enormous range of statistical products in the economic and industrial areas. In line with its charter aim of assisting and encouraging informed decision-making, research and discussion, the ABS provides data through ABS, state, public and tertiary libraries. The ABS newsletters 'What Figures' are also a valuable source of information on new publications, release of classics such as the Time Use Survey, services, seminar programs etc.

What commenced as a review of two key reference materials has led to an exploration of the resources available through the ABS. It is hoped that this review will not only provide a useful description of 'Australian Social Trends
but will persuade the reader to examine for themselves if their research can be enhanced by ABS products and services.

Dianne Simpson-McGlynn is currently working in the Evaluation Section in the Department of Social Security. She provides advice to staff doing program and departmental evaluations and assists in coordinating DSS activities in this field. She has also worked on client surveys conducted by DSS and on the Strategic Review of the Income and Assets test which was completed in 1994.
Few of us today can escape the impact of survey work in some form. The aim of David de Vaus' new edition of 'Surveys in Social Research' is to make the methodology involved more accessible to students, people conducting their own surveys and the informed observer. A range of specialist books are available in this field, focusing on statistical techniques, analytical processes and research methodologies. De Vaus provides a general introduction and overview to this often bewildering maze, explaining the links between theory and practice and the ways in which these can established. It is a multipurpose, practical text which stresses the need for sound statistical analysis.

The book is divided into four main parts, with a new chapter on ethics in survey design as a feature of this edition. The first part covers the scope and nature of survey research and provides a brief introduction to the formulation and clarification of research questions. The beginning of the book is surprisingly defensive. De Vaus lists many common criticisms of survey work, from the philosophical to the technical. The reader is alerted to the dangers of misinterpretation before progressing to more positive outcomes.

De Vaus notes that there is a significant gap between textbook accounts of how surveys should be done and how it actually is done' (p. 9). He highlights the dilemmas confronting the ethical researcher and the responsibilities of ensuring that applied research addresses the needs of the moment without compromising the profession. The objective of social analysis is to blend descriptive and explanatory research through a process of rigorous analysis: ‘(t)he key to empirical testing is to look for evidence which will disprove the theory, not simply to find supporting illustrations’ (p. 20).

The author then looks at the process of collecting data. In many ways this part is one of the best, demonstrating the author's first-hand experience. Using detailed checklists, de Vaus works through the steps involved in clarifying concepts; constructing and administering questionnaires; and then building, evaluating and revising indicators. The chapter on sampling techniques provides a useful summary of the core options, covering different methodologies and issues such as non-response and sample size. His discussion of non-probability sampling is particularly welcome, as increasingly accessible computer technologies can divert attention from this valuable tool. A reader with no involvement with survey work may find the
nitty-gritty daunting and even ethereal. But, as with many disciplines, it is best to press on regardless, digest the more applied chapters and then return to theory and concept.

De Vaus' coverage of questionnaire construction is sound. He works through this process systematically, focusing on question content and wording, assorted types of questions, questionnaire lay-out, the pros and cons of different types of interviews, and the vital role of pilot testing. The chapter covering questionnaire administration relies heavily on work by Dillman (1978), providing useful summaries of the steps covered. De Vaus also looks at how to maximise data extraction from specific questionnaire formats, stressing the need to develop and maintain reliable and efficient frameworks.

Next in line are the basic statistical techniques available to the researcher, ranging from univariate analysis, different forms of bivariate analysis to multivariate analysis. In a text which covers the full process of social research the author has successfully condensed a significant volume of statistical work into a manageable overview. For the newcomer to assorted formulae, the text is designed as a basis for preliminary, practical case work in the classroom, with the aid of more specialised references. For the experienced researcher this technical summary is a useful reminder of what is available. This encourages project managers to look at what can be achieved in a rapidly changing research environment, rather than assuming that familiar research methodologies can be recycled to maximum effect.

De Vaus devotes the fourth part of the book to the analytical process involved in survey research. Here we progress from the 'means' to its 'end': the exhausted novice finds that the real challenge and excitement, and the work, has just begun. The hypothesis or theory has been developed; relevant data identified and organised into preliminary variables. The researcher is now a detective - the puzzle must be solved without every piece being readily available. Composite variables are constructed by trial and error, with ingenuity, patience and determination. The researcher will encounter conflicting trends which upset the initial model ... the task grows.

De Vaus addresses the complex aspect of interpretation by describing and explaining the building blocks of analysis. He wisely encourages the researcher to venture into the unknown - to compare different parameters, test the outcomes, to look at relationships and see whether there is correlation, and then assess whether causation can be implied with any degree of certainty. These skills are best taught through example, and de Vaus provides a detailed description of work on gender differences and religion (de Vaus and McAllister, 1987). While this section works well as an introduction, it could be developed into a much stronger discussion by using several case studies, supporting a more systemic outline of the analytical process than that provided in the summary. While analysis is by far the most
difficult component for the student and researcher to grasp, and thus harder to explain, a more integrated end-
product is feasible and would give greater insights into the full power of social research.

The inclusion of a new chapter on ethics in survey research in this edition of 'Surveys in Social Research' is
to be commended and will justifiably further debate. De Vaus rightly says that '(a)ny survey will be shaped
by three broad sets of considerations: technical, practical and ethical' (p. 330). Many factors are covered by
the latter. These include the need to ensure that participants are involved voluntarily, that they take part on
the basis of informed consent, that their physical and psychological well-being is protected, and that the
results honour their entitlements to anonymity and confidentiality.

In drawing conclusions about the potential of surveys, de Vaus rightly says that surveys 'can provide a useful
window through which to see some of the workings of our social structure' (p. 354). The success or otherwise
of social research is, by its nature, dependent on the integrity, skill and resources of the specialists involved.
In this context, it is essential that people understand that 'statistics', numbers, coefficients and correlations
will never provide all the answers. Rather, they provide us with tools for logical analysis, nothing more, and
should be judged on the basis of whether the tools are sound or blunt, well-chosen and appropriate or
tangential or misleading. By its nature, 'good' and thorough analysis should be logical, clear and accessible to
the intelligent reader.

As specialists in universities, quasi-independent research institutes and private companies increasingly tender
for research projects to augment their funding base and generate profits, de Vaus notes that readers and
individual practitioners must address a wider range of ethical issues. The survey analyst is well advised to
understand the political potential of sponsored and contract research: findings can be used for a range of
secondary purposes and the researcher must retain the protection inherent in balance and integrity. This is
particularly important if funding is provided by a special-interest organisation, or where outcomes can be
used to identify, distort and misinterpret trends in social policy.

De Vans raises other, more practical issues. Researchers who are funded for specific projects by external
organisations should clarify their function, role and status in the formal contract involved, ensuring that all
parties know where they stand at the outset. This process also protects against unrealistic expectations, given
the research methodology, resource allocations and timing involved. The tender process for research funds is
another area of potential distortion - it may be tempting to overstate the possibilities to win funds, but this is a
short-term benefit which can rebound with devastating effect. It can discredit not only the individual, but the
discipline as well. The discussion is sound, but...
With this in mind, what then are the strengths and weaknesses of this new edition of 'Surveys in Social Research'? Does it meet its objectives and is it a useful resource for the student and the practitioner? In many regards, de Vaus has produced an excellent central reference. It is not designed to stand alone. Firstly, it gives the reader a valuable overview, enabling different aspects of survey work to be placed in perspective. This is particularly valuable for the newcomer to survey design, as the 'means' can become a labyrinth from which some never emerge. Secondly, the author provides excellent annotated references at the end of each chapter as well as a lengthy academic bibliography and index. For more isolated or rusty practitioners this is vital. The new glossary, while limited, provides quick access to short definitions. Thirdly, de Vaus helps to demystify survey research by breaking down the process into manageable components. This is perhaps the greatest strength - he encourages the reader to tackle and understand 'statistical research' rather than shy away.

So what could be bettered? As with many books of this kind, the reader gets the impression that the text was originally based on lecture notes which grew over time. In this fourth edition, there is scope for a fresh look at the flow and integration of the core text. In many instances, the reader becomes engrossed, to find that the chapter ends abruptly, suggesting a jump to the next 'module' and the next tutorial. To some extent this is justified in a text book designed for course work, but not when the aim is to reach the general reader. Further, a more polished progression would facilitate student comprehension perhaps a pilot study on how this well-worn text is understood by new readers (without verbal explanation) could assist in further revision. Flow charts and boxed examples are not always explained or fully consistent with the text, and some of the check-lists would benefit from thorough updating to integrate related discussion in other parts of the text. Also, the publishers should review the overall lay-out. One of the more useful features of this book is its check-lists. In each case, though, the points are jammed together uncomfortably, where with a little imagination, additional clarity could be achieved.

However, given the author's overall sensitivity and experience, there are more surprising omissions. The relative costs and trade-offs - in both time and money - of different survey methods are not covered effectively, either in terms of the applicability of different methods, timing constraints, and the options in balancing coverage, sampling goals and the attainable level of detail. Discussion of the interview process and questionnaire design and administration, while technically sound as far as it goes, is relatively antiseptic and overlooks the potential impact that surveys can have on individual respondents and interviewers. The main body of the text raises few cautions about the dangers of survey work. Intruding into people's lives
is no light matter and the student and practitioner must anticipate possible outcomes. This is touched on in the final chapter on ethics, but deserves effective integration throughout the more practical sections on survey design and administration. Not every reader will read and retain every page!

