



# OECD Review of Family Friendly Policies:

**The Reconciliation of Work and Family Life**

**Australia's Background Report**

Prepared by the Australian Department of Family and Community  
Services and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations  
with assistance from the Work and Family Life Consortium

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Early in 2001, Australia agreed to participate in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) three country thematic review of "Family Friendly Policies: The Reconciliation of Work and Family Life". The Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) funded participation in this review and collaborated with the Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR).

Participation in the review included the preparation of this Australian Background Report (or Country Note). It provides a point-in-time overview of key Commonwealth policies and programs that support reconciliation of work and family life. The Work and Family Life Consortium was commissioned to assist FaCS and DEWR with the preparation of this Background Report. Most of the data presented in this report is current for August 2001. As part of the review, Australia also hosted a visit by an OECD Study Team from 13 – 23 August 2001. The team met with a wide range of individuals and organisations including members of parliament, federal and state government departments, employer and industry representative groups, peak interest bodies, trade unions, best practice employers, service providers and academics.

The Commonwealth wishes to acknowledge all who have been involved in this review: the members of the Steering Committee, the contributors to the report and those who assisted in arranging the Study Team's visits and meetings in the Australian Capital Territory, Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia.

The Australian Background Report is available on the internet at the following sites:

Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services: [www.facs.gov.au](http://www.facs.gov.au)

Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations: [www.workplace.gov.au](http://www.workplace.gov.au)

OECD: [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org)

For further information contact the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services on 1300 653 227.

People with a hearing or speech impairment can contact the Department on its telephone typewriter (TTY) on 1800 260 402.

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# 1. Introduction and Overview

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The Australian Federal Government welcomes the decision by the OECD Working Party on Social Policy to undertake a thematic review of policies to support the reconciliation of work and family life. As a strong advocate for the review, we look forward to the opportunity that our participation will provide for a comprehensive study of family-friendly policies and their impact on the work and family interface in Australia.

This Report was prepared as background for the OECD Project 'Family Friendly Policies: The Reconciliation of Work and Family Life'. It is the result of collaboration between the Federal Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) and the (then) Federal Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business (DEWRSB), with assistance from the Work and Family Life Consortium (see Appendix A for consortium membership).

In Australia, as elsewhere, profound social changes have occurred over the last fifty years. These changes include significant shifts in the patterns of family life in Australia, including a transition from a society characterised by high fertility and high mortality, to a society with low fertility and low mortality. As well, Australia has experienced changing patterns in family formation and shifts in the gender division of labour.

These changes have occurred against a background of major transformation in the labour market. The increasing significance of the service sector and the imperatives of global trade have affected the experience of employers, workers, parents and children in Australia. Women have made major adjustments to balance work and family responsibilities. Although men have had less change to their working patterns, they have shown an increased willingness to be more actively involved in parenting.

Over the last two decades, Australian governments—that is, federal and state/territory governments—have implemented a number of initiatives to assist with the reconciliation of work and family. This includes a range of reforms designed to implement a commitment to 'family-friendly' policies across a range of portfolios.

The measures fall into three broad areas—employment and workplace relations, the tax transfer system and support for parents. Policies that assist families to combine work and family life reflect broader social and economic goals such as:

- supporting the well-being of families and early childhood development;
- supporting growth in the labour supply;
- supporting choice for families;
- ensuring business can benefit from a diverse workforce;

- encouraging mutually beneficial working arrangements for employers and employees; and
- addressing joblessness among families with children.

This report provides an overview of key Commonwealth policies and programs that support people to reconcile their work and family responsibilities. The way the material in the report is organised is set out below.

## Chapter 2: The Australian Context

This chapter presents information on the social and demographic changes that provide the context for policy settings, including changes in household composition such as the increase in single person residences and sole parent families, fertility trends, and the increase in life expectancy.

Changes in the labour market and the nature of work are also covered in some detail. It is noted that over the last decade the Australian labour market has been marked by employment growth and increasingly diverse forms of employment and working arrangements. The association between the growth in part-time work and the increase in female labour market participation is also noted. There has been sustained growth in part-time employment in Australia, both in the absolute numbers of part-time employees and the proportion of all employment that is part-time. On average, the number of people in part-time employment grew by 4.5 per cent a year between 1980 and 2000.

Flexibility and diversity of working hours have also increased. Since the 1970s, average working hours have decreased as part-time work expanded. Whilst in the 1980s and early 1990s the average working hours for full-time employees increased (with men continuing to work more hours than women), this trend has eased since the mid 1990s.

This chapter also provides a broad overview of our system of wage determination and changes to labour market regulation. It notes that employers and employees have increased choices under the *Workplace Relations Act 1996* (WRA), particularly with methods of agreement making. It also notes the decline in union membership over the last decade.

It is against this background of demographic and labour market trends that Australian government policies on employment, workplace relations and family support are considered throughout the remainder of the report.

## Chapter 3: Families and Work

In chapter three, the importance of work and employment to family well-being is considered, as well as the pressures on family life that they may cause. Data on the incidence of jobless families is discussed, together with data on families with one or both parents in the workforce. The increase in women's, and especially mothers', labour force participation and its implications for households is

discussed. The age of the youngest child has a major impact on mothers' employment. The lifetime earnings gap between mothers and childless women has closed markedly over the last twenty years, largely because today's mothers return to the workforce more quickly and frequently.

This chapter also discusses the spillover between home and work, which can be both positive and negative. Women commonly express satisfaction with the rewards they get from working, with those working part-time being especially satisfied with work-family balance. However, the majority of married women, mothers of preschool age children, and sole parents, report being under 'time pressure'—always or often feeling rushed or pressed for time.

The chapter concludes by identifying a number of emerging issues that are shaping policy development. These include the increased participation of mothers in the labour market due to increased flexibility in employment conditions, and an increase in the levels of family support services and financial assistance available to families with children. Changing family structures and the ageing population are also emerging as important issues shaping policy development.

## Chapter 4: Family Policy Settings

Chapter four examines the family program and policy settings in Australia, including the range of family benefits and support services

and recent welfare reform programs including *Australians Working Together* (AWT). The goals of family assistance are discussed. These include horizontal equity objectives (such as assisting with the costs of children and redistributing income over the life cycle), and vertical equity objectives (boosting low family earnings and alleviating child poverty). As well, the Australian family assistance system is designed to boost employment, reduce low income traps and increase incentives to work.

Financial pressures can contribute to relationship breakdown, which can result in a poorer financial position, reduced workforce attachment and poorer outcomes for children. Detailed information is provided on the Family Tax Benefit and Parenting Payment, and how these income support measures support the capacity of families in a broad sense.

Support services such as child care are also examined. The need to manage work responsibilities is the major reason why children are in formal care, and information is presented on the usage of the various types of child care. Recent enhancements to child care provision are reported. ABS data indicate a downward trend in the unmet demand for formal child care in Australia in the 1990s. By 1999, only 6 per cent of children were reported to be in need of additional care. The fact that there remains significant demand for out-of-school-hours care is noted.

Other federal government programs to assist families are also examined, including the JET (Jobs, Education and Training) program, which assists parents to re-enter the workforce, the Transition to Work program under AWT, and family support services which aim to prevent or resolve parenting or relationship problems. Issues and programs specific to Indigenous Australians are also considered.

## Chapter 5: Support for Families in the Workplace

Chapter five focuses on the workplace relations policy environment and workplace practices. The role of governments, employers, unions and community organisations in creating family-friendly workplaces is considered.

Information is provided on the federal legislative framework and the other mechanisms by which work and family measures are delivered. The interaction of the legislation with an industrial safety net of awards in setting minimum conditions is explained, and the role of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) test cases in determining parental leave and personal/carer's (and family) leave provisions. Figures are provided on the incidence of these provisions and of regular part-time work in awards.

The focus then shifts to family friendly provisions in enterprise and individual agreements. A priority of the Federal Government has been to

change workplace culture by promoting the advantages for employers and employees of flexible workplace practices that are tailored to their particular needs. Certified agreements and Australian Workplace Agreements can provide family friendly working arrangements additional to those available through statutes or the award system.

Data is provided on the incidence of key work and family provisions in workplace agreements. It shows that some 42 per cent of federal agreements certified in 2000 and 2001 contained at least one family friendly provision and these covered almost three-quarters of employees who were subject to agreements. This figure rises to 80 per cent of agreements if flexible hours provisions are included. The most prevalent work and family measures in federal collective agreements are those providing access to some form of (paid) leave for caring purposes.

## Chapter 6: Work and Family Workplace Practices

Chapter six presents evidence of the incidence and distribution of family friendly working arrangements more broadly, drawing on data from the 1995 Australian Workplace Industrial Relations Survey (AWIRS) and a range of Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) surveys.

As with many other family friendly work arrangements, provision of paid parental leave is more widespread than indicated by formal

workplace agreement analysis. In 2000, 38 per cent of female employees responding to an ABS survey indicated that they were entitled to paid maternity leave – 51 per cent of full-time employees and 21 per cent of part-time employees. Keep-in-touch schemes that assist in maintaining workforce attachment are also increasingly widespread.

Just over half of families with one or more children aged under 12 use family friendly provisions to assist them to combine care for their children with employment. The most common resource for these Australian workers is the use of flexible working time arrangements. Relatively few workplaces provide child care or offer child care assistance (AWIRS found that only 3 per cent of larger workplaces had on-site child care).

## Conclusion

Over the last two decades, measures to assist workers with family responsibilities have become a more pronounced feature of the Australian workplace relations system. There has been steady progress through workplace relations law, agreement making and the award safety net in providing access to family-related forms of leave. Access to unpaid parental leave for an increasing proportion of the workforce has been important in encouraging women's retention in the workforce after their children are born. The economic costs to women of having children have diminished significantly through the 1990s, partly because women are returning to work more often and more quickly.

The entitlement to paid leave for caring purposes is becoming increasingly widespread, as are arrangements for paid parental leave. These arrangements are a significant factor in maintaining workforce attachment for the first 12 months after the birth of a child or in easing mothers' return to the workforce during or after this critical period. The range of government activities to promote family friendly workplaces is contributing to the creation of a positive climate, with workplaces becoming more flexible and family responsive than analysis of the formal regulatory system might suggest.

Successive Australian governments have also placed a significant emphasis on supporting families, including in their engagement in work, through long standing policies such as child care and income support. Increasingly, a dynamic focus is being adopted which recognises the 'paths' people take through their life courses, and the importance of maintaining workforce attachment in periods out of the workforce to care for children.

The social security system provides a range of targeted assistance in the form of Family Tax Benefit, Parenting Payment, maternity and other allowances, a wide range of family support services, pharmaceutical benefits and housing assistance. Coupled with the provision of high quality, accessible and flexible child care options and the payment of Child Care Benefit, this assistance helps parents to combine their caring responsibilities with paid work.

Many of these payments and allowances are in recognition of the additional costs of raising children from the time of the birth of a child, and importantly, as the child grows.

Overall, the workplace provisions and government payments, detailed in this report, offer a range of options and a significant level of support to families, allowing them to make choices about how they manage their work and family responsibilities according to their needs and circumstances. Government policies in this area form part of a complex system and work is continuing to improve the system's capacity to help families reconcile work and family effectively.

## 2. The Australian Context

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### 2.1 Basic Demographic Context

Australia is a diverse, pluralist society of 19 million people. Australia's population is growing by around 1 per cent a year. Like other developed countries, Australia's population is demographically ageing, albeit more slowly than in other OECD countries. This trend will continue to be important over the next 50 years.

Around 9 million Australians are currently employed, with a national participation rate of 73.8 per cent. Australia has a high rate of women's participation—65.5 per cent—compared to the OECD average of 61.3 per cent. However, the rate is lower than in most North American and Scandinavian countries and the United Kingdom (US—70.8 per cent, Canada—70.5 per cent, Sweden—76.4 per cent, United Kingdom—68.9 per cent). In recent years, the unemployment rate has fallen and stood at 6.3 per cent for 2000<sup>1</sup>. Australians are working in an increasingly diverse range of employment types and patterns, as the data presented later in this report shows.

### 2.2 The Family Context

The OECD defines 'family' as 'each household of one or more adults living together with and taking responsibility for the care and rearing

of one or more children'<sup>2</sup>. By making 'family' co-extensive with 'household', it excludes families with members living in different households—for example, grandparents or non-resident parents<sup>3</sup>. As well, by making children central to the definition, it excludes childless households. Some of the latter will also be households where reconciling work and family is of pressing concern—for example households with elderly members or disabled adults needing constant care.

Given that the OECD's emphasis is on families with children, and that it explicitly excludes 'family care arrangements for the elderly' from the scope of family-work reconciliation policies<sup>4</sup>, this Background Report takes the same approach. While these broader caring issues are encompassed within the Australian work and family policy agenda, they are either not covered here or are mentioned only briefly.

#### 2.2.1 Long-term Trends in Australian Household Composition—Ageing and Fertility

Over the last three decades, the average household size has fallen substantially. The number of one-person households has grown, as has the number of sole-parent

households. Couples having fewer children have also contributed to the fall in household size.

Family households still make up the majority of Australian households. At June 2000, there were around 2,019,800 couple families with dependants and 549,100 sole-parent families with dependants (defined as families with children aged 0 to 15 or dependent students to the age of 24)<sup>5</sup>. However, single person residences are the fastest growing type of household. Over the last thirty years, they have almost doubled in number and are projected to continue this rapid expansion<sup>6</sup>. The reasons for this are the ageing of the population; the continuing pattern of falling fertility rates, together with rising divorce rates; and a higher proportion of people who will never marry.

In 1911, the age pyramid of the Australian population had a very broad base and was low in height. This reflected a high birth rate and short life expectancy. Since then, the base of the pyramid has narrowed. This occurred because in the last twenty years, the relative size of some age groups (particularly the young) has declined, while life expectancy has risen markedly. This narrowing will become more pronounced as the fertility of those born in the 'baby boom' is lower than that of their parents, and expected to be lower still among their offspring.

At the other end of the life course there have been remarkable increases in life expectancy in Australia. Male children born in 2000 can expect to live for an average of 76 years, and female children for 82 years. This is 10 to 12 years longer than their counterparts born in 1947, and 20 to 22 years longer than those born at the beginning of the twentieth century<sup>7</sup>. This historical trend towards greater life expectancy is elongating the age pyramid. It is expected that between 1991 and 2011, the population aged over 65 will grow at twice the rate of the total population<sup>8</sup>. The age pyramid has started to resemble a pear, and the bulge representing the baby boomers can be expected to rise up the pyramid in the coming decades.

Following the rise in the total fertility rate to 3.6 children per woman from 1948 to 1961 (the baby boom years), the rate has been declining to reach its lowest recorded level of 1.74 in 1998. The rate varies considerably by education levels and geographic areas, although the trend is to a decline across all social groups. This reflects a delay in family formation and an increase in the percentage of women remaining childless.

Since 1971, a pattern of postponed birth has become evident, and 'the percentage of first births occurring to married women aged 30 and over rose from 7.6 per cent to 31.1 per cent'<sup>9</sup>. In 1999, women aged 30 to 34 years exhibited the highest fertility rate, overtaking the 25 to

29 year-olds, at 108.5 babies per 1,000 women<sup>10</sup>. The birth rate amongst teenage mothers was the lowest ever in 1999, at 18.1 births per 1000 females, a reduction of 37.4 births from the 1971 peak of 55.5<sup>11</sup>.

There are likely to be many factors involved in the decline in fertility. Because of a more uncertain economic environment, more couples may be delaying having children until careers are established. Other factors could include the high rate of relationship or marriage breakdown in the peak child-bearing years. These issues are canvassed in FaCS' Occasional Paper Number 2—'Low Fertility: a discussion paper'<sup>12</sup>.