The importance of containing interview trauma is well-founded within the profession. In many cases research topics cover difficult experiences, fragile personal matters and in places, suppressed emotions and memories. In such instances the project manager should ensure that respondent trauma can be addressed effectively by the interviewer, either by rounding out the issues or providing referrals to counsellors or agencies which give one-on-one support where requested. The ‘closing process’ is crucial here - it should allow for open-ended comment as a safety valve which enables respondent concerns to be voiced. Such comments may not be coded and included in the data set, but at least at the pilot stage this part of the interview can throw up key issues which might not otherwise surface. De Vans expounds the values of pluralism in survey work yet he understates this resource.

The research topic may also be unfamiliar and distressing for the interviewers being used, particularly students and people working for commercial agencies. The researcher has a responsibility to provide appropriate counselling at the training stage and during the survey, and adequate debriefing at the end of the interview phase. The interviewer can be confronted with social issues which are difficult to handle en masse during days and weeks of survey work.

De Vaus usefully introduces discussion about ethical and contractual issues where research involves third parties, external or tied funding, sponsored research and host institutions. In many ways, the text should be developed further, particularly in light of industry growth in this area. Contracted and sponsored research extends or complicates a range of ethical issues. It also creates a raft of additional practical matters for which many researchers are ill-prepared. Tender specifications, tender documentation and formal contracts between the parties are potential minefields in the hands of the inexperienced, on any side of the fence.

At a different level, this fourth edition of 'Surveys in Social Research' is disappointing in that linkages between public data sets and individual research projects are understated. The author mentions Census data in passing, but research design needs to be discussed in a wider context which alerts the student and the reader to the wealth of resources which can be used when developing a project. With new technologies, increasingly detailed data are available on CD-ROM and through specified computer runs. In addition to the Census, the Australian Bureau of Statistics produces detailed surveys (often with analysis) and new interactive products which introduce users to data manipulation and interpretation. Other government agencies, peak
councils, and research institutes produce independent data streams. In this regard, an appendix on accessing public data as part of the research process, with appropriate additions to the bibliography, would have contributed to a more balanced and well-rounded publication.

However, despite this hypothetical wish list on what might have been, 'Surveys in Social Research' continues to provide people involved in social analysis with an invaluable, compact resource. For the student and the general reader it offers a very useful overview of the varied facets of survey work, as well as detailed information about reliable reference material. Within government, it is to be hoped that the book will be discussed in evaluation and policy circles now that a new edition is available. Social research is part of our environment, so it is essential that statistics and related survey findings can be used and questioned in a critical and constructive manner.

Colette Svoboda is a former Managing Editor of the Social Security Journal in the Department of Social Security in Canberra. She holds an honours degree in Economics from the University of Queensland and a Master of Arts degree in Industrial Relations from the University of Warwick (England). In recent years she has been involved in survey design, administration and analysis in several federal government departments.

References


SOCIAL SECURITY STATISTICS

Recipients, DSS Pensions, by State and Sex
Recipients, DSS Allowances
Youth Training, Job Search and Newstart Allowees, by Duration and State
Family Payments, Clients and Children
Age Pensioners

Data in the Social Security Statistics Section is prepared by staff in the Information Management and Services Branch, Corporate Services Division, Department of Social Security

SOCIAL SECURITY JOURNAL
DECEMBER, 1995
### TABLE 1 - PENSIONERS: PENSION TYPE, AUSTRALIA, JUNE 1985 TO JUNE 1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age Pension</strong></td>
<td>1,331,782</td>
<td>1,324,600</td>
<td>1,322,174</td>
<td>1,328,814</td>
<td>1,334,310</td>
<td>1,340,468</td>
<td>1,375,849</td>
<td>1,446,168</td>
<td>1,515,682</td>
<td>1,581,874</td>
<td>1,578,699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rehabilitation Allowance</strong></td>
<td>3,444</td>
<td>3,227</td>
<td>2,887</td>
<td>2,143</td>
<td>2,063</td>
<td>2,211</td>
<td>3,574</td>
<td>1,939</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Widow Pension Class B</strong></td>
<td>81,541</td>
<td>81,341</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>86,692</td>
<td>83,526</td>
<td>78,725</td>
<td>74,124</td>
<td>69,066</td>
<td>64,633</td>
<td>59,916</td>
<td>54,935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Widow Allowance (b)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bereavement Allowance (c)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sole Parent Pension (d)</strong></td>
<td>246,295</td>
<td>250,910</td>
<td>248,907</td>
<td>238,656</td>
<td>239,469</td>
<td>248,886</td>
<td>265,720</td>
<td>287,228</td>
<td>298,444</td>
<td>313,437</td>
<td>324,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wife Pension (Age)</strong></td>
<td>22,931</td>
<td>22,208</td>
<td>22,106</td>
<td>22,128</td>
<td>22,609</td>
<td>23,766</td>
<td>26,537</td>
<td>30,902</td>
<td>33,520</td>
<td>36,539</td>
<td>39,619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wife Pension (Disability)</strong></td>
<td>73,770</td>
<td>80,167</td>
<td>86,304</td>
<td>87,742</td>
<td>89,890</td>
<td>91,068</td>
<td>94,006</td>
<td>101,731</td>
<td>108,327</td>
<td>116,036</td>
<td>121,831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wife Pension (Rehab. Allow.)</strong></td>
<td>736</td>
<td>699</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>1,128</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Wife Pension</strong></td>
<td>97,437</td>
<td>103,074</td>
<td>109,021</td>
<td>110,356</td>
<td>112,981</td>
<td>115,417</td>
<td>121,671</td>
<td>133,194</td>
<td>142,013</td>
<td>152,620</td>
<td>161,457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Carer Pension (Age)</strong></td>
<td>627</td>
<td>1,975</td>
<td>2,644</td>
<td>3,162</td>
<td>3,579</td>
<td>4,025</td>
<td>4,619</td>
<td>5,574</td>
<td>6,507</td>
<td>7,441</td>
<td>8,321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Carer Pension (Disability)</strong></td>
<td>2,085</td>
<td>3,045</td>
<td>3,853</td>
<td>4,231</td>
<td>4,431</td>
<td>4,771</td>
<td>5,478</td>
<td>6,790</td>
<td>8,056</td>
<td>9,450</td>
<td>10,631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Carer Pension (Other)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Carer Pension</strong></td>
<td>2,712</td>
<td>5,020</td>
<td>6,497</td>
<td>7,393</td>
<td>8,010</td>
<td>8,796</td>
<td>10,161</td>
<td>12,631</td>
<td>15,045</td>
<td>17,699</td>
<td>20,099</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** 2,022,373 2,041,982 1,978,536 2,070,967 2,088,270 2,101,438 2,185,648 2,329,126 2,443,051 2,562,029 2,613,458

(b) Widow Allowance commenced 1 January 1995.
(c) Prior to 1 January 1995, Bereavement Allowance was called Widowed Person Allowance.
A large proportion of widows previously included in Widowed Person Allowance were transferred to Widow Pension Class B from November 1992.
(d) Sole Parent Pension replaced the previous Widow Class A Pension and Supporting Parent Benefit from March 1989.

…..not applicable
TABLE 2 - PENSIONERS: STATE BY PENSION TYPE BY SEX, JUNE 1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pension Type</th>
<th>Age Pension</th>
<th>Disability Support Pension</th>
<th>Rehabilitation Allowance</th>
<th>Widow Class B Pension</th>
<th>Sole Parent Pension</th>
<th>Wife Pension</th>
<th>Carer Pension</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Males</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>184 458</td>
<td>112 206</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6 675</td>
<td>4 159</td>
<td>307 501</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>138 356</td>
<td>74 059</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3 750</td>
<td>2 629</td>
<td>218 800</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>90 323</td>
<td>56 799</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4 305</td>
<td>1 900</td>
<td>153 337</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>53 168</td>
<td>30 277</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 919</td>
<td>1 060</td>
<td>86 424</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>43 041</td>
<td>28 324</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 915</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>74 041</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>14 231</td>
<td>10 782</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>26 365</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>1 777</td>
<td>2 581</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>4 678</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>3 765</td>
<td>2 510</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>6 572</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas</td>
<td>15 452</td>
<td>7 134</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22 594</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>544 571</strong></td>
<td><strong>324 672</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>19 913</strong></td>
<td><strong>11 137</strong></td>
<td><strong>900 312</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Females**  |             |                            |                           |                       |                    |             |               |       |
| New South Wales | 355 679    | 47 715                     | 3                         | 21 084                | 103 129            | 53 427      | 3 197         | 584 234 |
| Victoria     | 266 094    | 33 650                     | 3                         | 14 110                | 67 667             | 38 560      | 2 385         | 422 469 |
| Queensland   | 171 949    | 24 330                     | 7                         | 6 942                 | 59 978             | 27 985      | 1 677         | 292 868 |
| South Australia | 102 401 | 12 970                     | 0                         | 4 034                 | 25 727             | 15 759      | 643           | 161 534 |
| Western Australia | 83 814 | 12 226                     | 0                         | 4 883                 | 30 410             | 14 350      | 614           | 146 297 |
| Tasmania     | 28 843     | 4 619                      | 1                         | 1 223                 | 9 384              | 5 674       | 341           | 50 085  |
| Northern Territory | 2 926 | 1 131                     | 0                         | 319                   | 4 254              | 904         | 40            | 9 574   |
| Australian Capital Territory | 8 161 | 1 471                     | 1                         | 683                   | 4 358              | 1 000       | 63            | 15 737  |
| Overseas     | 14 260     | 1 646                      | 0                         | 1 658                 | 121                | 3 798       | 1             | 21 484  |
| **Total**    | **1 034 127**| **139 758**                | **15**                    | **54 936**            | **305 028**        | **161 457** | **8 961**     | **1 704 282** |