### 2.2.2 Family Breakdown and Sole Parenthood

Rates of divorce<sup>13</sup> in Australia rose steadily from a low base at the turn of the century until the introduction of the *Family Law Act* 1975, when the divorce rate was 45.5 per 10,000 of the population. By 2000, the rate was 27.2 per 10,000 of the population<sup>14</sup>. If current rates continue

over the next 30 years, it is estimated that one in three marriages will end in divorce<sup>15</sup>.

Despite recent trends, McDonald has calculated that 100 years ago the percentage of couples still together after 30 years (taking into account both widowhood and separation) would have been about 46 per cent, while the proportion today is 53 per cent<sup>16</sup>.

In Australia, sole-parent families now comprise around 21 per cent of all family households. The vast majority of these are sole mother families. By 2000, approximately one out of every five children aged 0 to 14 lived in a single-parent family<sup>17</sup>. It has been estimated that over a quarter of Australian children will spend at least part of their childhood in a single-parent family<sup>18</sup>. However, most Australians will spend their childhood living with both parents. The proportion of children still living with both natural parents has been calculated using 1986 data from Western Australia (*see Table 1*).

**TABLE 1: PER CENT OF CHILDREN LIVING WITH BOTH NATURAL PARENTS BY AGE OF CHILD**

Age of child	% living with both natural parents
1 year	91
6 years	85
12 years	80
15 years	77

Source: P. McDonald, *Families in Australia : a social-demographic perspective*, AIFS, 1995

## 2.3 Changes in the Labour Market and the Nature of Work

Since the 1991-92 recession, the Australian labour market has been marked by overall employment growth and increasingly diverse forms of employment and working arrangements. Between 1992-93 and 2000-01, nearly 1.5 million jobs were created and the unemployment rate declined relatively steadily to 6.9 per cent (seasonally adjusted in June 2001)<sup>19</sup>. Overall labour force participation rates remained stable. However, the participation rate increased slightly for women and decreased for men (*see Section 2.3.1*). Long-term unemployment (unemployed for 52 weeks or more) has dropped since the early 1990s. It was 23.6 per cent (seasonally adjusted) of total unemployment in June 2001. This was 3.9 percentage points below its average level since April 1986 (the starting point for the latest consistently defined series).

### 2.3.1 Women's Participation Rates

As in other OECD countries over recent decades, a most striking change in the Australian labour force was the dramatic increase in female labour force participation. Between May 1970 and May 2001, the seasonally adjusted female participation rate increased from 37.9 per cent to 55.5 per cent<sup>20</sup>. This increase is associated with an increase in part-time work (*see Section 2.3.3*). (*For further discussion of parents' participation rates see Section 3.*)

### 2.3.2 Employment Profile

The employment profile in Australia has experienced changes over the past decade. However, ABS data indicate that Australians remain overwhelmingly employed on a permanent basis (ie. receive paid annual or sick leave). In August 2000, 73 per cent of all wage and salary earners were reported to be permanent<sup>21</sup>. However, casual employment has increased its share of the total number of employees, from 16 to 27 per cent between August 1984 and August 2000<sup>22</sup>. In Australia, casual employment is very diverse. This has led to considerable misunderstanding of data on the extent and nature of 'casual' employment (*see Section 2.3.4*).

Permanent and casual employees can work either on a part-time or full-time basis. Over 30 per cent of casual employees work full-time. Over one-third of all part-time jobs in August 2000 were permanent.<sup>23</sup>

### 2.3.3 Characteristics of Part-time Work

From 1980 to 2000, there was sustained growth in part-time employment in Australia, both in the absolute numbers of part-time employees and the proportion of all employment that is part-time.

- On average, the number of people in part-time employment grew by 4.5 per cent a year (4.0 per cent among women and 5.9 per cent among men). This compared to overall employment growth of 1.9 per cent per year (2.8 per cent among women and 1.2 per cent among men).

- The proportion of employment that is part-time increased from 16 per cent to 27 per cent (from 35 per cent to 44 per cent among women and from 5 per cent to 13 per cent among men) (see Figure 1).
- Parents, particularly mothers with dependent children, are more likely to work part-time<sup>24</sup>.

Among parents of dependent children in June 2000:

- 57 per cent of employed partnered mothers worked part-time, compared to 53 per cent of employed sole mothers;
- 5 per cent of employed partnered fathers worked part-time, compared to 18 per cent of employed sole fathers.

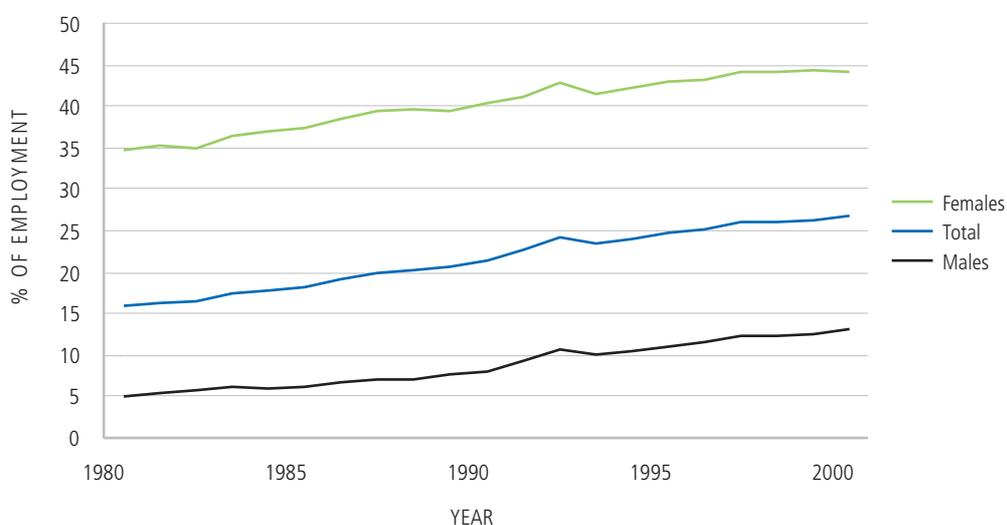
A large majority of part-time workers (about 70 per cent of men and 80 per cent of women) report being satisfied with their hours of work. Married women aged

between 25 and 54, many working part-time to balance work and family, report the least dissatisfaction with their part-time hours, with fewer than 15 per cent preferring to work more hours<sup>25</sup>.

In May 2000, part-time employees were paid an average of \$301.00 for an average of 18.1 hours per week. The average hourly rate of pay was \$16.50 for male part-timers and \$16.70 for female part-timers. By comparison, full-time employees earned an average of \$821.00 for 39.8 hours of work (average hourly earnings of about \$21.70 for men and \$18.80 for women). In terms of hourly wage rates, women earn much the same whether they work full-time or part-time, while for men this is less likely.<sup>26</sup>

Data on receipt of 'standard' employment benefits (annual leave, sick leave and long service leave) show that some 34 per cent of part-

**FIGURE 1: PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT AS A PROPORTION OF TOTAL EMPLOYMENT, 1980 TO 2000**



Source: ABS, Labour Force Australia, time series spreadsheets, Cat No. 6291.0, August each year

time employees are permanent (*see Table 2*). Female part-timers are more than twice as likely to have access to various forms of paid leave compared to male part-timers.

(For details about arrangements for part-time work see Section 5.3.3.)

### 2.3.4 Characteristics of Casual Work

Under Australia's workplace relations system, most federal and state awards give 'casual' employees a loading instead of certain employment conditions, such as paid annual leave and sick leave. The ABS relied on this feature of the award system to define casual employees as those 'who were not entitled to either paid holiday leave or paid sick leave'<sup>27</sup>.

Casual employees are generally employed on the basis that they do not necessarily have an expectation of ongoing continuing employment. At law, each engagement is regarded as a new contract of employment.

Casual work may be either regular or irregular, and it may be temporary or seasonal, or last for longer periods.

Over half of all casual employees (55 per cent) in Australia have worked for their current employer for over 12 months and 13 per cent have been with their employer for more than five years<sup>28</sup>.

There is also a great deal of diversity between industries in how much they rely on casual employees as an integral part of their workforce. Those industries with the greatest reliance are accommodation, cafes and restaurants; agriculture, forestry and fishing; retail trade; and cultural and recreational services.<sup>29</sup>

In part, the growth and diversity in casual employment reflect changes in the economy and in family and social choices.

About half of casual employees have a regular working pattern in terms of working a set number of days a week or fortnight or on a roster or shift system. While 16 per cent have access to a formal system of flexible working hours, 42 per cent have some say in their start and finish times (compared with 21 and 47 per cent, respectively, of permanent employees).<sup>30</sup>

**TABLE 2: PROPORTION OF PART-TIME EMPLOYEES RECEIVING STANDARD EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS IN MAIN JOB, AUGUST 2000**

Proportion of part-time employees entitled to benefit(%)			
Standard benefit	Males	Females	Persons
Annual holiday leave	18.7	39.3	33.6
Sick leave	18.6	39.8	34.0
Long service leave	14.3	33.9	28.5
None	35.6	20.1	24.4

Source: ABS, *Employee Earnings, Benefits and Trade Union Membership*, Cat. No. 6310.0

About two-thirds (67 per cent) of casual employees report working regular hours each week in their main job, although 41 per cent report being guaranteed a minimum number of hours. When further prompted, 18 per cent of this group report that a guaranteed minimum number of hours is actually a condition of their employment. Sixty per cent say that their earnings vary from week to week.<sup>31</sup>

### 2.3.5 Working time

Flexibility of working hours has also increased. The proportion of workers working Monday to Friday in their main job fell from 64.4 per cent to 60.2 per cent between 1993 and 1997<sup>32</sup>. More workers now report being able to work longer hours so they can take time off later. Also relevant to work and family time is that, in 2000, 60 per cent of workers reported having done 'some work on weekends or at night over the previous four weeks'<sup>33</sup>.

Since the 1970s, the average length of working hours has decreased as part-time work grew, particularly for female employees. In the 1980s and early 1990s the average length of working hours for full-time employees increased, with men continuing to work longer hours than women. However, this trend has eased since the mid 1990s. Average weekly hours for full-time employees rose by 1.4 hours between 1982 and 1988 and 1.9 hours between 1988 and 1994, but dropped by 0.2 hours between 1994 and 2001<sup>34</sup>.

### 2.3.6 Wage Determination

The development of social policy in Australia has taken a quite different path than in many other OECD countries. Australia has historically chosen to pursue its equity objectives through a balance of labour market regulation and the social security system. For much of

**TABLE 3: AVERAGE WEEKLY HOURS FOR FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES, BY GENDER, 1982-2001**

Year	Males	Females	All Persons
1982	39.1	36.3	38.2
1984	39.8	37.1	38.9
1986	39.8	36.7	38.8
1988	40.7	37.2	39.6
1990	41.3	37.9	40.2
1992	41.4	38.1	40.3
1994	43.1	38.5	41.5
1996	42.5	38.4	41.1
1998	42.5	38.6	41.1
2000	43.4	39.3	41.9
2001	42.8	38.7	41.3

Source: ABS Labour Force Cat No.6203.0, month of August, unpublished data

the last century, Australia had a unique system of industrial tribunals. As well, there was a heavy reliance on wage fixation for the male 'breadwinner' as the method of securing improvements in living standards for low-paid employees.

The male breadwinner model was effectively removed with a National Wage Case decision in 1974 when the commission explicitly rejected the continuance of a family welfare rationale for minimum wage determination. For the first time, the commission also determined a minimum wage to apply equally to both male and female employees.

### 2.3.7 Federal Minimum Wage

In the April 1997 National Wage Case, a federal minimum wage was determined. The federal minimum wage in Australia is just under 60 per cent of the median wage. This is a much higher proportion of median earnings than in comparable OECD countries and second only to France—for example, the same ratios in the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada are 36.4 per cent, 41.7 per cent and 42.5 per cent respectively.<sup>35</sup>

### 2.3.8 Pay Equity

As with other countries, in Australia a pay gap exists between male and female workers. In May 2000, women's total average weekly earnings were 67 per cent of men's. The ratio of female-to-male average weekly ordinary time earnings for full-time adult non-managerial employees was 90 per cent. When

the longer average working hours of males are taken into account this ratio rises to 92 per cent<sup>36</sup>.

Because of national equal pay decisions in the 1970s, significant reductions in the non-managerial gender pay gap occurred. The gap closed further in the 1980s and remained relatively stable during the 1990s. As at February 2001, the ratio of female-to-male full-time adult average weekly ordinary time earnings was 84.7 per cent<sup>37</sup>.

The reasons for the pay gap are complex and result from a range of factors. Women tend to work in industries where pay scales are lower than in male dominated industries with equivalent skill requirements (ie women's work is undervalued in areas such as librarianships, nursing, hairdressing, child care and other care areas etc).

Women's pay, and especially their earnings over a lifetime, are significantly affected by having children. The time women take out of the workforce to have and look after children, and the high incidence of preference for part-time work among mothers, contributes to the pay and earnings gap between women and men. On average, child rearing has a much bigger impact on mothers' employment and earnings than it does on fathers' employment and earnings. Child rearing also affects the hourly wage rate in a number of ways. For instance, it impacts on women's labour market experiences, often restricting career progression for those with family responsibilities. Periods of absence

from the labour market are also associated with a lessening in value of labour market skills, and there is evidence that this decreases women's wages relative to men's wages (see 3.1.2 for further details).

### 2.3.9 Changes to Labour Market Regulation in the 1990s

The 1990s saw the focus of the workplace relations system move away from centralised determination of wages and conditions through industry and occupational-level awards, to the setting of wages and conditions through agreements reached at the enterprise and workplace levels.

The federal *Workplace Relations Act 1996* (WRA) extended the emphasis on agreement-making. Awards and formal agreements are legally binding industrial instruments made at the federal or state level. Awards usually cover multiple employers and are intended to set a safety net of minimum wages and conditions across substantial sections of an occupation or industry. Awards are limited to twenty allowable matters which include parental leave and personal/carers leave, and provisions relating to working hours. Agreements are negotiated at the workplace to cover the mutual needs of employers and employees.

Developments through the 1990s included:

- increased choices through the WRA for employers and employees, particularly with methods of agreement making, including individual agreements (Australian Workplace Agreements) and collective agreements (negotiated with or without unions);
- a dramatic fall in award reliance since the introduction of enterprise/workplace level bargaining (some two-thirds of employees were paid at an award rate in 1990 compared to less than one-quarter in May 2000)<sup>38</sup>;
- an increasing use of collective agreements since the early 1990s (over 10,500 federal wage agreements were current at 31 March 2001, covering an estimated 1.4 million employees);
- an increasing use of collective agreements negotiated directly between employers and employees (at 31 March 2001, 11.1 per cent of agreements made under the WRA were made directly between employers and employees under s. 170LK); and
- a decline in trade union membership from 40.5 per cent in 1990 to 25.6 per cent in 2000<sup>39</sup>.

It is against this background of demographic and labour market trends that Australian government policies on employment and family support should be considered.

### 3. Families and Work

Employment can help build the independence and self-reliance of families, increase the resources available to meet their needs and protect against social exclusion and inter-generational disadvantage. On the other hand, pressures created by work can make effective parenting more difficult. The incidence of joblessness, the balance of work between parents, how time is used and the allocation of caring responsibilities are all key issues in managing work and family for Australian families.