(not applicable)
### TABLE 2 - PENSIONERS: STATE BY PENSION TYPE BY SEX, JUNE 1995 (CONTINUED)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pension Type</th>
<th>Age Pension</th>
<th>Disability Support Pension</th>
<th>Rehabilitation Allowance</th>
<th>Widow B Class Pension</th>
<th>Sole Parent Pension</th>
<th>Wife Pension</th>
<th>Carer Pension</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>State</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>540 137</td>
<td>159 921</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21 084</td>
<td>109 804</td>
<td>53 427</td>
<td>21 084</td>
<td>891 735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>404 450</td>
<td>107 709</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14 110</td>
<td>71 417</td>
<td>38 560</td>
<td>14 110</td>
<td>641 269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>262 272</td>
<td>81 129</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6 942</td>
<td>64 283</td>
<td>27 985</td>
<td>6 942</td>
<td>446 205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>155 569</td>
<td>43 247</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 034</td>
<td>27 646</td>
<td>15 759</td>
<td>4 034</td>
<td>247 958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>126 855</td>
<td>40 550</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 883</td>
<td>32 325</td>
<td>14 350</td>
<td>4 883</td>
<td>220 338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>43 074</td>
<td>15 401</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 223</td>
<td>10 234</td>
<td>5 674</td>
<td>1 223</td>
<td>76 450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>4 703</td>
<td>3 712</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>4 525</td>
<td>904</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>14 252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>11 926</td>
<td>3 981</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>4 586</td>
<td>1 000</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>22 309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas</td>
<td>29 712</td>
<td>8 780</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 658</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>3 798</td>
<td>1 658</td>
<td>44 078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1 578 698</strong></td>
<td><strong>464 430</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td><strong>54 936</strong></td>
<td><strong>324 941</strong></td>
<td><strong>161 457</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td><strong>2 604 594</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 3 - ALLOWEES: ALLOWANCE TYPE, AUSTRALIA, JUNE 1992 TO JUNE 1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Search Allowance (a)</td>
<td>529 538</td>
<td>482 594</td>
<td>449 268</td>
<td>413 586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newstart Allowance (a)</td>
<td>322 294</td>
<td>431 175</td>
<td>429 010</td>
<td>387 128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Training Allowance (a) (b)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21 857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Search, Newstart and Youth Training Allowance (a)</td>
<td>851 831</td>
<td>913 770</td>
<td>878 278</td>
<td>822 570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sickness Allowance (a)</td>
<td>44 172</td>
<td>46 579</td>
<td>47 132</td>
<td>47 311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Benefit (a)</td>
<td>34 792</td>
<td>28 854</td>
<td>25 947</td>
<td>20 884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mature Age Allowance (c)</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>27 528</td>
<td>39 026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mature Age Partner Allowance (c)</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>10 230</td>
<td>15 092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility Allowance (a)</td>
<td>13 911</td>
<td>16 160</td>
<td>20 795</td>
<td>22 851</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) These figures are an average of the weekly payments for the month of June 1995.
(b) Youth Training Allowance was introduced from 1 January 1995.
(c) These figures are an average of the fortnightly payments for the month of June 1995.
(d) Mature Age Allowance and Mature Age Partner Allowance were introduced in March 1994.
(d) Figure for June 1995 is a total number extracted as at the end of June 1995.
.. not applicable
Note: Discrepancies between totals and the sum of the components is due to rounding of monthly averages.
TABLE 4 - YOUTH TRAINING, JOB SEARCH AND NEWSTART ALLOWEES: STATE BY ALLOWANCE TYPE, JUNE 1995 (a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Youth Training Allowance</th>
<th>Job Search Allowance</th>
<th>Newstart Allowance</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>6 487</td>
<td>125 722</td>
<td>128 500</td>
<td>260 709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>4 260</td>
<td>99 802</td>
<td>108 208</td>
<td>212 270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>5 147</td>
<td>88 793</td>
<td>62 249</td>
<td>156 189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>2 278</td>
<td>35 209</td>
<td>36 737</td>
<td>74 224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>2 132</td>
<td>40 750</td>
<td>26 302</td>
<td>69 184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>1 030</td>
<td>11 996</td>
<td>15 585</td>
<td>28 611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>5 807</td>
<td>5 582</td>
<td>11 700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>5 508</td>
<td>3 967</td>
<td>9 688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>21 858</strong></td>
<td><strong>413 587</strong></td>
<td><strong>387 130</strong></td>
<td><strong>822 575</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) These figures are an average of the weekly payments for the month of June 1995.

Image to be inserted

Graph 2: Number of Youth Training, Job Search and Newstart Allowees by State, June 1995
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Sickness Allowance(a)</th>
<th>Special Benefit(a)</th>
<th>Mature Age Allowance(b)</th>
<th>Mature Age Partner Allowance(b)</th>
<th>Mobility Allowance(c)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>16 102</td>
<td>9 512</td>
<td>13 244</td>
<td>4 908</td>
<td>7 481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>10 856</td>
<td>6 142</td>
<td>10 664</td>
<td>4 350</td>
<td>6 772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>10 284</td>
<td>1 836</td>
<td>6 543</td>
<td>2 444</td>
<td>4 253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>3 474</td>
<td>1 014</td>
<td>3 796</td>
<td>1 529</td>
<td>2 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>4 546</td>
<td>1 566</td>
<td>2 983</td>
<td>1 193</td>
<td>1 650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>974</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>1 482</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>(d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>(e)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>47 311</strong></td>
<td><strong>20 885</strong></td>
<td><strong>39 026</strong></td>
<td><strong>15 092</strong></td>
<td><strong>22 851</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) These figures are an average of the weekly payments for the month of June 1995.
(b) These figures are an average of the fortnightly payments for the month of June 1995.
(c) These figures are a total number extracted as at the end of June 1995.
(d) Figures for the Northern Territory are included in Queensland.
(e) Figures for the Australian Capital Territory are included in New South Wales.

*SSJ, December 1995, Social Security Statistics*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total up to 1 year</strong></td>
<td>363 301</td>
<td>355 457</td>
<td>298 263</td>
<td>234 850</td>
<td>292 415</td>
<td>508 067</td>
<td>708 730</td>
<td>541 387</td>
<td>507 840</td>
<td>490 514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 7 weeks</td>
<td>97 585</td>
<td>92 709</td>
<td>80 699</td>
<td>71 085</td>
<td>94 631</td>
<td>139 055</td>
<td>169 006</td>
<td>124 468</td>
<td>112 233</td>
<td>116 170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 7 weeks to 3 months</td>
<td>61 715</td>
<td>61 026</td>
<td>55 019</td>
<td>41 536</td>
<td>53 915</td>
<td>95 199</td>
<td>124 544</td>
<td>91 842</td>
<td>81 341</td>
<td>83 043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 3 months to 6 months</td>
<td>109 313</td>
<td>107 571</td>
<td>79 849</td>
<td>59 761</td>
<td>73 027</td>
<td>139 497</td>
<td>195 296</td>
<td>165 510</td>
<td>153 266</td>
<td>144 003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 6 months to 1 year</td>
<td>94 688</td>
<td>94 151</td>
<td>82 696</td>
<td>62 468</td>
<td>70 842</td>
<td>134 316</td>
<td>219 884</td>
<td>159 567</td>
<td>161 000</td>
<td>147 298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total over 1 year</strong></td>
<td>197 156</td>
<td>189 287</td>
<td>172 584</td>
<td>144 467</td>
<td>113 634</td>
<td>142 869</td>
<td>122 285</td>
<td>348 179</td>
<td>340 758</td>
<td>304 307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 1 year to 2 years</td>
<td>91 249</td>
<td>88 015</td>
<td>80 358</td>
<td>63 089</td>
<td>50 253</td>
<td>82 959</td>
<td>29 704</td>
<td>166 768</td>
<td>152 875</td>
<td>132 181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 2 years to 3 years</td>
<td>42 058</td>
<td>39 975</td>
<td>36 039</td>
<td>30 618</td>
<td>23 638</td>
<td>22 644</td>
<td>49 452</td>
<td>94 893</td>
<td>78 842</td>
<td>63 883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 3 years</td>
<td>63 849</td>
<td>61 297</td>
<td>56 187</td>
<td>50 760</td>
<td>39 743</td>
<td>37 266</td>
<td>43 129</td>
<td>86 518</td>
<td>109 041</td>
<td>108 243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>560 457</td>
<td>544 744</td>
<td>470 847</td>
<td>379 317</td>
<td>406 049</td>
<td>650 936</td>
<td>831 015</td>
<td>889 566</td>
<td>848 598</td>
<td>794 821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean duration (weeks)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>71.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median duration (weeks)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) These figures are derived from quarterly surveys which produce totals that differ from those shown in Tables 3 and 4.
(b) From February 1990 the method of calculating duration was corrected to ensure that only duration in respect of the current benefit type is counted. This had a large effect on the 'over one year' duration figures, dropping them by perhaps 20 000 or more.
(c) Job Search and Newstart Allowance replaced Unemployment Benefits from July 1991. To preserve continuity with the previous data, Newstart Allowance durations relate to duration on Newstart Allowance together with duration on a previous allowance where applicable (mainly JSA).
(d) Youth Training Allowance numbers are included in the figures from May 1995.

n.a. not available
TABLE 7 - FAMILY PAYMENTS: CLIENTS AND CHILDREN BY FAMILY PAYMENT TYPE, AUSTRALIA, JUNE 1993 TO JUNE 1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Basic Family Payment Only</th>
<th>Additional Family Payment (AFP) (a)</th>
<th>Total AFP</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Workforce</td>
<td>Auto (b)</td>
<td>Total AFP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>June 1993</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients</td>
<td>1 123 477</td>
<td>521 289</td>
<td>810 219</td>
<td>1 933 696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>2 100 465</td>
<td>963 489</td>
<td>1 623 943</td>
<td>3 724 408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>June 1994</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients</td>
<td>985 967</td>
<td>530 456</td>
<td>841 894</td>
<td>1 827 861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>1 855 949</td>
<td>981 127</td>
<td>1 683 050</td>
<td>3 538 999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>June 1995</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients</td>
<td>967 528</td>
<td>531 425</td>
<td>836 590</td>
<td>1 804 118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>1 814 944</td>
<td>983 429</td>
<td>1 671 372</td>
<td>3 486 316</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Recipients of Additional Family Payment are also in receipt of the Basic Family Payment component.