#### 3.1 Joblessness and Families

For sole-parent families, employment is particularly important given there is only one potential breadwinner within the household. For couple families, being employed is an important protection against future family joblessness, especially in the case of separation or divorce. In June 2000, 16.8 per cent of children aged under 15 lived in a family (either a couple or sole-parent family) where no adult worked in the paid labour market<sup>40</sup>. Over the last 20 years, there was a marked increase in jobless families,<sup>41</sup> although there have been small improvements in the last two years.

As well, in June 2000, a little over half of the children living in couple families were in families where both parents worked (see Table 4). A

further 38.4 per cent were in families where one parent worked. In the majority of these families the non-working parent was not in the labour force. Less than 10 per cent of the children lived in couple families where neither parent worked.

The proportion of children living in jobless two parent families varied little with the age of the child. In contrast, the proportion living in families where both parents worked increased with the age of the child, from 43 per cent at age 0 to 4 to 63 per cent at age 10 to 14. The proportion living in families where only one parent worked decreased from 48 per cent at age 0 to 4 to 30 per cent at age 10 to 14 years. These figures highlight the balance between mothers' child-care and paid work roles, and the increased tendency for mothers to combine those roles as dependent children grow older and progress through the school system.

Table 4 also shows that almost one-fifth of children lived in sole-parent families, less than half of them (44 per cent) with a parent in a paid job. The proportion of children living with an unemployed parent varied little with the age of the child. The proportion of those living with a working parent increased markedly with the child's age, from 27 per cent for children aged 0 to 4 to 55 per cent when the child was aged 10 to 14.

**TABLE 4: NUMBER ('000) OF CHILDREN AGED UNDER 15 BY LABOUR FORCE STATUS OF PARENT(S), JUNE 2000**

	Aged 0 to 4	Aged 5 to 9	Aged 10 to 14	Total
<b>Couple family</b>	1,123.2	1,126.3	1,034.5	3,285.1
Both parents employed (%)	43.4	55.2	62.6	53.5
One parent employed/one parent not in labour force (%)	44.9	32.8	26.4	34.9
One parent employed/one parent unemployed (%)	3.2	4.1	3.2	3.5
Both parents unemployed (%)	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.6
One parent unemployed/one parent not in labour force (%)	3.9	2.9	2.2	3.1
Both parents not in labour force (%)	4.1	4.4	4.9	4.4
<b>One-parent family</b>	202.0	263.3	267.3	732.7
Parent employed (%)	26.7	45.6	55.2	43.9
Parent unemployed (%)	7.6	7.5	7.2	7.4
Parent not in labour force (%)	65.7	46.9	37.6	48.7
<b>Total children</b>	1,325.2	1,389.6	1,301.8	4,017.8

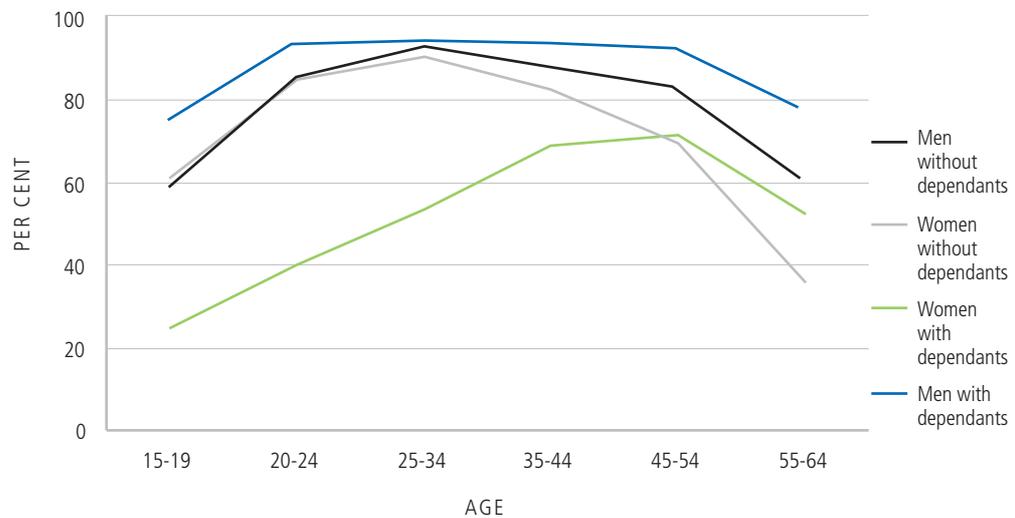
Source: ABS 2000a, *Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families*, Cat. No. 6224.0 Table 7

### 3.1.1 Parents' Participation in the Paid Labour Market

Figure 2 illustrates the labour force attachment of Australians aged 15 or more, in relation to the presence or absence of dependent children<sup>42</sup>. Comparing the participation rates of men with women at different ages highlights the differential effects of parenting<sup>43</sup>.

The participation rates for men between the ages of 20 and 54 were between 80 per cent and 100 per cent. These varied little with the presence of dependent children. The participation rates for men under the age of 20 and over 54 were substantially lower, especially if they did not have dependent children. In the case of younger men, the lower participation rates are partly because they are likely to be studying.

The participation rate of young mothers aged 15 to 19 was close to 25 per cent. The participation rate of women with dependent children increased markedly to a high point of about 70 per cent at age 45-54 but fell to about 50 per cent for those in the 55 to 64 age group. This pattern reflects a range of factors. A significant number of Australian women still exit the paid labour market when their first child is born. They gradually re-enter the paid labour market at some later date. As well, the younger the woman is the less likely she is to be attached to the labour market when her first child is born. This is because she will have spent fewer years in education and/or be less attached to a career path than older mothers<sup>44</sup>.

**FIGURE 2: LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES OF WOMEN AND MEN AT DIFFERENT AGES**


Source: ABS 2000a, *Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families*, Cat. No. 6224.0 Table 26

The participation pattern of women aged 15 to 44 without dependants is close to men's participation patterns. However, the participation rate of women aged 45 and over without dependent children declines relative to the participation rate of men of the same age group. This decline may be because older women approaching workforce retirement age tend to take on caring responsibilities for elderly relatives. These women also belong to an earlier generation who were less attached to the labour market during their parenting years than subsequent generations.

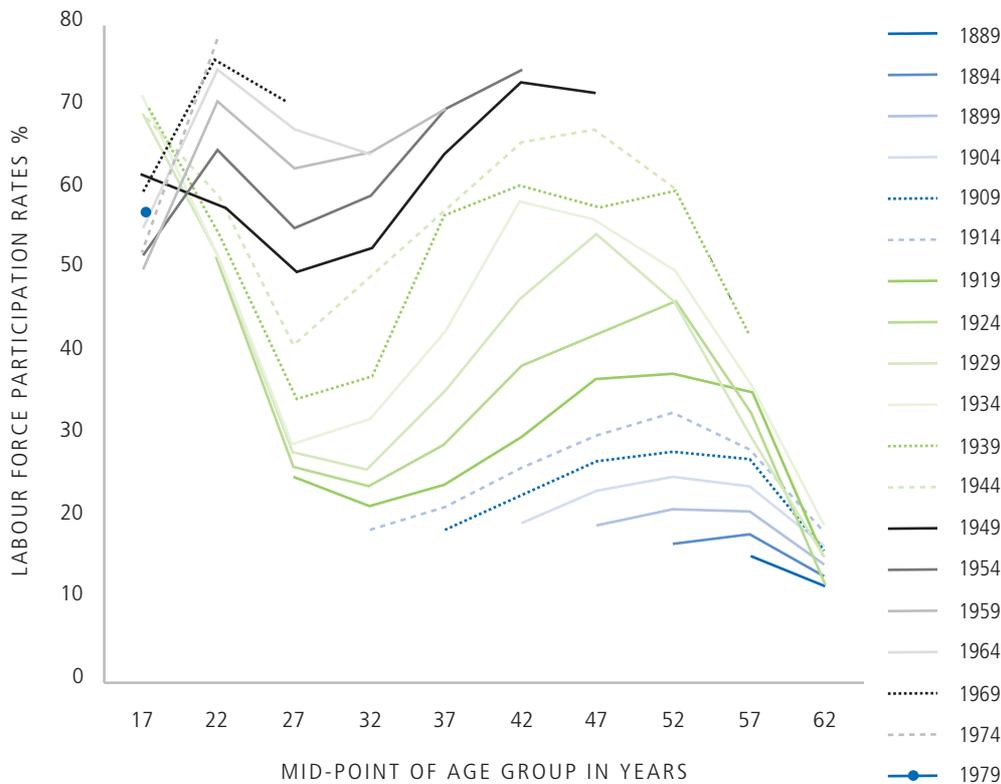
Figure 3 shows women's labour market participation for a range of birth cohorts. Each line in the figure describes a birth cohort, the first born in 1889 and the last in 1979. As a whole, the figure captures the labour market experiences of different generations of women.

As Young suggests, 'the 1929 birth cohort is the first to show evidence of the bimodal pattern of labour

force participation, with a slight peak at the young adult ages followed by a later peak at around 47 years of age'<sup>45</sup>. Later cohorts follow this characteristic M-shaped pattern, although the trough between the peaks has become smaller.

Women in the older cohorts tended to leave the labour force when they married, stayed out during their child-rearing years and returned when their children had grown. There was often a second exit initiated by the need to care for older family members. By contrast, later cohorts tended to remain in paid work until the birth of the first child, although the tendency to leave on the birth of the first child also decreased and the troughs in the M have become less pronounced in recent years. As well, women in the more recent birth cohorts have typically returned to work after birth, so that both the first and the second peaks indicate a similar rate of participation (75 per cent).

**FIGURE 3: AGE-SPECIFIC LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES OF AUSTRALIAN WOMEN ACCORDING TO COHORT EXPERIENCE**



Source: Young 1990 (updated and revised by Young in 2001)

### 3.1.2 Comparison of Employment to Population Rates for Single and Married Mothers

Table 5 shows employment to population rates in 1985 and 2000 for single mothers and married mothers in relation to the age of their youngest child<sup>46</sup>. In both years, the employment rates for single mothers were substantially lower than those for married mothers, regardless of the age of the youngest child. For all mothers, employment to population rates increased with the age of the youngest child. In 2000, the employment to population rate of married women, with a youngest

child less than 5 years of age, was less than 50 per cent, increasing to almost 70 per cent when their youngest child was aged between 5 and 9. The employment to population rate of single mothers was less than 30 per cent when their youngest child was aged less than 5, increasing to over 50 per cent when their youngest child was aged between 5 and 9.

Over the last 15 years, employment to population rates have increased. Most of the growth in employment for mothers of preschool age children was in part-time work. Among single mothers with older children, the growth has been shared fairly evenly between full-time and part-time work.

**TABLE 5: EMPLOYMENT TO POPULATION RATES FOR SINGLE MOTHERS AND MARRIED MOTHERS BY AGE OF YOUNGEST DEPENDENT CHILD (PER CENT)**

	Single mothers			Married mothers		
	Working full-time	Working part-time	Working	Working full-time	Working part-time	Working
<b>1985</b>						
0 to 4	12.0	10.0	22.0	10.9	19.5	30.4
5 to 9	15.7	17.0	32.7	22.8	30.9	53.7
10 to 14	27.7	15.5	43.2	28.3	29.7	58.0
With dependants (including those aged 15 to 24)	21.0	14.3	35.3	20.1	27.0	47.1
<b>2000</b>						
0 to 4	9.0	19.5	28.5	16.1	31.9	48.0
5 to 9	22.2	30.0	52.3	25.9	40.8	66.7
10 to 14	31.4	30.3	61.7	36.7	36.7	73.4
With dependants (including those aged 15 to 24)	23.2	26.0	49.2	26.1	35.1	61.2

Sources: Whiteford 2001, Table 4 and ABS 2000(a), *Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Families*, Tables 20, 14

Both single and married mothers with dependent children were more likely to work part-time rather than full-time in 2000. Single mothers whose youngest child was aged between 10 and 14 were the only group more likely to work full-time than part-time (married mothers with a youngest child aged between 10 and 14 were equally likely to work part-time or full-time).

A detailed analysis of employment to population rates demonstrates the importance to women's employment in small changes in the age of the youngest child. Census data show that in 1996 the employment to population rates of married mothers whose youngest child was aged less than one year, ranged from 20 per cent to 30 per cent, depending on the number of children they had. The

rates rose to about 50 per cent when the youngest child was aged 1 to 2, and further still when the youngest child was aged 3 to 5<sup>47</sup>. Mothers were more likely to work part-time when the youngest child was in the early years of primary school (aged 5-9), but were as likely to be working full-time as part-time when the children were older.

These patterns are reflected in women's lifetime incomes. Mothers from all educational backgrounds were likely to earn less than two-thirds of the earnings of their childless peers over a lifetime<sup>48</sup>. Mothers' daily living expenses were also considerably greater. However, at the end of the 1990s (compared to the situation in 1986) workforce and social infrastructure changes had affected the future prospects of

mothers. Largely because today's mothers return to the workforce more quickly and frequently, the gap between childless women and those with children has closed markedly<sup>49</sup>. For example, in 1986 a woman with completed secondary education and two children was likely to earn \$510,000 (1997 \$AUS) less than her childless peer over her lifetime. By 1997, this woman was twice as likely to return to the workforce while her children were of preschool age. As a consequence, the lifetime earnings gap between her and her childless counterpart had narrowed to \$172,000. This gap remains significant, however, and is partly explained by the likelihood of reduced career opportunities for employed mothers.

### 3.2 'Spillover' from Work to Family

Being in the paid workforce influences parents' lives in a number of ways<sup>50</sup>. Recent qualitative research has found both positive and negative perceptions of the effect of employment on women's family lives.

For example, women who are asked why they had chosen paid employment have emphasised the personal rewards they experienced from working—these were considered more important than the financial benefits<sup>51</sup>. Indeed, women are more likely than men to report that paid employment has a positive effect on their self-esteem. This also holds true for care-givers who find working a source of relief and a new interest<sup>52</sup>.

On the other hand, there can also be negative spillover effects from work to family. The Australian Living Standards Survey, conducted in 1991–92, suggested that these effects were felt most keenly by women working full-time, who were far more likely than part-timers to feel that work interfered with their domestic lives. For example, 55 per cent of women working full-time felt that 'working hours interfered with time for children'<sup>53</sup>. This compares with just under one-third of part-time women workers who were of the same view. Fathers were less likely to consider that work affected their ability to be a good parent (around 27 per cent).

Studies show consistently that negative spillover effects are felt most keenly by those working long hours, employed in high-status jobs, and by those who have low levels of work satisfaction<sup>54</sup>.

### 3.3 Patterns of Time Use

In Australia, as elsewhere, an apparent stability in average weekly hours spent in paid work masks a significant change over time in the dispersion of those hours. Information on how people spend their time is available from time use surveys that were carried out in 1974, 1987, 1992 and 1997<sup>55</sup>. The surveys show that working times have become more dispersed for both men and women (*see Section 2.3.5*). Depending upon individual family circumstances, this can have either positive or negative effects.

### 3.3.1 Changes in the Household Labour Supply

The biggest influences on women's time use are employment and transitions between the different stages in life such as marriage, the birth of a child, retirement or loss of a spouse. The official ABS time use surveys, which collect data for every resident in a household aged over 14, provide an opportunity to study the situations of whole households and how these have changed between 1987 and 1997. Using these surveys, it is possible to produce good estimates of time spent (volume of labour supplied) in both paid and unpaid work.

To improve comparability,<sup>56</sup> only the data on metropolitan prime-age heads of household and their spouses (where applicable) were analysed.