(b) Additional Family Payment Auto is paid to those recipients with children who receive or whose partner receives a pension or allowance from DSS.

Note: The figure for Basic Family Payment Only was derived by subtracting Total AFP from the Total.
### TABLE 8 - FAMILY PAYMENTS: STATE BY FAMILY PAYMENT TYPE BY SEX, JUNE 1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Payment</th>
<th>Basic Family Payment Only</th>
<th>Additional Family Payment (AFP) (b)</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Workforce</td>
<td>Auto (c)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total AFP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Males</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>5 182</td>
<td>2 176</td>
<td>8 155</td>
<td>10 331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>3 405</td>
<td>1 442</td>
<td>4 476</td>
<td>5 918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>3 074</td>
<td>1 568</td>
<td>5 274</td>
<td>6 842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>1 155</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>2 297</td>
<td>2 882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>1 620</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>2 324</td>
<td>2 873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>1 019</td>
<td>1 204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (a)</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>15 709</td>
<td>6 728</td>
<td>24 274</td>
<td>31 002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Females</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>307 146</td>
<td>92 977</td>
<td>170 522</td>
<td>263 499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>242 632</td>
<td>72 146</td>
<td>116 078</td>
<td>188 224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>172 343</td>
<td>64 693</td>
<td>98 532</td>
<td>163 225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>76 660</td>
<td>25 344</td>
<td>43 511</td>
<td>68 855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>98 035</td>
<td>28 199</td>
<td>47 002</td>
<td>75 201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>25 778</td>
<td>8 589</td>
<td>17 297</td>
<td>25 886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>9 481</td>
<td>3 405</td>
<td>7 750</td>
<td>11 155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>17 095</td>
<td>3 043</td>
<td>5 977</td>
<td>9 020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (a)</td>
<td>2 631</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>951 801</td>
<td>298 439</td>
<td>507 167</td>
<td>805 606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Persons</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>312 328</td>
<td>95 153</td>
<td>178 677</td>
<td>273 830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>246 037</td>
<td>73 588</td>
<td>120 554</td>
<td>194 142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>175 417</td>
<td>66 261</td>
<td>103 806</td>
<td>170 676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>77 815</td>
<td>25 929</td>
<td>45 808</td>
<td>71 737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>99 655</td>
<td>28 748</td>
<td>49 326</td>
<td>78 074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>26 199</td>
<td>8 774</td>
<td>18 316</td>
<td>27 090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>9 818</td>
<td>3 539</td>
<td>8 160</td>
<td>11 699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>17 491</td>
<td>3 132</td>
<td>6 266</td>
<td>9 398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (a)</td>
<td>2 750</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>967 510</td>
<td>305 167</td>
<td>531 441</td>
<td>836 608</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) State totals are defined on the basis of postcodes. These figures include recipients who are paid whilst overseas and invalid postcodes. These invalid postcodes result from either recipients supplying incorrect postcodes or data entry errors.
(b) Recipients in receipt of the Additional Family Payment are also in receipt of the Basic Family Payment component.
(c) Additional Family Payment Auto is paid to those recipients with children who receive or whose partner receives a pension or allowance from DSS.

*S.S.J, December 1995, Social Security Statistics* 230
Graph 3: Family Payments by Type and State, June 1995

- Basic Family Payment Only
- Total Additional Family Payment
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>211 685</td>
<td>211 685</td>
<td>211 685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>226 134</td>
<td>221 391</td>
<td>447 525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>125 113</td>
<td>194 425</td>
<td>319 538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-79</td>
<td>85 332</td>
<td>160 751</td>
<td>246 083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>67 468</td>
<td>135 531</td>
<td>202 999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>30 654</td>
<td>74 687</td>
<td>105 341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>8 577</td>
<td>28 153</td>
<td>36 730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95-99</td>
<td>1 187</td>
<td>6 603</td>
<td>7 790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 or more</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>901</td>
<td>1 007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rate of Payment (a)
- Single rate: 172 363, 628 595, 800 958
- Couple rate: 372 208, 405 532, 777 740

Level of Payment (b)
- Maximum: 346 257, 716 550, 1 062 807
- Reduced: 198 314, 317 577, 515 891

Conjugal conditional (c)
- Single: 52 187, 71 308, 123 495
- Widowed: 70 095, 431 310, 501 405
- Divorced: 20 243, 62 270, 82 513
- Married: 402 046, 469 239, 871 285

Total: 544 571, 1 034 127, 1 578 698

(a) This is the rate of pension (either single or married) at which the pensioner is eligible to be paid.
(b) This is the proportion of the rate paid to the pensioner, i.e., either the maximum rate or a reduced rate will be paid dependent on the income and assets test.
(c) This breakdown is determined by the legal marital status of the pensioner as well as their conjugal condition for assessment purposes.

..not applicable
Graph 4: Age Pensioners by Age and Sex, June 1995
## Table 10 – Age Pensioners: Country of Birth by Sex, Australia, June 1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Birth</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AUSTRALIA</strong></td>
<td>339,089</td>
<td>724,705</td>
<td>1,063,794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UK/IRELAND</strong></td>
<td>65,689</td>
<td>117,314</td>
<td>183,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EUROPE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>1,521</td>
<td>2,489</td>
<td>4,010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>564</td>
<td>963</td>
<td>1,527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>7,642</td>
<td>15,553</td>
<td>23,195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>12,187</td>
<td>17,900</td>
<td>30,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>3,669</td>
<td>4,223</td>
<td>7,892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>38,222</td>
<td>42,742</td>
<td>80,964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>3,671</td>
<td>5,357</td>
<td>9,028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>10,404</td>
<td>13,769</td>
<td>24,173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>11,709</td>
<td>12,648</td>
<td>24,357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>879</td>
<td>1,479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1,442</td>
<td>1,814</td>
<td>3,256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Republic of Yugoslavia</td>
<td>8,788</td>
<td>12,828</td>
<td>21,616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Europe (a)</td>
<td>11,039</td>
<td>13,415</td>
<td>24,454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Europe</strong></td>
<td>112,049</td>
<td>145,593</td>
<td>257,642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MIDDLE EAST</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>1,716</td>
<td>1,750</td>
<td>3,466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>2,008</td>
<td>2,745</td>
<td>4,753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>1,265</td>
<td>2,076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Middle East</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Middle East</strong></td>
<td>5,308</td>
<td>7,039</td>
<td>12,347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NORTH AMERICA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>847</td>
<td>1,369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>831</td>
<td>892</td>
<td>1,723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total North America</strong></td>
<td>1,353</td>
<td>1,739</td>
<td>3,092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOUTH AMERICA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other America</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>735</td>
<td>1,096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total South America</strong></td>
<td>1,023</td>
<td>2,298</td>
<td>3,321</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued over)
TABLE 10 – AGE PENSIONERS: COUNTRY OF BIRTH BY SEX, AUSTRALIA, JUNE 1995
(CONTINUED)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Birth</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AFRICA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>2 490</td>
<td>3 915</td>
<td>6 405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>1 470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>826</td>
<td>1 677</td>
<td>2 503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia/Zimbabwe</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Africa</td>
<td>723</td>
<td>1 088</td>
<td>1 811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Africa</strong></td>
<td><strong>4 625</strong></td>
<td><strong>7 870</strong></td>
<td><strong>12 495</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASIA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>2 414</td>
<td>3 652</td>
<td>6 066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>2 348</td>
<td>4 505</td>
<td>6 853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>875</td>
<td>1 478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>826</td>
<td>1 226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>948</td>
<td>1 284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>1 776</td>
<td>2 751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam/Cambodia/Laos</td>
<td>1 289</td>
<td>1 992</td>
<td>3 281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Asia</td>
<td>1 042</td>
<td>1 962</td>
<td>3 004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Asia</strong></td>
<td><strong>10 129</strong></td>
<td><strong>18 075</strong></td>
<td><strong>28 204</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OCEANIA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>4 575</td>
<td>7 997</td>
<td>12 572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Oceania</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Oceania</strong></td>
<td><strong>5 210</strong></td>
<td><strong>9 304</strong></td>
<td><strong>14 514</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Not Stated</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>544 571</strong></td>
<td><strong>1 034 127</strong></td>
<td><strong>1 578 698</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Other Europe includes former members of the USSR not otherwise specified.