Table 6 shows that Australian households alter the balance between paid and unpaid work in response to children and schooling. Childless couple households allocate on average more than 70 hours a week to paid work, or nearly two-thirds of their total work time. In contrast, households whose youngest child is preschool age devote over 70 hours to unpaid work, reducing their paid hours to less than 60 a week. In couple households where the youngest child is at school, average weekly paid and unpaid work are almost equal.

Sole mothers' total hours of labour<sup>57</sup> are greater than the total hours worked by single women without

children. The total hours of labour for couples with children exceeds that of the total labour of couples without children by about the same ratio.

Among single women without children, paid work accounts for two-thirds of the total weekly work hours, whereas among sole mothers it accounts for one-eighth. Sole mothers with children attending school devote one-quarter of their total working hours to paid work.

The households with the longest hours of total work, paid and unpaid, are those with preschool age children, while those with the shortest are childless couples. Couple households with children at school occupy an intermediate position.

These 'total hours' mask the fact that a lot of time is devoted to child care as a simultaneous activity accompanying another 'main' or primary activity. There are four times as many hours devoted to child care as a background or secondary activity than are devoted to child care as a foreground or primary activity. This gives some idea of the marginal time costs for households of raising children of different ages—time costs that might be thought of as part of the costs of children.

**TABLE 6: HOUSEHOLD SUPPLY OF PAID AND UNPAID LABOUR BY HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION (HOURS PER WEEK)**

	No children	Youngest aged 0 to 4	Youngest aged 5 to 14
<b>Married</b>			
<b>1987</b>			
Paid work	71.4	56.3	66.5
Unpaid work	43.2	76.8	60.7
Total work	114.6	133.1	127.2
<b>1997</b>			
Paid work	76.1	58.0	65.2
Unpaid work	43.1	76.7	62.8
Total work	119.3	134.7	128.0
<b>Single</b>			
<b>1997</b>			
Paid work	36.6	7.9	15.8
Unpaid work	18.4	56.7	41.4
Total work	55.0	64.6	57.1

Source: ABS 1998a, Time Use Survey, Australia. User's Guide 1997, Cat.No. 4150.0

### 3.3.2 Estimates of Time Spent in Caring for Children

In recent years, longitudinal research has shown the critical importance of the first three years of children's lives. However, it is often in this period that the capacity of parents to create a positive environment for their children is most under stress.

The time use surveys show that the caring work associated with rearing children is substantial and falls disproportionately upon mothers, although there was some redistribution to fathers between 1974 and 1997. The time parents<sup>58</sup> invest in their preschool age children has risen significantly over this period (from 21 to 30 hours per week). However, the average time a father spends in child care with preschoolers has

doubled since 1974. At the same time, fathers' share of the household child care has risen from one-fifth to one-third. Importantly, on average, for every hour of primary child care, parents report four more hours of child care as a secondary or background activity to some other primary activity.

### 3.3.3 Perceived Time Pressure

Survey data indicate that women working less than full-time hours are satisfied with work and family balance. In 1995, the AWIRS<sup>59</sup> found that women (and those of both sexes working fewer than 25 hours a week) expressed the greatest satisfaction with their working hours<sup>60</sup>. A year later, the Australian Family Life Course Study (AFLCS) found that nearly 80 per cent of

women working half-time hours or fewer were content with their hours of work, while satisfaction decreased with increasing working hours. Most women with children under 12 expressed a preference for working fewer hours<sup>61</sup>.

While only 10 per cent of both men and women in the AFLCS said that family demands interfered with work, around 44 per cent of men and 28 per cent of women said that work interfered negatively with family.

Whatever kind of household women live in, women experience more time pressure than do men. Both women who live alone and men in general 'sometimes feel rushed or pressed for time'. However, married women, mothers of preschool age children, and sole parents,<sup>62</sup> are 'always or often rushed or pressed for time', with a small proportion reporting that they 'rarely' or 'never' felt rushed.

Among men, the perception of time pressure is little changed between the proportions of single men, married men and fathers who always feel rushed or pressed for time. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that couples feel under greater time pressure than single men and women, and that parents feel under greater time pressure than couples without children. Sole mothers are the group that feels under the greatest time pressure.

### 3.4 Emerging Issues Shaping Policy Development

A number of key issues emerge from analysis of information on workforce participation and time use in Australia.

For the most part, Australia has been highly successful in creating an environment where women participate in the workforce. Over the last 20 years, the increase in female labour force participation has been rapid. This has been largely a function of the increased participation of mothers supported by:

- a significant growth in part-time work;
- the substantial and increasing provision of child care;
- the expansion of in-work benefits and levels of financial support for families with children; and
- increased flexibility in employment conditions in the workplace relations system.

On the whole, Australian mothers have made most of the adjustments to reconcile work and family responsibilities. They are increasing their lifetime attachment to the labour force, lowering fertility, postponing childbirth, and managing the rearing of younger children with a combination of periods out of the labour force and considered use of part-time work. The number of men making use of workplace flexibility is rising but remains small<sup>63</sup>.

Family structures have continued to change with an increasing number of families where neither parent works. Evidence suggests outcomes for these families are better when they can access work. This raises the policy challenge of creating jobs with adequate flexibility for this group and designing income assistance in ways that encourage active planning and participation.

Australia has an ageing population, with implications for caring needs in the future, and a declining fertility rate. Unless women increase their labour force participation even further, this has consequences for the labour supply. Analysis of the links between work and family issues and fertility levels is still at a very early stage.

The combined effects of all these influences on work and family have led to new demands for policy to make reconciling work and family easier. In particular, there is a strong demand for increased support for working parents and more family friendly employment practices.

*(For a more detailed discussion of the Australian tax-transfer system and recent reforms, child care services, and other family supports see Chapter 4.)*

*(For more information on the workplace relations environment and employment conditions, see Chapter 5.)*

## 4. Family Policy Settings

Unlike many other OECD countries, Australian social security arrangements are flat rate, means-tested government support payments for people unable to find work or fully support themselves from work, not expected to work or unable to work.

Government income support is funded from general taxation revenue rather than a contributory system based on insurance principles.

The Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) was created in 1998. The new department integrated:

- functions from the former Department of Social Security;
- child care, disability services and family services from the (then) Department of Health and Family Services;
- family relationship services from the Attorney-General's Department; and
- the Child Support Agency from the Australian Tax Office.

FaCS lists three key social policy outcomes—Stronger Families, Stronger Communities, and Economic and Social Participation—as the main focus of its activity, to be achieved by three key strategies:

- preventing social problems arising through capacity building and early intervention;
- promoting independence, choice and self-reliance; and

- maintaining a strong and sustainable social safety net.

For many years, Government child care policies, financial assistance through tax transfer systems, allowances and concessions for youth and students, the Child Support Scheme for children of separated families and family support services generally have been an important feature of work and family policies. More recently, the Government's Stronger Families and Communities Strategy, established in 2000, identified work and families issues as priorities.

In the 2001-02 federal Budget, the Government announced major changes to Australia's social support system through the *Australians Working Together* package. The package is the first step towards reform of the social support system. The Government believes that the '....*Australians Working Together* [package] will see more people able to achieve independence; more families with jobs; stronger, more robust communities and a willingness for everyone to play their part'<sup>64</sup>.

*Australians Working Together* is a whole of government response to improving Australia's social support system for working age people. The objectives of the reforms are to significantly reduce the incidence of jobless families and jobless households, increase the extent of self-reliance among the working age population and build stronger

communities that generate more opportunities for social and economic participation. The package will be implemented over four years.

The new system will maintain the social safety net and provide improved, personalised assessment and service, more opportunities for training and work experience, better incentives, and reasonable requirements for people to find work, increase their earnings, or contribute to their communities. A key feature of the package is the balance between assistance, incentives and requirements.

The *Australians Working Together* package includes a range of measures to assist people of workforce age. Specific initiatives for parents include:

- individualised assistance through Centrelink<sup>65</sup> Personal Advisers, to help parents on Parenting Payment to plan and prepare for a return to work;
- promotion, through new claim interviews and Participation Packs, of the advantages of work and the assistance available to help parents prepare for a return to work;
- a new Transition to Work program which will bring together a range of individual and flexible transitional assistance for people who have been away from the workforce for a long time, and for those who have never had paid jobs; and
- access to a range of expanded training, employment and support services, including additional outside school hours child care places and child care fee assistance.

A number of other initiatives contained in the *Australians Working Together* package are:

- a Working Credit to encourage workforce age people on income support to take up full-time, substantial part-time or irregular casual work by allowing them to keep more of their income support payment when they first start work or have intermittent work;
- Training Credits worth up to \$800 to gain work-related skills for eligible jobseekers; and
- a Literacy and Numeracy Training Supplement to assist people who want to improve their skills as part of their plan to go back to work.

## 4.1 Family Assistance and In-work Benefits

Since the early 1980s, Australia has progressively expanded assistance for low income families in general and low income working families in particular. Rather than employment conditional benefits offered by a number of OECD countries, family assistance is part of the general system of social assistance. (See *Appendix B for details of Federal Government payments to families.*)

In the Australian context, family assistance has a number of goals. These include horizontal equity objectives such as assisting with the costs of children and redistributing income over the life cycle. They also include vertical equity objectives of boosting low family earnings and alleviating child poverty. As well, the

Australian family assistance system over the last two decades has been designed to boost employment, reduce low income traps and increase incentives to work<sup>66</sup>.

In any means-tested system, for some benefit recipients higher payments can also mean higher effective marginal tax rates as the larger benefit is withdrawn. However, these income support measures support the capacity of families in a broader sense. Basic financial pressures can paralyse the capacity of some families to manage any of their affairs, including the investment needed to return to work in the longer term. Financial pressures can also contribute to relationship breakdown, which can result in a poorer financial position, reduced workforce attachment and poorer outcomes for children. At the same time, the choice made by dual income families for both parents to work is not always driven by financial need. Some people choose to work for stimulation, challenge and social connection.

#### 4.1.1 Family Tax Benefit

The main form of financial assistance is Family Tax Benefit (FTB). A recipient may receive benefits as a fortnightly cash payment or through the tax system. In the latter case this is achieved either through a lump sum payment at the end of the financial year or by a reduction in tax payments withheld from income throughout the financial year. FTB has two parts— FTB Part A and FTB Part B. The latter is targeted to single income families, including

sole parents. The amount families receive varies according to the number and ages of the children and their income.

When FTB was introduced on 1 July 2000, it increased the amount of assistance available to families by \$140 a year for each dependent child. There was also an increase in assistance for single income families, and an increase in the level of income at which assistance is income tested. These increases were further boosted with a 5.8 per cent indexation increase from 1 July 2001. Government expenditure on family assistance has increased by more than \$2 billion a year (over 20 per cent) since the introduction of FTB.

In 2001-2002, the maximum rate of FTB Part A was \$3204.70 per year per child under 13 years, while the base rate of FTB Part A was \$1029.30 per year per child under 18 years. Different rates applied for other ages. FTB Part A is means-tested on the family income, with the maximum rate reduced by 30 cents for every dollar of family income over \$29,857 (this is higher than the minimum wage) until the base rate of FTB Part A is reached. The previous arrangements applied a withdrawal rate of 50 cents for every dollar. Now, families with incomes up to \$77,234 (plus \$3,139 for each eligible child after the first) can receive the base rate of FTB Part A with, once again, a withdrawal rate of 30 cents for every dollar over that amount.

The taper rates for these payments also mean that families can earn significant extra income and still benefit. In a

dynamic sense, the benefits provided for low to middle income earners provide an incentive for jobless families to strive for employment and income rises over time.

FTB Part B is intended to give extra assistance to families with one main income, including sole parents, particularly to those with a child under five. In 2001-2002 the maximum rate was \$2752.10 per year per family with a child under five and \$1919.90 per year for families with either a youngest child five to fifteen years or with slightly older children who are full-time students. It is not means-tested on family income, but on the income of the secondary earner—that is, the one whose income is less. In sole parent families and single income couple families, the family receives the whole amount of FTB Part B regardless of income. The secondary earner can have an annual income of \$1,679 in 2001-2002 before FTB Part B was withdrawn at a rate of 30 cents for every dollar of income above that amount<sup>67</sup>.

There are 2 million families eligible for FTB. In all, over 1.8 million families are receiving FTB Part A as fortnightly payments, while other families have claimed or are expected to claim their benefit through the tax system. There are 1.2 million families receiving FTB Part B, almost all of whom also receive Part A. Total FTB expenditure is estimated at \$11 billion a year.

#### 4.1.2 Parenting Payment

Parenting Payment is delivered through the income support system.

It provides income support to parents who have primary care of a dependent child aged under 16. The payment is available to both sole and partnered parents who are either outside the labour force or in low paid employment. It is paid either to one partner in a couple family, usually the woman (Parenting Payment partnered—PPp) or to sole parents (Parenting Payment single—PPs) who are also mainly women. Income and assets tests apply both to claimants, for PPs and PPp and to their partners, for PPp. Like other pension-based payments, Parenting Payment Single is indexed twice a year to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and benchmarked each year so that it does not fall below 25 per cent of Male Total Average Weekly Earnings (MTAWE). Parenting Payment partnered is indexed to CPI only.

PPs recipients have access to a Pensioner Concessions Card that entitles the cardholder to Commonwealth health concessions, including reduced costs for medicines under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, and a range of other concessions available from State and Local Government authorities such as reduced utilities, transport and educational costs. PPp recipients receive a Health Care Card. All recipients may be eligible for an Education Entry Payment of \$208 and single recipients may be eligible for an Employment Entry Payment of \$104 (using figures current at 1 July 2001). Additional assistance for study is available to PPs recipients through the Pensioner Education Supplement.

Parenting Payment recipients are encouraged and supported to re-enter the labour market through the Jobs, Education and Training (JET) program. From September 2002, parents with high-school aged children will be required to attend an annual planning interview with Centrelink to develop a return to work plan. These requirements to plan for a return to work will be extended to all recipients with school age children from July 2003. A modest part-time activity requirement for parents with teenage children will also be introduced (*see Section 4.3 for more detail*).

## 4.2 Child Care

Child care has been an important element of Federal Government support for working families for many years. The policy and funding for preschools, schools and some occasional care centres have been the primary responsibility of State and Territory governments. A detailed description of child care policies and practices is in the background report prepared for a recent OECD Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC).

Until 1990 there was an emphasis on providing funding to non-profit child care services to increase the number of child care places available. In 1990, as the number of children in child care continued to increase, the Government extended fee subsidies to families using for-profit services. Shortly after this, a quality improvement and accreditation

system was introduced for long day care centres.

During the 1990's the majority of the growth in child care was from for-profit child care services. Responding to concerns about the distorting effects of ongoing subsidies to one part of the child care industry (that is, to non-profit child care centres), the Government removed operational subsidies and moved to subsidising families themselves through Child Care Benefit (CCB). From 1996 to July 2001, Government assistance has increased by over 21 per cent with the introduction of CCB, nearly double the increase in CPI. For-profit child care services now make up a significant part of the industry.

According to the most recent data, 73 per cent of children in centre-based long day care are in private for-profit centres<sup>69</sup>.

The trend to more private sector involvement in providing services is likely to continue, with new places for family day care (FDC) and outside school hours care (OSHC) open to private operators. Changed OSHC funding arrangements took effect from April 1998 when Operational Subsidy was replaced with improved Child care Assistance. Many families were able to access Child care Assistance for the first time as a result of this change.

The total budget allocation for child care in 2001-02 is just under \$1.4 billion. Most recently, Government attention has shifted to the role child care has in providing opportunities for children's development, learning and socialisation. The Government also

**TABLE 7: PROPORTIONS OF CHILDREN IN DIFFERENT TYPES OF CARE, JUNE 1999**

	Proportion of children (%)
Formal care only	14.0
Informal care only	27.7
Both formal and informal care	9.50
Children who used neither formal nor informal care	48.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: ABS 1999d, *Child Care June 1999*, Cat. No. 4402.0, p. 12

recognises the role of child care in supporting parents and families within the wider community.

Despite the significance of the formal care sector, the largest proportion of children are still cared for by parents and by informal arrangements. Informal care is the most common form of non-parental care (see Table 7), used especially by part-time, casual and shift workers<sup>70</sup> who need to access care outside standard hours.

In 2000, the Federal Government announced 7,770 new places in more flexible child care arrangements, particularly in-home care. The initiative was designed to assist shift workers, families working outside standard hours, families with a sick child and families in rural and regional areas.

Within the formal care sector, the need to manage work responsibilities is the major reason why children are in care. Table 8 shows the distribution of these children across the range of formal care options.

ABS data indicate a downward trend in the unmet demand for formal child care in Australia in the 1990s.

By 1999, only 6 per cent of children were reported to be in need of additional care<sup>71</sup>. Since 1996 there has been an increase of 221 per cent in support for outside school hours care with places in these services increasing from 71, 800 to around 230,000 in June 2001.

In the 2001–02 Budget the *Australians Working Together* package included \$16 million over four years to fund additional OSHC places for 5,300 school age children and extra financial help for families with child care fees. The new child care places became available from July 2001. By providing better access to child care and assistance with fees, families, particularly single parents, will have greater flexibility and more options when they look for work or undertake training.

Despite these increases, in some locations there is still unmet demand for OSHC, which is used almost solely by working parents. Of families wanting more child care, one third needed OSHC.

In February 2002, families could earn up to \$29,857 a year and still be eligible for the maximum rate of CCB.

**TABLE 8: CHILDREN IN FORMAL CHILD CARE FOR WORK-RELATED REASONS, 1999**

Type of care	Children in child care for work related reasons as a proportion of all children in child care (%)	Description
<b>Long Day Care centres:</b>		
community-based	84	For children under school age—generally open for at least eight hours a day, five days a week, 48 weeks of the year. These may be run by private or public operators, or by employers. Some centres provide OSHC and vacation care for a limited number of primary school children.
private	83	
<b>Family Day Care:</b>	89	For children aged 0 to –12—provided by individuals in their own homes, who are recruited, trained, and supported from a central coordination unit. These units receive an operational subsidy from the Federal Government.
<b>Before/after school care:</b>		
	98	Available to primary school children.
<b>Vacation care:</b>	93	Available to primary school children.
<b>Occasional/other care:</b>	50	For preschool age children, for short periods of time on a regular or irregular basis to allow parents to attend to personal matters. Other care includes for children in remote areas, most of which operate in Indigenous communities, mobile services, JET creches in remote communities, in-home care for children with special needs or where standard forms of care are not available.

Source: FaCS, 1999 Census of Child Care Services

About 38 per cent of families receive maximum CCB, a clear indication that low income families are not priced out of the child care market in Australia. The maximum weekly CCB rates were \$129 for one child, \$269.64 for two children and \$420.86 for three children<sup>72</sup>. About 13 per cent of families receive minimum CCB. About 49 per cent of families receive part

CCB. Additional child care assistance is available for children with special needs and for children at risk of abuse or neglect. Where a child is at risk of abuse or neglect, child care services can apply to Centrelink for Special Child Care Benefit which covers the full cost of child care. This can be paid for up to 13 weeks.

### 4.3 Support for Returning to Work

Helping people maintain their workforce attachment when they have taken time out for family reasons is increasingly recognised as a critical aspect of the social support system. In this context, flexible working arrangements, access to part-time work and employer sponsored 'keep in touch' schemes for employees on parental leave, are important. The Federal Government also provides support with specific labour market programs.

Introduced in 1989, the JET program aims to help participants to enter or re-enter the workforce. It provides structured assistance including a 'return to work plan', and information, advice and referrals to educational institutions, child care services, labour market programs and state/territory or local services. Participation is voluntary and does not attract additional payments, although there may be assistance with child care and training costs. JET is open to all those who receive Parenting Payment, single and partnered, Carer Payment, Widow B Pension, Widow Allowance, Partner Allowance and Special Benefit<sup>73</sup>.

The JET program has been operating at full capacity for several years. In 1999–2000, there were around 61,000 new JET interviews. As well, almost 56,000 participants were placed in education and training courses and over 28,000 participants had earnings from employment.

The Return to Work program was launched in March 2000. It is a

voluntary, non-means-tested labour market assistance program for parents with school age children, who have been out of the workforce for two years or more because of their unpaid caring responsibilities, and who want paid employment of 15 hours or more a week. At December 2000, there had been 2,373 entrants to the program, of whom 34 per cent had gained employment three months after leaving the program (5 per cent full-time and 29 per cent part-time)<sup>74</sup>.

Through the *Australians Working Together* package, additional support and incentives will provide opportunities for people on Parenting Payment to prepare for return to work, and to help them with services to acquire or improve their work skills. Parents will be able to access a range of expanded training, employment and support services, including improved child care fee assistance and more outside school hours child care places.

Reasonable activity requirements for parents receiving income support will be introduced and will be carefully designed to take account of each person's needs, capacities and circumstances. For example, people will be able to choose between work experience, community work, part-time work, study, training or a specific job-readiness program.

From September 2002, people who receive Parenting Payment and whose youngest child is aged 12 to 15 will need to attend an annual interview with a Centrelink Adviser. From July 2003, people who receive

Parenting Payment whose youngest child is aged 13 to 15 will undertake a modest level of part-time activity of around six hours each week. Parents will be reminded of their requirements after six weeks and Centrelink Personal Advisers will review activities each three months. Financial penalties for not meeting these activity requirements will be used only as a last resort. From July 2003, all people who receive Parenting Payment and whose youngest child is aged 6 to 15 years will be required to attend annual interviews at Centrelink. People who are finding it difficult to meet requirements will be offered additional help and support.

A new Transition to Work program, announced as part of *Australians Working Together*, commences in July 2002. The new program will assist people who have been away from the workforce for a long time, or have never had paid jobs. It will bring together the Return to Work program and pre-vocational training elements of the current JET program. It will also provide assessment, training and advice about how to get into the job market. Transition to Work will help people whether or not they are receiving income support. To be eligible, people must be looking for paid employment and planning to return to the workforce after a lengthy absence. Transition to Work will use existing funding of \$39 million from the Return to Work program and the pre-vocational elements of JET.

From July 2002, additional funding of \$62 million over four years will be

provided to establish a new Personal Support Program.<sup>75</sup> This will help people on income support payments who have severe or multiple personal obstacles to employment, such as homelessness, drug or alcohol addiction, mental illness or exposure to domestic violence. It will assist around 45,000 people each year by 2004-05—up from 15,000 places in 2000-01.

## 4.4 Family Support

The federal and state/territory governments provide a range of relationship and parenting support services. At the federal level these include relationship support and education, parenting support and education, services to help rebuild relationships between parents and between parents and children and/or adolescents and financial counselling. Usually, the non-government sector is funded to provide these services.

Increasingly, relationship and parenting problems are recognised as contributing to poor work performance. However, there is potential for improvements in work performance if relationship difficulties can be resolved early. There are strong arguments for assisting families to build skills and to resolve their issues as such assistance can help reduce negative social and economic flow-on effects such as loss of employment, marriage breakdown or financial difficulties particularly associated with being a sole parent.

Programs are increasingly offering and promoting their services through workplaces so as to provide support

for men who would not otherwise access them. A number of these are funded under the Federal Government's Men and Family Relationships Initiative.

## 4.5 Community Support

The community support base has eroded partly because of changes in working time patterns, increases in workforce mobility and high workforce participation by women (who traditionally formed a major component of community volunteer effort). As a result, there are often weaker support networks available for people when they face personal difficulties or work problems (including the problem of finding work when unemployed).

Recent policy initiatives, particularly the Federal Government's Stronger Families and Communities Strategy, aim to help reinvigorate local communities. The strategy includes a range of initiatives to recognise and encourage volunteering and the value of community leadership, as well as providing additional family support through community identification and management of support programs.

## 4.6 Child Support

In Australia, a child's parents have a responsibility to support the child financially whether they are living together or not. The Australian Child Support Scheme was established in 1988 and is currently administered by the Child Support Agency within FaCS. Its purpose is to provide a central agency to register child

support arrangements, including those made privately, to assess the child support payable and to collect payments where requested, as well as providing an information service on child support matters.

In 1999-2000, \$1.4 billion was transferred between parents. As child support is only one of the many issues facing separated parents, the agency has developed a range of support 'products' and is working in partnership with communities to provide better integrated support services. Of particular interest is the work-based model developed to deliver support to separated parents in the workplace.

## 4.7 Indigenous Australians

In 1996, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples accounted for 2 per cent of Australia's population<sup>76</sup>, although they represented a much higher proportion of the population in many regions of Australia, especially non-capital city locations. In the Northern Territory, for example, the Indigenous population made up one-quarter of the population and accounted for nearly three-quarters of the population in centres of less than 2,000 people.

Research suggests that compared to other Australian families, Indigenous families are experiencing substantial and multiple forms of economic hardship<sup>77</sup>. Indigenous people tend to live in larger households than other Australians and have smaller household incomes<sup>78</sup>. Compared to other Australian households, Indig-

enous households are likely to have more than one family, and they are more likely to be multi-generational with older people living with younger people in extended families.

Studies have found that Indigenous Australians are just as likely to be in work or to want to work as other Australians, but they are far more likely to be discouraged from looking for work<sup>79</sup>. This research highlights the 'difficulty in increasing participation rates given the feedback between the concentration of unemployment in indigenous families ... and labour supply and employment prospects'<sup>80</sup>. Other research shows that the monetary incentive from employment for many Indigenous Australians to work is low, given the low level of income they can expect from paid work<sup>81</sup>. Replacement rates<sup>82</sup> are highest for those with partners and dependent children. They are higher for women than for men.

FaCS manages a number of projects developed in cooperation with Centrelink to improve the accessibility and quality of service to Indigenous Australians<sup>83</sup>. For example, in many Indigenous families, parenting is provided by a wider range of kin than the biological parents, and it is unusual for a child to remain permanently with a primary carer<sup>84</sup>. The Statement of Care pilot scheme allowed FTB recipients to redirect Family Allowance monies to others within family groups.

Under the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) scheme, Indigenous communities can receive a grant of a similar size to their collective unemployment benefit entitlement to undertake community-defined work. Unemployed community members can choose to participate in the scheme by working part-time to receive their individual unemployment entitlement<sup>85</sup>. CDEP participants can qualify for additional payments through Centrelink, including Rent Assistance, Health Care Cards, and the CDEP participation supplement, which is paid at the same rate as the Work for the Dole<sup>86</sup> supplement.

Under *Australians Working Together*, job outcomes for Indigenous people participating in CDEP will be improved in areas with good job opportunities. Since February 2002, CDEP organisations have been funded to take on the role of Indigenous Employment Centres, assisting up to 10,000 participants make the transition from CDEP work experience to paid employment. The Government is providing new funding of up to \$31 million over four years, bringing total spending on this initiative to around \$48 million.

Indigenous Employment Centres offer work experience, job search support and access to training, and provide support and mentoring assistance to Indigenous jobseekers outside CDEP. The centres also work with local employers and Job Network<sup>87</sup> members to find people work and help them keep it.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, which is Australia's national policy making and service delivery agency for Indigenous people, will work with 100 remote Indigenous communities to develop Community Participation Agreements. These agreements will involve the community in identifying practical ways people can contribute to their families and communities in return for their income support.

## 4.8 Summary

Successive Australian governments have placed emphasis on supporting families, including in their engagement in work. This is reflected in long standing policies such as child care, income support and a range of other policies and support services. Increasingly, a dynamic focus is being adopted which recognises the 'paths' people take through their life courses, and the importance of maintaining workforce attachment in periods out of the workforce to care for children. Government policies in this area form part of a complex system and work is continuing to improve the system's capacity to help families reconcile work and family effectively.

## 5. Support for Families in the Workplace

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR—which replaced DEWRSB after the 2001 federal election) is responsible for employment and workplace relations, including promotion of work-family balance. As well, employer associations, individual employers, trade unions and community organisations have adopted policy commitments and programs to assist workers with the reconciliation of work and family responsibilities. As a consequence, there has been progress in introducing family friendly measures into Australian workplaces.

### 5.1 Workplace Relations—the role of Governments

Policies to encourage family friendly arrangements exist at both federal and state/territory levels of government. At the federal level, policy orientation is enshrined in the *Workplace Relations Act 1996* (WRA). A number of specialist agencies at both levels of government plan, coordinate and implement work and family strategies in the workplace relations field. The Work and Family Unit (WFU) in DEWR was first established in 1990, as part of a series of initiatives following ratification of International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No. 156 on *Workers with Family Responsibilities*. (See Appendix C for government agencies responsible for work and family issues.)

Federal and state/territory anti-discrimination agencies also directly and indirectly address work and family issues. The federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner, for example, undertakes research, policy and educational work designed to promote greater equality between men and women. In August 1998 the Government asked the Commissioner to investigate pregnancy discrimination in the workplace and the report of that inquiry is of particular relevance<sup>88</sup>. (See Appendix D for a list of federal and state/territory anti-discrimination legislation that covers family or caring responsibilities.) Work and family issues are also addressed in part by the federal Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA). (See Appendix E for information about EOWA's public awareness activities.)

During the 1990s, most governments (including federal, state and territory governments) introduced initiatives in the key areas of employer education and information, recognition and promotion of best practice across industry, the provision of information to workers, discrimination protection for workers, and researching current work-family issues. Many of these are ongoing (see Appendix E).<sup>89</sup>

## 5.2 Employer, Trade Union and Non-government Organisations

Australian unions and employer bodies are organised along both federal and state/territory lines, with one national peak union body and several national peak employer organisations. Increasingly, work and family issues were on these organisations' agendas during the 1990s.

### 5.2.1 Employer Associations

A number of peak employer bodies integrate advice on equal employment opportunity (EEO), including work and family measures, into their workplace relations advice program. In September 2000, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) published the *ACCI Best Practice Paper No 7: Encouraging Work and Family Measures in Australian Workplaces*. It is part of a series in which ACCI 'seeks to encourage best practice on important labour relations issues'. They also publish quarterly reports on federal enterprise agreements that include a discussion of work and family measures introduced during that quarter.

The ACCI National Work and Family Awards are facilitated by the Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (Work and Family Unit), together with the Council for Equal Opportunity in Employment Ltd (CEOE) (see *Appendix E*) and sponsored by AMP. Established in 1985 by ACCI and the Business Council of

Australia, CEOE promotes business focussed equitable employment strategies. It provides training, resources and support for employers on eliminating discrimination and the implementation of diversity management strategies, including work and family.

### 5.2.2 Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU)

As a peak body, the ACTU seeks to influence minimum award conditions through its submissions to the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC). Community education and campaigning through the media, as well as education work with affiliated unions, have also been important union strategies. A recent ACTU policy document gives priority to work and family balance<sup>90</sup>. These policies are aimed at improving the ability of workers to combine their work and family responsibilities by:

- securing increases through bargaining to paid leave entitlements, such as paid maternity leave, increased personal carer's leave and extra rostered days off; caps on hours worked; rosters that take account of family responsibilities; and improved rights for workers in developing and implementing rostering; and reduced standard working hours to 36 per week (at enterprise-level and in appropriate industries); and
- improving award standards for leave and part-time work, with test cases on extending unpaid parental leave and increasing access to carer's leave (see *Section 5.3.3 below*)<sup>91</sup>.