Note: Country of Birth is coded when clients first register for assistance.
Graph 5: Age Pensioners by Country of Birth, June 1995

Figure 1: Overseas born Age Pension recipients, June 1995

(a) Includes UK/Ireland
### TABLE 11 - AGE PENSIONERS: AGE GROUP BY SEX BY RATE OF PAYMENT (a), JUNE 1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age groups (years)</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Single rate</td>
<td>Couple rate</td>
<td>Single rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>172 363</td>
<td>372 208</td>
<td>628 595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>135 006</td>
<td>76 679</td>
<td>135 006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>134 075</td>
<td>92 059</td>
<td>143 660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-79</td>
<td>78 176</td>
<td>46 937</td>
<td>135 855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>58 075</td>
<td>27 257</td>
<td>119 173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>47 584</td>
<td>19 884</td>
<td>101 760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>21 605</td>
<td>9 049</td>
<td>55 292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95-99</td>
<td>5 850</td>
<td>2 727</td>
<td>20 336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 or more</td>
<td>819</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>4 792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>346 257</td>
<td>198 314</td>
<td>716 550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) This is the rate of pension (either single or couple) at which the pensioner is eligible to be paid. For the period 20 March 1995 - 30 June 1995 the maximum rate of pension was:
- Single $326.10 per fortnight
- Couple $272.00 per fortnight (each)

### TABLE 12 - AGE PENSIONERS: AGE GROUP BY SEX BY LEVEL OF PAYMENT (a), JUNE 1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age groups (years)</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>Reduced</td>
<td>Maximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>135 006</td>
<td>76 679</td>
<td>135 006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>134 075</td>
<td>92 059</td>
<td>143 660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>78 176</td>
<td>46 937</td>
<td>135 855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-79</td>
<td>58 075</td>
<td>27 257</td>
<td>119 173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>47 584</td>
<td>19 884</td>
<td>101 760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>21 605</td>
<td>9 049</td>
<td>55 292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>5 850</td>
<td>2 727</td>
<td>20 336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95-99</td>
<td>819</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>4 792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 or more</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>346 257</td>
<td>198 314</td>
<td>716 550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) A pensioner will either be entitled to be paid at the maximum or a reduced rate of payment. That is, they may be paid the maximum single/couple rate or a reduced single/couple rate depending on their income and assets.
..not applicable
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Home Ownership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60-64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Males**

- **Deemed Interest in Home**: .. 82 63 60 56 50 17 1 1 1
- **Home Owned Fully**: .. 60 326 25 33 7 17 940 1 619 7 74 1 215 18 131 086
- **Home Owned Partly**: .. 3 070 2 126 1 199 915 45 6 1 7 894
- **Home Owner But Lives Elsewhere**: .. 82 20 31 34 23 9 1 0 200
- **Joint Ownership**: .. 108 969 67 030 41 809 28 321 9 980 1 941 179 11 258 240
- **Life Interest**: .. 376 255 186 154 92 34 6 0 200
- **No Home Owned**: .. 50 099 27 824 19 511 16 361 8 495 2 982 484 57 125 813
- **Nursing Home-Home Owner**: .. 408 495 947 1 479 1 287 560 102 6 5 284
- **Nursing Home-Non Home Owner**: .. 545 589 727 1 087 1 043 545 116 8 4 660
- **Purchased Life Tenancy**: .. 62 44 32 57 34 9 3 0 241
- **Purchasing Home Owner**: .. 931 151 42 21 6 1 1 0 1 1 1 53
- **Retirement Village-Home Owner**: .. 0 0 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 1
- **Retirement Village-Non Home Owner**: .. 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 1
- **Other Form Of Ownership**: .. 551 408 725 758 382 122 12 0 2 958
- **Not coded**: .. 633 770 1 123 1 605 1 065 352 55 4 5 607

**Total**

.. 226 134 125 113 85 332 67 468 30 654 8 577 1 187 106 544 571

(Continued over)

.. not applicable
## TABLE 13 - AG EPENSIONERS: HOME OWNERSHIP BY AGE GROUP BY SEX, JUNE 1995 (CONTINUED)

### Age group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home Ownership</th>
<th>60-64</th>
<th>65-69</th>
<th>70-74</th>
<th>75-79</th>
<th>80-84</th>
<th>85-89</th>
<th>90-94</th>
<th>95-99</th>
<th>100+</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Females</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deemed Interest in Home</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Owned Fully</td>
<td>73599</td>
<td>62588</td>
<td>57406</td>
<td>49033</td>
<td>39063</td>
<td>19271</td>
<td>5762</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>307810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Owned Partly</td>
<td>4643</td>
<td>5917</td>
<td>5728</td>
<td>4121</td>
<td>3122</td>
<td>1439</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Owner But Lives Elsewhere</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Ownership</td>
<td>81542</td>
<td>94531</td>
<td>69022</td>
<td>45470</td>
<td>29118</td>
<td>10220</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>332172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Interest</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>965</td>
<td>1057</td>
<td>1081</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Home Owned</td>
<td>47782</td>
<td>52413</td>
<td>52415</td>
<td>47963</td>
<td>45623</td>
<td>28724</td>
<td>12732</td>
<td>3359</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>291534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing Home-Home Owner</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>1064</td>
<td>2194</td>
<td>3845</td>
<td>3746</td>
<td>1894</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>13937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing Home-Non Home Owner</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>1258</td>
<td>2130</td>
<td>4157</td>
<td>4543</td>
<td>2962</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>17127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchased Life Tenancy</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchasing Home Owner</td>
<td>1289</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement Village-Home Owner</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement Village-Non Home Owner</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Form Of Ownership</td>
<td>957</td>
<td>1540</td>
<td>2631</td>
<td>3118</td>
<td>2794</td>
<td>1444</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not coded</td>
<td>552</td>
<td>1470</td>
<td>2928</td>
<td>4659</td>
<td>5848</td>
<td>4145</td>
<td>1611</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>211685</td>
<td>221391</td>
<td>194425</td>
<td>160751</td>
<td>135531</td>
<td>74687</td>
<td>28153</td>
<td>6603</td>
<td>901</td>
<td>1034127</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 13  AGE PENSIONERS: HOME OWNERSHIP BY AGE GROUP BY SEX, JUNE 1995 (CONTINUED)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home Ownership</th>
<th>60-64</th>
<th>65-69</th>
<th>70-74</th>
<th>75-79</th>
<th>80-84</th>
<th>85-89</th>
<th>90-94</th>
<th>95-99</th>
<th>100+</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deemed Interest in Home</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>734</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Owned Fully</td>
<td>73 599</td>
<td>122 914</td>
<td>82 743</td>
<td>67 973</td>
<td>55 682</td>
<td>27 012</td>
<td>7 652</td>
<td>1 199</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>438 896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Owned Partly</td>
<td>4 643</td>
<td>8 987</td>
<td>7 854</td>
<td>5 320</td>
<td>4 037</td>
<td>1 895</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33 354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Owner But Lives Elsewhere</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Ownership</td>
<td>81 542</td>
<td>203 500</td>
<td>136 052</td>
<td>87 279</td>
<td>57 439</td>
<td>20 200</td>
<td>3 933</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>590 412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Interest</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>1 116</td>
<td>1 220</td>
<td>1 243</td>
<td>1 235</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6 250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Home Owned</td>
<td>47 782</td>
<td>102 512</td>
<td>80 239</td>
<td>67 474</td>
<td>61 984</td>
<td>37 219</td>
<td>15 714</td>
<td>3 843</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>417 347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing Home-Home Owner</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>874</td>
<td>1 559</td>
<td>3 141</td>
<td>5 324</td>
<td>5 033</td>
<td>2 454</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>19 221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing Home-Non Home Owner</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>1 173</td>
<td>1 847</td>
<td>2 857</td>
<td>5 244</td>
<td>5 586</td>
<td>3 507</td>
<td>1 091</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>21 787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchased Life Tenancy</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchasing Home Owner</td>
<td>1 289</td>
<td>1 410</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement Village-Home Owner</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement Village-Non Home Owner</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Form Of Ownership</td>
<td>957</td>
<td>2 091</td>
<td>3 039</td>
<td>3 843</td>
<td>3 552</td>
<td>1 826</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15 901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not coded</td>
<td>552</td>
<td>2 103</td>
<td>3 698</td>
<td>5 782</td>
<td>7 453</td>
<td>5 210</td>
<td>1 963</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>27 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>211 685</td>
<td>447 525</td>
<td>319 538</td>
<td>246 083</td>
<td>202 999</td>
<td>105 341</td>
<td>36 730</td>
<td>7 790</td>
<td>1 007</td>
<td>1 578 698</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