### 5.2.3 Non-government Organisations

Historically, non-government organisations have played an important role in raising public awareness about workplace issues for families in Australia, in particular in relation to work-related child care. Working Women's Centres in Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory and a national network of community legal centres<sup>92</sup> are important in providing an independent source of advice and information to employees on work and family entitlements.

### 5.3 Work and Family Measures in Workplace Relations 'Instruments'

The workplace relations system has been important in workers' access to work and family provisions in Australia, providing a vehicle for entitlements that in other countries are often delivered through dedicated parental rights legislation and/or through social security.

There are work and family provisions in the three main types of formal industrial instruments—awards,<sup>93</sup> collective enterprise agreements,<sup>94</sup> and individual agreements<sup>95</sup>. In practice there is considerable interaction, with legislation and awards providing a basic set of provisions extended by collective or individual agreements. The terms and conditions of employment under federal agreements must be at least as good as the overall terms and conditions that would apply under

the relevant award (although the agreement may increase or decrease individual award entitlements).

### 5.3.1 The Federal System of Workplace Relations

Federal law is the major regulator of workplace relations arrangements for employers and employees under federal awards and agreements. Since new federal workplace relations legislation was introduced in 1996, it may now be possible for employees under State awards to have access to federal agreements.

### 5.3.2 Federal Legislation

The *Workplace Relations Act 1996* (WRA) is the primary legislative instrument at federal level. One of its principal objects is 'assisting employees to balance their work and family responsibilities effectively through the development of mutually beneficial work practices with employers' (s. 3(i)). A further aim is 'respecting and valuing the diversity of the workforce by helping to prevent and eliminate discrimination', including on the basis of family responsibilities and pregnancy (s. 3(j)). The federal tribunal established by the Act—the Australian Industrial Relations Commission—is also required to take account of ILO Convention 156 (s. 93A).

The Act includes provisions that are designed to prevent and eliminate discriminatory provisions in federal awards and agreements on a range of grounds, including family responsibilities. It further proscribes

termination of employment for a set of reasons including family responsibilities and absence from work during parental leave (s. 170CK(2)(f, h)). The objects of some state workplace relations legislation also refer to work and family considerations<sup>96</sup>.

Since the early 1990s, the focus of the federal workplace relations system has moved away from a centralised system to promoting bargaining and agreement making at the level of the workplace and the individual, while retaining a safety net of wages and conditions through awards. In addition, the WRA legislates for some minimum conditions, for example, an entitlement to unpaid parental leave and unpaid adoption leave of 12 months for permanent employees who have been with their employer for 12 months continuously. A priority of the Federal Government has been to change workplace culture by promoting the advantages for employers and employees of flexible workplace practices, which are tailored to their particular needs.

### 5.3.3 Statutory Provisions, Award Entitlements and Test Cases

Employment conditions, including parental leave and paid maternity leave, may be derived from a number of sources including federal and State labour laws, industrial awards and industrial agreements, both federal and State. Historically, the award system has been the main vehicle through which many forms

of leave have been provided in Australia. Through test cases run before the AIRC, general standards in the federal jurisdiction have been established that result in standard clauses available for import into federal awards on a case-by-case basis. In some cases, legislation has picked up or adapted the test case provision, thus creating wider coverage across the workforce.

#### **Parental leave—including maternity, paternity and adoption leave**

Over the past two decades, the existing parental leave provisions contained in federal awards have evolved through a process of test case decisions of the AIRC. Improvements in these provisions were in response to social and economic developments. The most important test cases in relation to parental leave have been the maternity leave for women test case in 1979, the adoption leave test case in 1985 and the parental leave for men and women test case in 1990.<sup>97</sup>

In May 2001, an AIRC Full Bench decision granted access to unpaid parental leave to federal award-covered casual employees employed on a “regular and systematic basis for several periods of employment or on a regular or systematic basis for an ongoing period of employment during a period of at least 12 months, and [with] a reasonable expectation of on-going employment”.<sup>98</sup> This new provision will be inserted into federal awards on application by the award parties on an award-by-award basis.

The WRA provides that permanent full-time and part-time employees who have 12 months continuous service with their employer have a minimum entitlement to 52 weeks of shared unpaid parental leave to care for a new born child or following the adoption of a child aged under five<sup>99</sup>. Parents are also entitled to take one week's unpaid parental leave simultaneously at the time of birth. Employees taking parental leave have a right to return to the position they held prior to taking leave, or to one similar in status.

Where paid maternity leave is provided, it is generally provided through certified agreements. The average duration of paid maternity leave provided through agreement making is around six weeks with the duration ranging from less than one week on full pay in some agreements to twelve weeks leave on full pay followed by a further forty weeks at sixty per cent of pay (*see section 6.1 for further details*).

Paid maternity leave is a common entitlement for women employed permanently in the public sector, both federal and State. While the duration of paid maternity leave varies across Commonwealth, State and Territory public sectors, most public servants have an entitlement of between two and twelve weeks paid maternity leave (*see section 5.3.5*).

#### **Personal/carer's (family) leave**

Carer's or family leave enables employees to take time off to care for and support an immediate family or household member who is sick. Entitlements to carer's leave may be

contained in awards and/or workplace agreements. The standard established by the federal Personal/Carer's Leave Test Case decisions in 1994 and 1995 provides that employees may use up to a maximum of five days from their own personal (combined sick and bereavement) leave entitlement to care for a sick family or household member. Additional measures were also introduced into awards that provide greater flexibility—for example allowing annual leave to be taken in single days for caring purposes<sup>100</sup>.

In 2000, DEWRSB carried out a survey of the top 100 awards to estimate the incidence of a number of employment conditions. The 100 selected awards are a sample of major awards in the federal jurisdiction and all provide the basis for the conditions of employment for large numbers of employees. These awards include public and private sector awards, and single employer and multi-employer awards within an industry. In October 2000, it was estimated that 75 per cent of the top 100 federal awards contained personal/carer's leave provisions. Family/carer's leave is also one of the most widespread family friendly provisions in federal agreements<sup>101</sup>.

#### **Regular part-time work**

The availability of regular part-time jobs with secure conditions is important in helping families to combine work and family responsibilities. Permanent part-time employment provides employees with reasonably predictable work patterns, continuity of employment

and access to pro-rata conditions associated with permanent full-time employment (for example, paid annual leave and sick leave and forms of leave to assist workers with family responsibilities, such as parental and carer's leave)<sup>102</sup>. These arrangements are able to reflect the particular circumstances of employees, including their work and family responsibilities. Through the WRA, the Federal Government has removed restrictions on regular part-time employment, including quotas on the number of employees able to undertake regular part-time work in awards, and minimum or maximum weekly hours of work.

The AIRC is also required to ensure that, where appropriate, awards provide for regular part-time employment, both through award reviews and in the creation of new awards. In November 2000, some 75 per cent of the top 100 federal awards provided for regular part-time work. In one-sixth of those awards providing for regular part-time work, the provision was limited to those returning from parental leave<sup>103</sup>.

### 5.3.4 Provisions in Enterprise (Collective) and Individual Agreements

Agreements can provide family friendly working arrangements additional to those available through statutes or the award system. Formal collective agreements (federal and state) currently cover some 35 per cent of Australian employees, while a further 1.8 per cent are covered by registered individual agreements<sup>104</sup>.

While the data derived from analysis of enterprise agreements are useful indicators of the extent to which enterprise level agreements are being used as vehicles for family friendly measures in the workplace, some caution needs to be exercised in interpreting the data<sup>105</sup>.

Twenty eight per cent of employees covered by federal agreements had access to regular part-time hours, with provisions being most common in the retail industry; the accommodation, cafes and restaurant industry; and finance and insurance services industry<sup>106</sup>. Overall, permanent part-time employment is widespread, being included in agreements covering close to 70 per cent of agreement-covered employees. It is also a common award provision. Tables 15 to 18 in Appendix F show the incidence of selected work and family provisions in collective and individual agreements. The inclusion of a number of family friendly provisions in federal collective agreements has increased since the introduction of the WRA.

Table 15 shows that overall, some 42 per cent of federal agreements certified in 2000 and 2001 contained at least one family friendly provision and these covered almost three-quarters of employees who were subject to agreements. This figure rises to 80 per cent of agreements if flexible hours provisions are included.

Table 16 shows that the most prevalent work and family measures in federal collective agreements for 2000 to 2001 are those providing access to some form of (paid) leave

for caring purposes. Family/carer's leave provisions were included in 27 per cent of agreements covering 59 per cent of employees under agreements certified in 2000 and 2001. Provisions enabling access to other forms of leave for caring purposes were found in 19 per cent of agreements and reached 40 per cent of employees. Nearly one third of employees were covered by an agreement which contained paid maternity leave provisions.

Table 17 shows the comparative extent of work and family measures in agreements from 1997 to 2001. As with Table 16, the most prevalent are measures dealing with some form of caring leave (ranging from 24 to 30 per cent of agreements certified in each year). Similarly, access to part-time work is a widespread feature of federal agreements which has steadily increased over this period.

While data available on Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) and collective agreements cannot be directly compared, it is clear from Table 18, that again provisions for carer's and associated leave are among the most frequent to be covered in individual agreements. Twenty-six per cent of employees under AWAs had provisions more generous than the relevant award in respect to this type of leave. Paid maternity and paternity leave were available to 17 per cent and 15 per cent respectively of employees covered by AWAs.

Figures for AWAs approved as at the end of 1999 show that 72 per cent of employees on AWAs had access to at least one family friendly provision,

not including flexible hours. This figure rises to 77 per cent of these employees when flexible working hours arrangements are included<sup>107</sup>.

### 5.3.5 Australian Public Service Arrangements

The *Australian Public Service Act 1999*, federal agreements and the Australian Public Service Award set out the terms and conditions of employment for federal public service employees. These employment conditions support work and family balance, such as personal leave, part-time work and flexible working hours. Many certified agreements and AWAs extend and tailor employment conditions to meet the needs of individual agencies and employees. The *Maternity Leave (Commonwealth Employees) Act 1973*, which applies to the Australian Public Service and other Federal Government agencies, provides for twelve weeks paid maternity leave for federal public service employees.

## 5.4 Summary

The material presented in this chapter illustrates that governments, employers, employees and their associations, and community organisations all have a role to play in providing support for families in the workplace. It describes the range of formal mechanisms by which work and family measures are delivered, and details some of the key provisions and employee entitlements in the federal jurisdiction in particular. The incidence of these provisions in

workplace agreements is monitored by the federal government and data showing the significant range and spread of work and family measures in these agreements has been discussed here. The next chapter goes on to present evidence of the incidence and distribution of family friendly working arrangements more broadly.

## 6. Work and Family Workplace Practices

Formal provisions in awards, agreements and legislation offer important leave entitlements and underpin flexible workplaces that help with balancing work and family life. Benefits may also be available as a result of custom and practice, company policy or individual negotiation.<sup>108</sup> Access may depend on employer good-will, a supportive workplace culture and favourable business operating conditions. This chapter summarises the available data on Australian workplace practices that assist employees with family responsibilities.

### 6.1 Leave provisions

#### 6.1.1 Paid Parental Leave

The 1995 AWIRS found greater provision of paid parental leave than indicated by formal workplace agreement analysis, though with significant differences by sector. Table 9 shows its frequency in the AWIRS workplaces with more than 20 employees<sup>109</sup>. The average amount of paid leave provided was four weeks.

Reports from the EOWA indicate that private sector organisations are increasingly keeping in touch with employees who are on parental leave, whether paid or unpaid. Since 1994, the number of organisations keeping employees on parental leave informed of vacancies or other opportunities increased by 57 per cent<sup>110</sup>.

In 2000, 38 per cent of female employees responding to an ABS survey indicated that they were entitled to paid maternity leave—this included 51 per cent of full-time employees and 21 per cent of part-time employees. Industries with the highest incidence of paid maternity leave included government administration and defence (68%) and communication services (59%, which is predominantly public sector), finance & insurance (59%) and education (57%). The accommodation, cafes and restaurants industries had the lowest incidence of paid maternity leave at only 13 per cent, followed by the retail industry (20%) and cultural and recreational services (28%).

**TABLE 9: PAID MATERNITY AND PAID PATERNITY LEAVE BY SECTOR, 1995**

Sector	Paid maternity leave % of workplaces	Paid paternity leave % of workplaces
Private	23	13
Public	59	31

*Total number workplaces surveyed = 1,967*

*Source: AWIRS, cited in Morehead et. al 1997, p. 116*

Occupations with the highest incidence of paid maternity leave include managers & administrators (65%) and professionals (54%).

Additionally, 18.1 per cent of female employees do not know whether or not they are entitled to paid maternity leave.<sup>111</sup>

### 6.1.2 Personal/Carer's (Family) Leave

The AWIRS found that most employees said that there was at least one form of leave usually available to care for a sick family member (see Table 10).

The AWIRS was conducted prior to the federal Personal/Carers Leave Test Case decision and the incidence of paid family leave has increased since then. Other data indicate that access to paid family leave may be considerably higher in large organisations. For example, in 1997, approximately 72 per cent of organisations reporting to the EOWA offered paid leave to employees for the care of dependants<sup>112</sup>.

Surveys asking employees what leave they had **actually** taken to care for a sick family member, show approximately one-third using paid

leave, while others indicated other arrangements including unpaid leave<sup>113</sup>. Women were more likely than men to rely on **unpaid** leave as revealed by both AWIRS data and in data from the ABS surveys.

## 6.2 Flexible Working Arrangements

The use of flexible working time arrangements (broadly defined) is the most common resource for Australian workers who are combining work and family obligations. Just over half of families with one or more children aged under 12 use family friendly provisions to enable them to care for their children<sup>114</sup>. This figure has stayed roughly constant during the 1990s.

Table 11 shows the most common provisions or work arrangements that are used to assist with caring for children.

Similar findings emerged from the New South Wales ABS survey which showed that some 70 per cent of those who used a specific work arrangement to enable them to care for any dependant used either flex-time, time-off in lieu, an informal arrangement or part-time work<sup>115</sup>.

**TABLE 10: HOW EMPLOYEES TAKE TIME OFF TO LOOK AFTER SICK FAMILY MEMBERS, 1995**

Type of leave	Own paid sick leave	Annual leave	Leave without pay	Time-in-lieu	Paid family leave	Can't take time off	Other
% of employees	43	43	36	16	15	4	7
% of females	41	37	44	15	16	4	8

Population: All employees at workplaces with 20 or more employees N = 18,866.

Source: AWIRS 1995 Employee Survey, as reported in Morehead et. al 1997, p. 115.

**TABLE 11: THE TYPE OF WORK ARRANGEMENT USED TO CARE FOR CHILDREN, 1999**

Type of work arrangement used	% of mothers in families with an employed mother	% of fathers in families with an employed father
Permanent part-time work	36.8	1.9
Flexible working hours	33.7	18.0
Work at home	15.4	7.4
Shiftwork	8.5	5.3
Job-sharing	3.9	0.5
Other	3.5	1.2
Total families where mother or father used work arrangements <sup>a</sup>	67.8	26.7

*a. Components do not total as parents could use more than one form of work arrangement*

*Source: ABS 2000d, Child Care June 1999, Table 30*

Working part-time is a common way in which women in particular accommodate work and family, but its incidence varies across industries. In a recent survey, one quarter of employees (and only 12.5 per cent of male employees) said it would be easy to arrange to work fewer hours<sup>116</sup>.

### 6.2.1 Flexibility in Starting and Finishing Times

The AWIRS found that about half of employees in workplaces said they had 'some' or 'a lot' of control over starting or finishing hours<sup>117</sup>. This is consistent with more recent survey data that found that just over half of employees said it was easy to vary start and finish hours<sup>118</sup>.

Control over start and finish times was closely related to occupation and industry, and significantly more full-time than part-time, and slightly more male than female employees said they had a lot of control<sup>119</sup>. In 2000, flexibility in working time was

the measure nominated most by employees who wanted additional arrangements to help with caring<sup>120</sup>.

### 6.2.2 Working Place Arrangements

In 2000, some 12 per cent of carers in the New South Wales workforce reported using home-based work to facilitate their caring arrangements<sup>121</sup>. In 1995, one-fifth of employees said that they could work at home if they needed to. A smaller number of employees reported having a regular arrangement with their employers to work from home. In 2000, around 6 per cent of workers (typically higher paid and high status employees) had this arrangement, working on average one-third of their total hours at home<sup>122</sup>.

ABS surveys on parental caring arrangements in families with at least one child aged under 12 found that mothers' reliance on working from home as a child care strategy had decreased over the 1990s (from

18 per cent to 15 per cent). Over the same time, men's use of work from home had risen slightly to 7.4 per cent<sup>123</sup>.

## 6.3 Family Care Facilities at Work

In Australian workplaces, there is a growing recognition of the importance of family care facilities. Although these are increasingly being considered in workplace negotiations, workplace provision of family care facilities is still less widespread than flexible working arrangements. A recent survey in Western Australia asked employed family carers about the provision of child care assistance, special arrangements when family members are sick or during school holidays, and a family room in the workplace. It found that more than two thirds (68%) of respondents were satisfied with their employer's support for their family responsibilities, with a smaller proportion (40%) being satisfied with the family care arrangements at their workplace. Amongst those who were dissatisfied, the majority said this was because there was limited or no provision for child care<sup>124</sup>.

### 6.3.1 Workplace Child Care

In contrast to the widespread availability of working time flexibility and leave provisions, it appears that few workplaces provide child care or offer child care assistance. In 1995, only 3 per cent of larger workplaces (covering some 5 per cent of workers in workplaces

with over 20 employees) reported having child care on site<sup>125</sup>. In 2000, there were 65 employer-sponsored child care services. As well, employers had reserved over 600 child care places for their employees in centre-based or family day care services<sup>126</sup>.

### 6.3.2 Access to a Telephone

Some three-quarters of employees surveyed for AWIRS believed they could have access to a phone at work for family reasons. Those in lower level occupations and part-time workers had least access<sup>127</sup>.

## 6.4 Trends Amongst Leading Organisations in Australia

Characteristics likely to be associated with family friendly practices include industry sector, workplace size, and the degree to which human resource practices are formalised. Public sector and very large private sector workplaces (with over 500 employees) tend to be more family friendly than smaller private sector workplaces.

In the private sector, organisations with more structured management practices and/or high status occupations are more likely to have family friendly provisions. Organisations with an explicit gender equity commitment (as indicated by the existence of a written EEO policy) are also more likely to be family friendly<sup>128</sup>. Leading organisations are recognised and promoted in the annual National Work and Family Awards (*see Appendix E*).

## 6.5 Summary

The data presented in this chapter from the Australian Workplace Industrial Relations Survey and the ABS demonstrates that workplaces are more flexible and family responsive in practice than analysis of the formal regulatory system might suggest. Considered together with the material presented in the previous chapter, it also highlights the importance of flexible working arrangements for employees seeking to combine work with caring responsibilities.

Over the last two decades, measures to assist workers with family responsibilities have become a more pronounced feature of the Australian workplace relations system. There has been steady progress through workplace relations law, agreement making and the award safety net in providing access to family-related forms of leave. Access to unpaid parental leave for an increasing proportion of the workforce has been important in encouraging women's retention in the workforce after their children are born.

The entitlement to paid leave for caring purposes, again increasingly widespread across the workforce, is also significant. Surveys indicate that carers leave is well used and highly valued.

The federal legislative framework and the range of government activities to promote family friendly workplaces are contributing to the creation of a workplace environment that supports employees with family

responsibilities. It is now widely acknowledged that beyond certain minimum conditions, approaches need to be tailored according to the needs and characteristics of an organisation and its workforce. One-size does not fit all, either in terms of the range of employee needs and how these change over the life-cycle, or in terms of the operational imperatives of different industries and workplaces. There is no doubt that work arrangements that assist employees with family responsibilities are increasingly on the bargaining agenda in both the public and private sectors. For many organisations, there is a compelling 'business case'. Offering family friendly practices can be an effective means of attracting and retaining staff, especially in a tight labour market, and lead to improved morale and higher productivity. There is ample scope in the agreement—making process for employers and employees to make mutually beneficial arrangements at the workplace, whether this is done on a collective or an individual basis.

## 7. Appendices

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### Appendix A: Work and Family Life Consortium Membership and Steering Committee Membership

#### *Members of the Work and Family Life Consortium:*

[Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales](#)

Mr Michael Bittman

Dr Bruce Bradbury

Ms Jenny Chalmers

Ms Jacqueline Tudball

Dr Denise Thompson

[Australian Centre for Industrial Relations Research and Training](#)

Ms Caroline Alcorso

Ms Betty Arsovka

Ms Kristin Van Barneveld

Ms Marilyn Bryce

Dr John Buchannan

[Macquarie University](#)

Associate Professor Graeme Russell

[University of Queensland](#)

Dr Gillian Whitehouse

#### *Members of the Steering Committee:*

Ms Elizabeth Broderick,  
Partner, Blake Dawson Waldron

Ms Belinda Curtis, Corporate  
Diversity Manager, AMP & Marriage  
and Family Council Representative

Ms Robyn McKay, Executive Director,  
Department of Family and Community  
Services

Mr Mark Jasprizza, Assistant  
Secretary, Workplace Relations  
Implementation, Department of  
Employment and Workplace  
Relations

Dr Bruce Smith, Assistant Secretary,  
Department of the Prime Minister  
and Cabinet

## Appendix B: Federal Government Payments to Families

TABLE 12: AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PAYMENTS TO FAMILIES BY TYPE, ELIGIBILITY, RATES, CONDITIONS AND FREQUENCY AS AT 30 JULY 2001

Payment type	Eligibility	Rate	Assets Test	Income Test	Income Unit	Income Period
<b>Family Tax Benefit A (FTB Part A)</b>	Dependants <21yrs; dependant, full-time students aged 21 to 24 not receiving YA or similar payment.	Base/ft: Dependant <18yrs—\$39.48; Dependant 18 to 24yrs—\$53.06. Max/ft: Under 13yrs—\$122.92; 13–15yrs—\$155.82; 16 to 17yrs—\$39.48; 18; 24yrs— 53.06.	None	\$29,857 per annum to receive maximum rate. Assistance reduces by 30 cents for each dollar of additional income until base is reached. Maintenance Income Test also applies.	Family	Fortnightly OR financial year OR via tax system.
<b>Family Tax Benefit B (FTB Part B)</b>	Dependants <16yrs; Dependant full-time student <18yrs not receiving YA or similar; Single income families; Double earning families with second income threshold.	Max/ft: Dependant <5yrs—\$105.56; Dependant 5 to 15yrs (and 16 to 18yrs if full-time student)—\$73.64.	None	Primary earner/sole parent—none; Secondary earner — \$1,679 per annum to receive maximum rate. Assistance reduces by 30 cents for each dollar of additional income.	Secondary Earner	Fortnightly OR financial year OR via tax system.

Payment type	Eligibility	Rate	Assets Test	Income Test	Income Unit	Income Period
<b>Maternity Allowance</b>	Parents/guardians within 13wks of birth/care.	\$780	None	As for FTB Part A.	Family	Lump sum through Centrelink.
<b>Maternity Immunisation Allowance</b>	Fully immunised babies, 18 months to 2yrs; Eligible for FTB(A) or paid Maternity Allowance.	\$208	None	As for FTB Part A.	Family	Lump sum through Centrelink.
<b>Double Orphan Pension</b>	Child <16yrs, with both parents deceased; Payable in limited circumstances—for example, where one parent is dead and the other is in prison.	Ft: \$41.10	None	None	Personal (dependant)	Fortnightly
<b>Carer Allowance</b>	Daily carer of a person with disability (can receive more than one allowance if two or more people are cared for).	Base/ft: \$82	None	None	Personal (carer)	Fortnightly

Payment type	Eligibility	Rate	Assets Test	Income Test	Income Unit	Income Period
<b>Large Family Supplement</b>	Families with four children or more.	For 4 <sup>th</sup> and subsequent children—\$8.40/ft.	None	As for FTB Part A.	Family	Fortnightly OR yearly.
<b>Multiple Birth Allowance</b>	Families with 3 or more children born in same birth <6yrs.	Triplets—\$102.76/ft; Quadruplets or more—\$137.20/ft.	None	As for FTB Part A.	Family	Fortnightly OR yearly; Payments cease when children turn 6.
<b>Carer Payment</b>	Carer of a 'profoundly disabled child' or one disabled child or an adult and that adult's dependent child.#	Same as Age Pension: Singles—\$402.00; Couples—\$335.50 each.	Carer—As for Parenting Payment (PP); Person being cared for—as for PP if beneficiary, otherwise Special Care Receiver test.	If recipient is not receiving a pension s/he must meet the Special Care Receiver income and assets tests with limits applying to adult and child recipients.	Personal	Fortnightly

Payment type	Eligibility	Rate	Assets Test	Income Test	Income Unit	Income Period
<b>Parenting Payment (PP) and supplementary payments</b>	Qualifying dependant <16yrs (rules apply as to which parent is the recipient in the situation of shared care).	For PP: Sole parents—\$402.00/ft; Partnered parents—\$332.80/ft (\$386.90 if couple is separated due to illness, respite care or imprisonment); Pharmaceutical Allowance: Sole parents—\$5.80; For eligible partnered parents—\$2.90 each (or \$5.80 each if couple is separated due to illness, respite care or imprisonment). Education Entry Payment—\$208 Employment Entry Payment—\$104.	For PP: Sole homeowners—<\$133,250 to <\$269,250; Partnered parents (combined assets) homeowners—\$189,500 to \$415,500; Sole parents, non-homeowners—\$228,750 to \$364,750; Partnered parents (combined assets), non-homeowners—\$285,000 to \$511,000.	For PP: Sole parents, 1 child—\$130.60 to \$1150.10/ft; Sole parents, >1 child—\$24.60/ft extra for each additional child; Partnered parents, when partner not a pensioner and claimant's income <\$62/ft and partner's income <\$546/ft.	For PP: Personal (sole parent or one parent of a couple).	PP—fortnightly Pharmaceutical Allowance Education Entry Payment and Employment Entry Payment—lump sums through Centrelink.

Payment type	Eligibility	Rate	Assets Test	Income Test	Income Unit	Income Period
<b>Rent Assistance</b>	FTB Part A claimants receiving >base rate and paying private rent.	<p>Sole parent, 1 to 2 children—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• max of \$103.04 if rent/ft &gt;\$240.01;</li> <li>• no payment if rent/ft &lt;\$102.62;</li> <li>• 3+ children: max of \$116.48 if rent/ft &gt;\$257.93;</li> <li>• no payment if rent/ft &lt;\$102.62 Couple, 1 to 2 children—</li> <li>• max of \$103.94 if rent/ft &gt;\$289.29;</li> <li>• no payment if rent/ft &lt;\$151.90;</li> <li>• 3+ children: max of \$116.48 if rent/ft &gt;\$307.21;</li> <li>• no payment if rent/ft &lt;\$151.90.</li> </ul>	None	As for FTB Part A; No payment if rent/ft is less than \$98.70 for sole parents; \$146.02 for couple parents.	Personal (claimant)	Fortnightly

Payment type	Eligibility	Rate	Assets Test	Income Test	Income Unit	Income Period
<b>Health Care Card</b>	Claiming max FTB Part A by instalment, Newstart Allowance, YA, PP, Carer Allowance, Austudy, low income earner.	Entitles claimants to reduced cost medicines and a number of other services; No max use conditions.	None	As for FTB Part A.	Personal/ family	Card issued every 6 months.
<b>Child Care Benefit (CCB)</b>	Using approved/ registered child care; Children born on or after 1 January 1996 must be immunised, be on a catch-up schedule or be exempt; Parental work/study/training test for registered care or >20hrs/wk per child approved care.	Approved care for non-school child in 50 hours of care(max rate payable for incomes under \$29,857 per annum or families on income support)—\$129/wk; Registered care for non-school child in 50 hrs of work related care \$21.50/wk;CCB is limited to 20 hours of care per week for non-work-related care.	None	Approved care—minimum rate payable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• over \$85,653 per annum for 1 child;</li> <li>• \$92,904 for 2 children;</li> <li>• \$105,554 for 3 children, plus \$17,618 for each additional child.</li> </ul>	Personal (dependant)	Estimated each year; Benefit for approved care paid via subsidies to parents or directly to service providers; Benefit for registered care paid to parent on presentation of receipts.

Payment type	Eligibility	Rate	Assets Test	Income Test	Income Unit	Income Period
<b>Newstart Allowance</b>	Unemployed, 21yrs+, capable of work.	Newstart Allowance: Sole parent—\$386.90/ft. Partnered parent—\$322.80 Education Entry Payment—\$208 Employment Entry Payment—\$104.	As for PP	Sole parent—\$62 to \$637.57 Partnered parent—\$62 to \$546.00.	Personal (claimant) Income Unit.	Fortnightly
<b>Remote Area Allowance</b>	Resident of remote region within special tax zone determined by Australian Taxation Office (visit <a href="http://www.ato.gov.au">www.ato.gov.au</a> ).	Single—\$18.20; Couple—\$15.60 + \$7.30/dependant.	None	None	Family	Fortnightly
<b>Youth Allowance (YA)</b>	Full-time student 16 to 24yrs; <21, unemployed; Independent, 15yrs+ and above school leaving age.	Max/ft: Sole parent—\$380.10; Partnered parent—\$318.60.	Family assets test—<\$424,750; Independent—as for PP.	Partnered parent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• students \$236 to \$660.43/ft;</li> <li>• unemployed—\$62 to \$525.86/ft</li> </ul> Sole parents— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• students \$236 to \$785/ft;</li> <li>• unemployed—\$62 to \$611/ft.</li> </ul>	Personal (claimant)	Fortnightly

Payment type	Eligibility	Rate	Assets Test	Income Test	Income Unit	Income Period
<b>Abstudy</b>	Student of Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander descent.	Max/ft: Sole parent— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• &lt;16yrs—\$380.10</li> <li>• 16 to 20—\$380.10;</li> <li>• 21+—\$386.90;</li> </ul> Partnered parent— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• &lt;16 yrs—\$318.60;</li> <li>• 16 to 20yrs—\$318.60;</li> <li>• 21+—\$322.80.</li> </ul>	As for YA	As for YA	Personal (claimant)	Fortnightly
<b>Austudy</b>	Student 25yrs+	Max/ft: Sole parent—\$380.10; Partnered parent—\$318.60.	As for PP	<\$236 until payments are affected.	Personal (claimant)	Fortnightly

Source: *Guide to Commonwealth Government Payments, 20 March 2001 to 30 June 2001; FaCS and Centrelink websites*

Notes: (a) # Two people who each provide constant care can claim the couple rate of Carer Payment.