240
## TABLE 14 - AGE PENSIONERS: BY AGE GROUP BY RECEIVING/NOT RECEIVING RENT ASSISTANCE, JUNE 1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group (years)</th>
<th>Receiving Rent Assistance</th>
<th>Not Receiving Rent Assistance</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>24 675</td>
<td>201 459</td>
<td>226 134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>14 149</td>
<td>110 964</td>
<td>125 113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-79</td>
<td>11 301</td>
<td>74 031</td>
<td>85 332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>11 799</td>
<td>55 669</td>
<td>67 468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>8 207</td>
<td>22 447</td>
<td>30 654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>3 572</td>
<td>5 005</td>
<td>8 577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95-99</td>
<td>661</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>1 187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 or more</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>74 427</strong></td>
<td><strong>470 144</strong></td>
<td><strong>544 571</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Females</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>20 229</td>
<td>191 456</td>
<td>211 685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>22 452</td>
<td>198 939</td>
<td>221 391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>24 535</td>
<td>169 890</td>
<td>194 425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-79</td>
<td>27 860</td>
<td>132 891</td>
<td>160 751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>35 270</td>
<td>100 261</td>
<td>135 531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>30 016</td>
<td>44 671</td>
<td>74 687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>16 266</td>
<td>11 887</td>
<td>28 153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95-99</td>
<td>4 752</td>
<td>1 851</td>
<td>6 603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 or more</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>182 064</strong></td>
<td><strong>852 063</strong></td>
<td><strong>1 034 127</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Persons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>20 229</td>
<td>191 456</td>
<td>211 685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>47 127</td>
<td>400 398</td>
<td>447 525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>38 684</td>
<td>280 854</td>
<td>319 538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-79</td>
<td>39 161</td>
<td>206 922</td>
<td>246 083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>47 069</td>
<td>155 930</td>
<td>202 999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>38 223</td>
<td>67 118</td>
<td>105 341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>19 838</td>
<td>16 892</td>
<td>36 730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95-99</td>
<td>5 413</td>
<td>2 377</td>
<td>7 790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 or more</td>
<td>747</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>1 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>256 491</strong></td>
<td><strong>1 322 207</strong></td>
<td><strong>1 578 698</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

.. not applicable

*SSJ, December 1995, Social Security Statistics*
PROJECT NOTES

Editor's Note
Current and Planned Research

• Retirement Incomes
• Income Support for People with Disabilities
• Income Support for Families
• Labour Market Programs
• Assistance for Young People
• Income Support Research Other

New Books and Reports

SOCIAL SECURITY JOURNAL

DECEMBER 1995
The Project Notes Section in this issue of the *Social Security Journal* builds on the comprehensive outline of current research within Australia which was introduced in the December 1994 issue. As noted then, subsequent issues of the journal will include details about new projects not already listed and final reports as they become available.

The Project Notes Section already provides a vital research resource for people who are interested in social security issues, whether as practitioners, researchers or members of relevant agencies. It is planned that the Section will continue to provide comprehensive information about current work on a twice-yearly basis.

The Project Notes Section does not aim to provide a full census of relevant work. Rather, it presents a central 'bulletin board' which can be accessed by readers within Australia as well as overseas. While every effort is made to circulate requests for relevant information the end product is, by its nature, dependent on the assistance and co-operation of researchers and specialists in the public, academic and welfare, community and church sectors.

Because it is not possible to update every item covering current or planned research in each issue, individual copies of current and previous issues of the *Social Security Journal* are now available through Commonwealth Government Bookshops and the Australian Government Publishing Service. Ordering details are provided on the inside back cover in each issue.

If you have any suggestions as to the information you would find useful in the Project Notes Section, please contact Melinda Robson, the Project Notes Coordinator on (06) 244 5540. Completed reports and books can also be forwarded to: Ian Vandenbergh, Managing Editor, *Social Security Journal*, International Branch, DSS, Box 7788, Canberra Mail Centre, ACT, 2610. This will ensure that new materials are considered for the Book Review Section and circulated to staff within DSS who are working in the relevant areas. Project Notes return forms can be forwarded at any time.
### CURRENT AND PLANNED RESEARCH

#### RETIREMENT INCOMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>The Superannuation Guarantee and Australian retirement provision: economic policy and implementation issues</th>
<th>Universality and selectivity in income support: an assessment of the issues</th>
<th>Citizenship, social rights and income in retirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RESEARCHER</td>
<td>Armstrong, Kirsten</td>
<td>Shaver, Sheila</td>
<td>Shaver, Sheila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBJECTIVES &amp; METHOD</td>
<td>Investigate interaction between superannuation and social security, with special reference to provision of a safety net for those in need without tempting wealthier retirees to access the public age pension.</td>
<td>Review the arguments in favour of universal as opposed to means-tested income support and test these arguments from both an Australian and an international perspective. Literature review and quantitative analysis of income support and income packaging of aged persons using Luxembourg income study data for Australia, UK, USA, Germany, Norway and Sweden.</td>
<td>Study the expectations and plans of middle-aged persons and married couples for their income in retirement, and how perceptions of a social right to income support in retirement are influenced by class and political culture. Secondary analysis of quantitative data sources and small qualitative fieldwork study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSTITUTION</td>
<td>University of New South Wales/AMP Society</td>
<td>Small Policy Research Centre</td>
<td>Social Policy Research Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTACT</td>
<td>(02) 257 4622</td>
<td>(02) 385 3855</td>
<td>(02) 385 3855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPIC</td>
<td>Retirement incomes: a bibliography</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESEARCHER</td>
<td>Encel, Diana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBJECTIVES &amp; METHOD</td>
<td>Describe and classify published material from 1970s onwards dealing with retirement incomes in Australia.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIME FRAME</td>
<td>Estimated completion date: March 1996</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSTITUTION</td>
<td>Social Policy Research Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTACT</td>
<td>(02) 385 3845</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TOPIC
Carers communication strategy research project  
A comparison of clients before and after the Disability Reform Package

### RESEARCHER
O’Donnell, L (HS&H)  
Schmidt, C. (DSS)  
Wightman, Peter

### OBJECTIVES & METHOD
The researcher aims to substantiate the extent to which carers self identify and the attitude and the awareness of the broader community and key intermediaries towards carers. Information will be used to underpin a communications strategy.

Research included: Random telephone survey to ascertain self identification; focus of carers to identify issues of awareness and attitudes of broader community; and in-depth interviews with key intermediaries and carers.

A series of longitudinal surveys designed to provide detailed data on the circumstances of people with disabilities before and after the introduction of the DRP. Includes data on medical condition, income support, employment and programs undertaken.

Sample surveys were used to provide a short longitudinal analysis. Twice yearly interviews were conducted with pre and post-DRP groups. Inscope customers were those applying for DSP, SA or IP and SB

### TIME FRAME
December 1995 – February 1996  
Estimated completion date: 1996

### INSTITUTION
Department of Human Services and Health and Department of Social Security  
Department of Social Security

### CONTACT
(06) 285 5781 (HS&H)  
(06) 244 7530 (DSS)  
(06) 244 6240

SSJ, December 1995, Project Notes: Income Support for People with Disabilities 248
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>Evaluation of Child Care Allowance</th>
<th>Evaluation of Parenting Allowance (PgA)</th>
<th>Evaluation of Maternity Allowance (MAT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RESEARCHER</td>
<td>Rowlands, David</td>
<td>Rowlands, David</td>
<td>Rowlands, David</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBJECTIVES &amp; METHOD</td>
<td>To be incorporated into the Parenting Allowance Evaluation</td>
<td>The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the impact of PgA on families, in particular its role in providing financial recognition for carers and increasing choices available to parents. The evaluation will consist of a number of projects, including a longitudinal survey of customers, a cohort analysis of administrative data, analysis of replacement rates and EMTRTs, and a post-implementation review.</td>
<td>The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the impact of MAT on families, in particular its role in helping with the costs associated with the birth of a child. The evaluation will consist of a number of projects, including a customer survey, a survey of private sector employers, and a post-implementation review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSITITUTION</td>
<td>Department of Social Security</td>
<td>Department of Social Security</td>
<td>Department of Social Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTACT</td>
<td>(06) 244 6452</td>
<td>(06) 244 6452</td>
<td>(06) 244 6452</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*SSJ, December 1995, Project Notes: Income Support for Families*
### INCOME SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>Income support for parents and other carers</th>
<th>Accounting for difference in needs in income support, poverty and inequality research</th>
<th>The social impact of the integration of family payments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RESEARCHER</td>
<td>Bradbury, Bruce</td>
<td>Bradbury, Bruce</td>
<td>Foreman, Horrie, et al</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBJECTIVES &amp; METHOD</td>
<td>This project will discuss the economic and social rationales for the provisions of income support to parents and other carers. It will include a discussion of past, present and possible future policy alternatives, Consider the relevance of varying family needs for income support policy, and poverty, and inequality research. Develop methods for measuring changes in poverty where there are no agreed consumer equivalence scales. Theoretical and statistical analysis of ABS income survey data sets.</td>
<td>Assess the effects on families of the integration of family payments on 1 January 1993. Payments to female rather than male partner and changes to timing of payments studied through pre-integration mail survey and post-integration household interview and telephone surveys.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIME FRAME</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Completed – Report to be published in Policy research Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSTITUTION</td>
<td>Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW</td>
<td>Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW</td>
<td>Department of Social Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTACT</td>
<td>(02) 385 3853</td>
<td>(02) 385 3853</td>
<td>(06) 244 7308</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*SSJ, December 1995, Project Notes: Income Support for Families*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>Department of Social Security’s Support Network for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Parents (SNAP) Program</th>
<th>Developments in family payments, 1983-96</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RESEARCHER</td>
<td>Fuery, Michael</td>
<td>Stanton, David Fuery, Michael</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBJECTIVES &amp; METHOD</td>
<td>Evaluate the SNAP Program, designed to address child poverty in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Personal and focus group interviews with DSS staff, government agencies and representative organisations, family groups and communities.</td>
<td>Changes in family payments policy between 1983 and 1996 and the reasons for them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSTITUTION</td>
<td>Department of Social Security</td>
<td>Department of Social Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTACT</td>
<td>(06) 244 5634</td>
<td>(06) 244 5634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPIC</td>
<td>Labour market experiences of older workers</td>
<td>Labour market experiences of older women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESEARCHER</td>
<td>Encel, Sol</td>
<td>Encel, Sol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBJECTIVES &amp; METHOD</td>
<td>Examine job seeking experiences of persons over 45 who have lost their jobs and sought new employment. Interviews with 38 older workers in Sydney, located through labour market programs, employers, unions and personal networks.</td>
<td>Examine job-seeking experiences of women over 45 who have attempted to return to employment. Interviews with women over 45 in Sydney and two regional centres, with special emphasis on NESB and Aboriginal women. Participants located through labour market programs and support groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIME FRAME</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSITITUTION</td>
<td>Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW</td>
<td>Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTACT</td>
<td>(02) 385 3859</td>
<td>(02) 385 3859</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SSJ, December 1995, Project Notes: Labour Market Programs
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>TOPIC</strong></th>
<th>Longitudinal study of wards leaving care</th>
<th>Evaluation of Youth Service Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESEARCHER</strong></td>
<td>Cashmore, Judy</td>
<td>Cassidy, Wayner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OBJECTIVES &amp; METHOD</strong></td>
<td>Investigate the transition to independent living for 16 to 18 year old state wards before discharge, 3 months and 12 to 15 months after discharge. Interview two comparison groups living at home and away from home.</td>
<td>Assessing the effectiveness of the Youth Service Units in improving the delivery of DSS services to young people. Surveys of YSU customers, staff, other DSS staff and community agencies. Analysis of relevant data and statistics. Consultations with staff of YSUs, DSS Are and Regional Offices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TIME FRAME</strong></td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Estimated completion date: January 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institution</strong></td>
<td>Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW</td>
<td>Department of Social Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONTACT</strong></td>
<td>(02) 385 3860</td>
<td>(06) 244 5742</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**INCOME SUPPORT RESEARCH - OTHER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>Relative deprivation</th>
<th>Budget standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low income earners in the income distribution survey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESEARCHER</th>
<th>Holbert, Robert Kroon, Harry</th>
<th>Holbert, Robert Travers, Peter</th>
<th>Holbert, Robert Saunders, Peter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| OBJECTIVES & METHOD                     | Analyse the characteristics of low income earners in the 1989-90 income distribution survey, with special regard to individual and aggregate reporting of social security incomes. | A pilot project, using customer surveys, exploring the possibility of collecting comparable data on relative deprivation among Department of Social Security (DSS) customers, and the scope for utilising that information to inform judgements regarding the relative adequacy of DSS payments. | Develop contemporary estimates of the expenditure required by differently constituted households to achieve a designated level of living. |
|                                        |                             |                                |                                |

| TIME FRAME                             | Completed                   | Completed                      | June 1997                      |
|                                        |                             |                                |                                |

| INSTITUTION                            | Department of Social Security and Australian Bureau of Statistics | Department of Social Security Flinders University of South Australia | Department of Social Security Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW |
|                                        |                             |                                |                                |

| CONTACT                                 | (06) 244 7385               | (06) 244 7385                  | (02) 244 7385                  |
|                                        |                             |                                |                                |

*SSJ, December 1995, Project Notes: Income Support Research - Other* 254
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>Indicative budget standards for Australia</th>
<th>The concept, measurement and causes of poverty (stage 1)</th>
<th>Monitoring income distribution and redistribution in Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RESEARCHER</td>
<td>Bittman, Michael</td>
<td>Saunders, Peter</td>
<td>Saunders, Peter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBJECTIVES &amp; METHOD</td>
<td>To establish a modest-but-adequate budget for seven basic household types and derive a low cost budget for the same household types. These budgets should help determine the adequacy of benefit payments. A modest-but-adequate budget is established by choosing a point above a minimal standard of living but below a luxury level. All aspects of expenditure are included. A low cost budget is determined by excluding some items, covering the quantity and quality of some items and extending the lifetime of others.</td>
<td>To investigate the contemporary relevance of the Henderson poverty line methodology to Australian conditions. To undertake sensitivity analyses with a view to simplifying and modifying the current methodology and to seek expert advice on the value of any changes.</td>
<td>To investigate, using any secondary data sources, the nature and extent of changes in income distribution in Australia and to seek explanations for those changes. Analysis of unit record data from the ABS household income and expenditure surveys, complemented by analysis of other ABS (eg labour force) data and cross-country data from the Luxembourg Income Study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSTITUTION</td>
<td>Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW</td>
<td>Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW</td>
<td>Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTACT</td>
<td>(02) 385 3854</td>
<td>(02) 385 3844</td>
<td>(02) 385 3844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPIC</td>
<td>Income distribution and inequalities in health</td>
<td>Trends in the level and distribution of household expenditure</td>
<td>Longitudinal study of DSS allowance recipients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESEARCHER</td>
<td>Saunders, Peter</td>
<td>Saunders, Peter</td>
<td>Bradbury, Bruce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBJECTIVES &amp; METHOD</td>
<td>Investigate the relationships between income, standards of living, poverty and health status in Australia. Analysis of a unified data base derived by integrating unit record file data from the 1989-90 income and notional health surveys.</td>
<td>To use household expenditure data to investigate changes in living standards between Australian households, over time and across household types. Secondary analysis of unit record file data from the ABS household expenditure surveys.</td>
<td>Monitor changes in recipient’s earnings patterns, movements on or off income support, and behavioural or attitudinal changes as a result of the new income test and payment arrangements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSITITUTION</td>
<td>Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW</td>
<td>Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW</td>
<td>Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTACT</td>
<td>(02) 385 3844</td>
<td>(02) 385 3844</td>
<td>(02) 385 3853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOPIC</strong></td>
<td>An international comparative study of poverty, the labour market and income support policies</td>
<td>Self-employment and the assessment of income</td>
<td>Department of Social Security Portfolio Access and Equity Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESEARCHER</strong></td>
<td>Bradbury, Bruce</td>
<td>Bradbury, Bruce</td>
<td>de Gail, Tony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OBJECTIVES &amp; METHOD</strong></td>
<td>Looks at poverty among people of working age, in particular the relationship between low wages and tax and social security policy. Primarily an analysis of data from the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS)</td>
<td>Literature survey and research into DSS and ABS data on self-employed and their income level. Clarify current access to DSS payments by the self-employed; whether taxable income is an appropriate indicator of need; how income levels can be best assessed.</td>
<td>A full evaluation of the second DSS portfolio A&amp;E Plan was completed in December 1994. The evaluation recommended measures to improve A&amp;E across the Department’s programs and services for the years 1994-97. Following from the evaluation, an A&amp;E Blueprint for Continuous Improvement was published. The Blueprint clearly outlines the strategies for addressing service delivery and program issues for A&amp;E target groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INSTITUTION</strong></td>
<td>Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW</td>
<td>Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW</td>
<td>Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONTACT</strong></td>
<td>(02) 385 3853</td>
<td>(02) 385 3853</td>
<td>(02) 244 6563</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## TOPIC
| The Department of Social Security Community Research Project (CRP) | Evaluation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services provided by the Department of Social Security | The current reform of social security in China |

## RESEARCHER
| Delahunt, Rosemary | Griffiths, Bob | Fuery, Michael |

## OBJECTIVES & METHOD
To examine the potential of new and innovative community-based services to enhance the living standards of people on low incomes.

The research methods include:
1. A process of traditional research and analysis, a national workshop, and community consultations;
2. A program of research, which will test the ability of new and innovative local, community-based activities and services; and
3. The piloting of a Community Information Network (CIN) which will test the usefulness of computer information networks as mechanisms for the provision of information.

Using departmental reviews, assess the effectiveness of the Department’s services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers and identify more effective service delivery arrangements.

The research will examine attempts by the Chinese Government to reform social security for the urban population and to extend social security coverage to the rural population in the context of broader economic and structural reforms.

The research methods include:
1. Review of literature, including recent reports by several international bodies, journal articles, and Chinese Government publications; and
2. Interviews with senior DSS staff who have provided advice to the Chinese Government on reform options.

## TIME FRAME

## INSTITUTION
| Department of Social Security | Department of Social Security | Department of Social Security |

## CONTACT
| (06) 244 6029 | (06) 244 5600 | (06) 244 5634 |

*SSJ, December 1995, Project Notes: Income Support Research - Other*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>Evaluation of the 1992-93 migrant access package</th>
<th>Costs of children</th>
<th>Why some custodial parents receive little or no child support and / or have no child support arrangements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RESEARCHER</td>
<td>de Gail, Tony</td>
<td>Carberry, Fiona (DSS) Saunders, Peter (SPRC)</td>
<td>Carbery, Fiona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBJECTIVES &amp; METHOD</td>
<td>The evaluation will examine the expansion of the Migrant Liaison Officer (MLO) program. Analyse the uptake of MLO services in remote and rural communities (including refugees); survey customer organisations and DSS Regional Office staff; analyse trends in the take-up of customers from a non-English speaking background in programs such as JET and FIS analyse the extent to which NESB customers are using the MTI service.</td>
<td>The research is being conducted in response to a Recommendation of the Joint Select Committee on Certain Family Law Issues in its November 1994 Report on the Child Support Scheme. The research is being done by the SPRC as a component of the Budget standards project. It will examine how the costs of children vary according to age and position in the household. The research will determine (Budget standards’ using a particular ‘basket’ of goods and services which has been priced and corresponds to a specific standard of living for different household types.</td>
<td>The research is being conducted in response to a Recommendation of the Joint Select Committee on Certain Family Law Issues in its November 1994 Report on the Child Support Scheme. The study will investigate why some custodial parents with children under the age of 18 years are receiving little or no child support and /or have no child support arrangements. To administer a survey questionnaire to a sample of custodial parents through face-to-face interviews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSITITUTION</td>
<td>Department of Social Security</td>
<td>Department of Social Security Social Policy Research Centre</td>
<td>By tender – to be advised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTACT</td>
<td>(06) 244 6563</td>
<td>(06) 244 6505 (02) 385 3833</td>
<td>(02) 244 6505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPIC</td>
<td>Evaluation of Community Service Officers</td>
<td>Special Benefit evaluation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESEARCHER</td>
<td>Cassidy, Wayne</td>
<td>McGlashan, Vikke</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBJECTIVES &amp; METHOD</td>
<td>Assessing the effectiveness of Community Service Officers in assisting homeless people to access DSS services. Analysis of management information, statistics and data. Surveys of customers, community service providers, DSS staff and CSOs. Consultations with CSOs and staff of DSS Regional Offices.</td>
<td>To examine the extent to which program objectives are being met; the eligibility criteria (both legislative and policy); the effectiveness and appropriateness of the income test and hardship provisions; and the adequacy and appropriateness of the payment. Primary sources for the evaluation were an analysis of current and historical DSS administrative data on Special Benefit; data on SSAT and AAT appeals; post-implementation review of intensive reviews of long-term special beneficiaries (conducted March to September 1993); and findings and recommendations from the 1994 National Audit of Special Benefit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIME FRAME</td>
<td>Estimated completion date: February 1996</td>
<td>Estimated completion date: February 1996</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSITITUTION</td>
<td>Department of Social Security</td>
<td>Department of Social Security</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTACT</td>
<td>(06) 244 5742</td>
<td>(06) 244 7788</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TITLE</td>
<td>Study of the Feasibility of Child Disability Tables</td>
<td>Super, Saving and Inequality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTHOR</td>
<td>Australian Council of Social Service</td>
<td>Coopers and Lybrand Consultants</td>
<td>Davidson, Peter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRICE (incl p&amp;p)</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>$12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO. OF PAGES</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBLISHER/SUPPLIER</td>
<td>Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS)</td>
<td>Department of Social Security</td>
<td>Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Locked Bag 11</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 Yurong Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Darlinghurst NSW  2010</td>
<td></td>
<td>East Sydney  NSW 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTACT</td>
<td>(02) 332 4355</td>
<td>(06) 244 7345</td>
<td>(02) 332 4355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTHOR</td>
<td>Departments of Social Security, Human Services and Health and Employment, Education and Training</td>
<td>Encel, Sol Studencki, Helen</td>
<td>Family Programs and Services Division, Department of Social Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCOPE &amp; OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>To examine the effectiveness and efficiency of the reforms and explore cost-effective ways to make further improvements.</td>
<td>Interviews with older workers about employment, unemployment and age discrimination.</td>
<td>The evaluation of the A&amp;E Plan was included in the 1993 Portfolio Evaluation Plan. The recommendations for the coming three years are intended to help integrate A&amp;E into planning and policy development processes as well as delivery of services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRICE (incl p&amp;p)</td>
<td>$29.95</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>$19.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO. OF PAGES</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBLISHER/ SUPPLIER</td>
<td>Australian Government Publishing Service</td>
<td>CCOA C/- Ageing and Disability Department 83 Clarence Street Sydney NSW 2000</td>
<td>Australian Government Publishing Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTACT</td>
<td>(06) 295 4411</td>
<td>(02) 367 6840</td>
<td>(06) 244 4411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TITLE</td>
<td>AUTHOR</td>
<td>SCOPE &amp; OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>PRICE (incl p&amp;p)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Series</td>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluation of the SNAP Program</td>
<td>To be advised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report of an Evaluation of the Department of Social Security’s Support</td>
<td>Fuery, Michael</td>
<td>A longitudinal study of the impact of low family income and other aspects of</td>
<td>$16.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Parents Program</td>
<td></td>
<td>disadvantage on children.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unequal Lives? Low Income and the Life Chances of Three-year Olds</td>
<td>Gilley, Tim Taylor, Janet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONTACT**

- (06) 295 4411
- (06) 244 6541
- (03) 9483 1317
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUTHOR</td>
<td>Johnston, Jo</td>
<td>Jordens, Ann-Mari</td>
<td>McDonald, Allan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCOPE &amp; OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>History of the impact of post-war migration on Australian legislation, administrative practices and notions of national identity,</td>
<td>To demonstrate the feasibility of providing a universal basic income free of means test.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRICE (incl p&amp;p)</td>
<td>$65.00</td>
<td>$25.95</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO. OF PAGES</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBLISHER/SUPPLIER</td>
<td>Intermedia Brisbane</td>
<td>Hale &amp; Iremonger, GPO Box 2552, Sydney NSW</td>
<td>A &amp; D McDonald PO Box 280 Urangan QLD 4655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTACT</td>
<td>(07) 360 2895</td>
<td>(02) 565 1955</td>
<td>(071) 289971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TITLE</td>
<td>Drawing the Line on Poverty: through Community Action (Kit)</td>
<td>Social Security Contributions: An Australian Perspective</td>
<td>Inputs and Outcomes: A Comparative Analysis of Policies to Reduce Child and Family Poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTHOR</td>
<td>Queensland Council of Social Service</td>
<td>Saunders, Peter</td>
<td>Saunders, Peter McHugh, Marilyn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCOPE &amp; OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>To assist organisations to respond practically to alleviate poverty and disadvantage at the local level.</td>
<td>To review the history role and impact of social security contributions in Australia.</td>
<td>To study and compare the situation of a group of ‘model’ sole parent families in nine countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRICE (incl p&amp;p)</td>
<td>$10.00</td>
<td>$45.00</td>
<td>See below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO. OF PAGES</td>
<td>Kit</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>See below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTACT</td>
<td>(07) 3832 1266</td>
<td>(02) 232 4044</td>
<td>(02) 385 3844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TITLE</td>
<td>Budgetary Impact of Population Ageing</td>
<td>At the end of Eligibility: Female Sole Parents Whose Youngest Child Turns 16</td>
<td>Homeless Young People and Commonwealth-State Policies and Services: A Victorian Case Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTHOR</td>
<td>Saunders, Peter</td>
<td>Shaver, Sheila King, Anthony McHugh, Marilyn Payne, Toni</td>
<td>Shaver, Sheila Paxman, Marina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCOPE &amp; OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>To review methodologies for estimating the impact of population ageing on State Government budgets</td>
<td>Follows the sole parents’ transition from the pension to unemployment, to other income support or income, and identifies the factors associates with a successful transition.</td>
<td>Study of support provided, including income support, to homeless people under 18, and of integration of Commonwealth and State services in meeting their needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRICE (incl p&amp;p)</td>
<td>See below</td>
<td>$9.00</td>
<td>$9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO. OF PAGES</td>
<td>See below</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTACT</td>
<td>(02) 385 3844</td>
<td>(02) 385 3857</td>
<td>(02) 385 3857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AUTHOR</strong></td>
<td>Stanton, David Daprè, Bob</td>
<td>Stanton, David Fuery, Michael</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SCOPE &amp; OBJECTIVES</strong></td>
<td>The paper provides a broad analysis of the Australian tax / transfer system. The history of social security in Australia with particular emphasis on financing issues is then examined. A comparison of general revenue contributory (social insurance) methods of financing follows with an analysis of how the Australian system has coped with economic and social pressured in recent years. Then financing methods are considered in the context of future challenges in Australia and other countries.</td>
<td>Description of changes in and reforms to family payments in the Australian Social security system over the period 1983-1996, with brief reference to developments up to 1983.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRICE (incl p&amp;p)</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NO. OF PAGES</strong></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Published in the Major Articles section of this Journal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PUBLISHER/SUPPLIER</strong></td>
<td>Australian Government Publishing Service</td>
<td>Australian Government Publishing Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONTACT</strong></td>
<td>(06) 295 4411</td>
<td>(06) 295 4411</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NOTE: The Social Security Journal Project Notes Section is compiled using return forms from individual researchers. Every effort has been made to retain the original intent of the writers involved but, where necessary, the objectives and methodology being used in specific projects have been abbreviated. Details about obtaining copies of materials listed are as correct as possible at time of printing. DSS takes no responsibility for verifying the accuracy of entries, particularly those covering price and the cost of packaging and dispatch and variations in exchange rates or retail prices set by individual suppliers. If you require further information about specific projects, please contact researchers directly using the contact numbers given.

Social Security Journal,
December 1995

268
INCOME SUPPORT FEEDBACK

The following three forms - 'New Books and Reports', 'Current Research Projects' and 'Other Researchers' - are designed to gather summary information on income support related issues for the June 1996 edition of the Social Security Journal.

The Project Notes Section first appeared in the December 1994 edition of the Journal and was very well received. It is currently assisting community agencies and specialists across Australia as a useful resource. Due to its success, Project Notes was expanded for the June 1995 edition to include details about new reports and books in the income support field, as well as a selective bibliography.

The 'New Books and Reports' form is for the return of information about any new reports, newsletters or books which have been completed in the last year which you would like to publicise through the Journal.

As with previous editions of the Journal, we are also seeking brief information on current research projects in the income support field. If you are involved in any such research, please complete the 'Current Research Projects' form. If you know of any other researchers currently working in this field please complete the 'Other Researchers' form.

Completed forms should be mailed to:

Ms Melinda Robson
Social Security Journal
Department of Social Security
Box 7788
Canberra Mail Centre ACT 2610

or taxed on (06) 244 5901 for inclusion in subsequent editions of the Journal. For further information, please telephone Ms Robson on (06) 244 5540.