(b) Payment rates are current at 30 June 2001. Where no base rate is given, payments are reduced as stated until the payment received equals zero.

## Appendix C: Government Agencies with Responsibilities for Work and Family Issues

**TABLE 13: GOVERNMENT AGENCIES WITH PARTICULAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR WORK AND FAMILY ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA—AT THE FEDERAL AND STATE/TERRITORY LEVELS**

Federal Government	Work and Family Unit Department of Employment and Workplace Relations <a href="http://www.workplace.gov.au">www.workplace.gov.au</a>
New South Wales	The Women's Equity Bureau Department of Industrial Relations <a href="http://www.dir.nsw.gov.au">www.dir.nsw.gov.au</a> <a href="http://www.dir.nsw.gov.au/rights/women">www.dir.nsw.gov.au/rights/women</a>
Victoria	Effective Organisations Unit Industrial Relations Victoria <a href="http://www.ir.vic.gov.au">www.ir.vic.gov.au</a>
Queensland	Work and Family Unit Department of Industrial Relations <a href="http://dir.qld.gov.au">dir.qld.gov.au</a> <a href="http://www.ir.qld.gov.au/work&amp;family/index.htm">www.ir.qld.gov.au/work&amp;family/index.htm</a>
South Australia	Workplace Relations Policy Division Department of Administrative and Information Services <a href="http://www.dais.sa.gov.au/">www.dais.sa.gov.au/</a> <a href="http://www.eric.sa.gov.au/policy/work_family.htm">www.eric.sa.gov.au/policy/work_family.htm</a>
Tasmania	Women Tasmania Department of Premier and Cabinet <a href="http://www.women.tas.gov.au">www.women.tas.gov.au</a>
Western Australia	The Family and Children's Policy Office Ministry of Family and Children's Services <a href="http://www.doplar.wa.gov.au">www.doplar.wa.gov.au</a> <a href="http://www.doplar.wa.gov.au/search/index.htm">www.doplar.wa.gov.au/search/index.htm</a> <a href="http://www.familyone.wa.gov.au">www.familyone.wa.gov.au</a>
Australian Capital Territory	Chief Minister's Department Australian Capital Territory Government <a href="http://www.act.gov.au/cmd">www.act.gov.au/cmd</a>
Northern Territory	Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment Northern Territory Government <a href="http://www.nt.gov.au/ocpe/">www.nt.gov.au/ocpe/</a>

## Appendix D: Anti-discrimination Legislation

**TABLE 14: ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LEGISLATION THAT COVERS FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES**

Jurisdiction	Legislation	Areas covered	Date most recent amendment introduced
Federal	<i>Sex Discrimination Act 1984</i>	Family responsibilities (termination of employment only)	1994
New South Wales	<i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1977</i>	Responsibilities as a carer	2001
Victoria	<i>Equal Opportunity Act 1995</i>	Status as a parent or carer	1995
Queensland	<i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1991</i>	Parental status	1992
Western Australia	<i>Equal Opportunity Act 1984</i>	Family responsibilities and family status	1992
Australian Capital Territory	<i>Discrimination Act 1991</i>	Status as a parent or carer	1991
Northern Territory	<i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1992</i>	Parenthood	1992
Tasmania	<i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1998</i>	Parental status, family responsibilities	1998

## Appendix E: Government Work and Family Public Awareness Activities

Federal and state/territory governments have run extensive public awareness activities to promote work and family issues to both employers and employees and the benefits of family friendly workplaces. This promotional work includes research and publications, information sharing forums—such as workshops and conferences, and using the Internet.

### Federal Government

#### Department of Family and Community Services

*Work and Family: Current thinking, research and practice, Feb 2000*

A literature review prepared by Graeme Russell and Lyndy Bowman as a background paper for the National Families Strategy.

[www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/aboutfacs/programs/families-ResearchPapers.htm](http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/aboutfacs/programs/families-ResearchPapers.htm)

*Family and Work: The Family's Perspective, May 2001*

A report of research commissioned from the Australian Institute of Family Studies by FaCS and the Marriage and Family Council to explore children's views of their parents' working.

[www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/family/family\\_and\\_work.htm](http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/family/family_and_work.htm)

#### *Stronger Families and Communities Strategy Facts Sheets*

A series of facts sheets are available that provide information about:

- the Strategy;
- what makes families and communities strong;
- partnership approaches to community projects;
- engaging multicultural communities;
- targeted help for indigenous communities; and Strategy initiatives.

Information on case studies that showcase the many innovative and effective community-based ideas which can address local social and economic problems is also provided. A fact sheet on how to apply for funding is available and details of projects that have been approved for funding under the Strategy in each State and Territory can also be accessed via this site:

[www.facs.gov.au](http://www.facs.gov.au)

#### Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

[www.workplace.gov.au](http://www.workplace.gov.au)

*Report on Agreement Making in Australia under the Workplace Relations Act: 1998 and 1999*

A biennial report on developments in enterprise bargaining with particular emphasis on the effects on women, part-time employees, people from non-English backgrounds and young people. It reports on the incidence of family friendly provisions in agreements.

### *Work and Family Resource Kit*

Contains fifteen information sheets that provide basic information on a range of work and family issues, including caring for older people, relocation, breastfeeding, tele-working, issues for older workers, and the presence of children and other dependants. The kit is available free and is widely distributed through conferences, workshops, other information sharing events and via the department's web site.

### *Work and Family Resources Folder*

A set of practical booklets containing more information than that contained in the Resource Kit, guides aimed at policy makers and human resource managers in employer organisations. The guides provide advice on developing family friendly policies, best practice case studies and Australian and international research. The folder and/or the guides are for sale. Subjects covered are:

- *Workplace Guide to Work and Family*  
Provides advice on issues to consider in developing policies and initiatives to help workers combine work and family responsibilities.
- *Guide to Elder Care Issues in the Workplace*  
Deals with developing policies and initiatives to help workers combine caring responsibilities for older family members with work.
- *Relocation and Families: A Guide to Family friendly Relocations*  
Is based on a study of relocation policies and practices in Australian workplaces and contains case studies of workplaces that have introduced family friendly measures as part of their relocation policy and practices.
- *Guide to Combining Breastfeeding and Work*  
Provides low-cost options to help employers and breastfeeding women negotiate workplace practices to support breastfeeding once women return to work after parental leave.
- *Best Practice—Work and Family Initiatives*  
This guide lists National Work and Family Award winners and finalists since 1998. It summarises each organisation's key structural features and family friendly measures. Also contains a list of family friendly provisions in federal agreements.
- *Guide to Tele-working*  
Provides information on developing and implementing tele-working arrangements.
- *Guide to Part-Time Work and Job-Sharing*  
Provides information on developing and implementing part-time work and job-sharing.
- *Guide to Evaluating Work and Family Policies*  
Provides managers and supervisors with essential information to conduct effective evaluations of work and family strategies.
- *Federal Industrial Relations and Legislation Framework—A Work and Family Perspective*  
An introduction to the WRA, which outlines the federal workplace relations framework, emphasising its work and family aspects. Includes details of state and territory legislation.
- *Family Rooms: Children and Other Dependants in the Workplace*  
Discusses issues relating to establishing family rooms, including

a 'how-to' guide, benefits and legal issues that can arise from bringing dependants into the workplace.

- *Guide to Issues for Older Workers*

Provides information on work/life issues affecting older workers and suggests policies and initiatives to address these, including case studies of companies that have introduced initiatives for older workers.

#### *A Nice Place to Work*

A free publication aimed at small businesses (less than 20 employees) to raise awareness of family friendly options and the benefits for both employers and employees. The guide recognises that small employers are unlikely to employ human resources specialists and consequently work and family measures that suit this sector must be low-cost, practical and simple to implement.

#### *Work and Family Awards Finalists Booklet*

The first of this series was published in 2000 to showcase National Work and Family Award winners and finalists. (*For more information about the awards, see 'Best Practice—Work and Family Initiatives' and 'Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry National Work and Family Awards' below*). This free booklet is distributed at the end of the awards presentation and is also available from the Department.

#### *Work and Family Newsletter*

The Work and Family Unit (WFU) publishes a free newsletter three times a year. It is distributed to 2,100 addressees on the work and family mailing list, as

well as at conferences, workshops, and other information sharing events and is available on the department's web site.

#### *Balancing the Till in 2001*

A pamphlet that outlines the initial findings from the nationwide study of retail workplace practices. The study was conducted jointly by the WFU, EOWA and the Australian Retail Association. Launched in May 2001, the pamphlet was widely distributed and is part of an ongoing project designed to improve work and family practices in the retail sector. The full report was published in February 2002.

#### *Work and Family Bibliography*

Published on the DEWR's web site, this bibliography lists Australian and international publications on work and family issues, which focus largely on the implementation of work and family policies in workplaces. Last updated in 2000, some major research is also included on the site.

#### *Work and Family State of Play 1998*

A statistical and qualitative analysis of progress in the spread of family friendly provisions in Australian workplaces, with emphasis on federal workplace relations.

#### *Balancing Breastfeeding at Work*

Aimed at both employers and employees to raise awareness of issues for breastfeeding women, includes facilities and arrangements for breastfeeding breaks and flexible work practices. The publication was a joint project between the University of Adelaide, South Australian

Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the ACTU, the (then) federal Department of Health and Aged Care, WFU and the Nursing Mothers' Association of Australia. Published in 2000, 25,000 copies were widely circulated.

#### *National Work and Family Awards*

The ACCI National Work and Family Awards are supported by the Federal Government as a means of promoting best practice in family friendly arrangements in Australian workplaces. The Awards have been an annual event since 1992.

The awards are facilitated by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and the Council of Equal Opportunity in Employment Ltd (CEOE Ltd) and are sponsored by AMP Ltd and ACCI. Award winners and finalists are promoted through three DEWR publications—the *Work and Family Newsletter*, the *Finalist's Booklet* and the *Best Practice Guide*. The Awards are also promoted through the media and the DEWR web site and provide case studies for other WFU publications. The CEOE Ltd and the EOWA also promote the award winners. The Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations officiates at the annual presentation held to announce the award winners and finalists. This event is always well attended. A conference is held in conjunction with the awards every second year.

#### *Web site*

The WFU maintains several pages on the DEWR web site. These are used to promote general issues around work and family, the National Work and Family Awards, and WFU publications, events and projects. In February 2001, visits to the work and family pages averaged 141 'hits' per day. The above publications can be found at: [www.workplace.gov.au](http://www.workplace.gov.au)

#### *Australian Work and Family*

##### *Discussion List*

An e-mail discussion list managed by WFU, which includes around 200 subscribers, including human resources professionals, researchers, consultants and academics. The list is used to distribute summaries of media reports on work and family, publicise work and family events and request/share information on policy development and implementation. [workandfamily@dewr.gov.au](mailto:workandfamily@dewr.gov.au)

#### **Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA)**

The EOWA administers the *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999* and educates and assists organisations to achieve EEO for women.

#### *Web site*

The EOWA maintains a web site about the organisation and how to make and report on Workplace Plans. The site also includes useful guides and case studies for developing EEO policies. Some of these include features relating to work and family. [www.eowa.gov.au](http://www.eowa.gov.au)

### **Office of the Employment Advocate (OEA)**

#### *Australian Workplace Agreements: How to Profit from Family Friendly Workplaces (2000)*

A publication aimed at informing employers and employees about how to use AWAs as a means for introducing innovative working arrangements, including family friendly provisions.

#### *Web site*

The OEA has a web site that includes information for employers and employees on the process for making AWAs. The web site also includes sample clauses and information promoting family friendly clauses.

*www.oea.gov.au/Links/LinksTitle\_FamilyFriendlyWorkplaces.htm*

### **The Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS)**

AIFS is Australia's national centre for research and information on families and is located within the Family and Community Services Portfolio. The Institute researches issues that affect family stability and well-being and plays a key role in the development of family policy and informed debate in Australia. Its research program falls into three streams: Children and Parenting; Family and Marriage; and Family and Society. Work and family has long been a focus of research for the Institute in particular areas such as parental leave, work related child care, flexible working hours and family friendly workplaces. Copies of a wide range of publications are

available from the AIFS library via the interlibrary loan service. More information about the AIFS and its activities can be found on their web site at *www.aifs.org.au*

### **Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC)**

#### *Pregnant and Productive (1999)*

Report on the results of the national inquiry into pregnancy and work in the context of discrimination. The inquiry was set up by the federal Attorney-General and conducted by the Sex Discrimination Unit in the HREOC in 1998 and 1999. With 46 recommendations, the report analyses the results of a wide range of submissions and discussions held as part of the inquiry.

#### *Pregnancy Guidelines (2001)*

Recommendation 2 in the *Pregnant and Productive* report was to develop a set of guidelines for employers on managing pregnancy in workplaces. The guidelines are free from the HREOC and can be downloaded from their web site at *www.humanrights.gov.au*.

#### *Harsh Realities*

Two sets of case studies on discrimination complaints that were settled before they reached a formal hearing in the commission. The case studies aim to educate employers in particular on their responsibilities under the various anti-discrimination laws. Some of the case studies refer to family-related discrimination issues.

## State/territory governments

### *Work and Family Guidebook (2001)*

Published by the New South Wales Government for small business employers.

### *Maternity at Work (2000)*

Published by the New South Wales Government to provide information on the management of pregnant employees. The publication explains the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees.

### *Managing Caring Responsibilities and Paid Employment 2000, NSW*

Conducted by the ABS on behalf of the New South Wales Government

### *Business vs Bathtime (2000)*

Published by the Victorian Government, an analysis of a qualitative research project on the availability of family friendly practices in Victorian enterprises, and the issues women and men face when using the practices.

### *Work and Family: Best of Both Worlds (2000)*

A Queensland Government kit aimed at both employers and employees to raise awareness of balancing work and family responsibilities.

### *Queensland 2001 Work and Family Awards—Profile of the Winners*

Part of a series of case studies of each award winner from the 2001 Work and Family Awards in Queensland.

### *Family Policy Development Research (2001)*

Survey results published by the Queensland Government from a survey of Queensland households to find out the attitudes of families in relation to working life issues and attitudes to families generally.

### *Balancing Work and Caring Responsibilities in Tasmania (1999)*

Conducted by the ABS on behalf of the Tasmanian Government.

### *FamilyOne*

A brand name and logo introduced by the Western Australian Government as a marketing tool for companies that demonstrate genuine commitment to family friendly work practices, or whose customer services cater for families.

### *Queensland Work and Family Awards*

In 2001, the Queensland Government introduced its own work and family awards to recognise employers who have best practice family friendly workplaces and to acknowledge organisations that contribute to the development of work and family practices in other organisations.

### *Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services*

Introduced a number of activities to help individuals reconcile work and family, including a work and family policy and guidelines for breast-feeding at work and programs for supporting families and children.

## Appendix F: Work and Family Provisions in Certified Agreements

**TABLE 15: MULTIPLE FAMILY FRIENDLY PROVISIONS, FEDERAL CERTIFIED AGREEMENTS 2000 AND 2001**

No. of Provisions	Certified agreements with family friendly provisions <sup>(a)</sup>		Certified agreements with family friendly provisions and flexible working hours <sup>(b)</sup>	
	Number	Per cent of agreements	Number	Per cent of agreements
16		#	2	*
15		#	3	*
14		#	8	*
13		#	13	*
12	1	*	27	*
11	12	*	38	*
10	11	*	69	1
9	24	*	162	1
8	67	*	200	1
7	106	1	288	2
6	159	1	413	3
5	336	2	454	3
4	592	4	722	5
3	892	7	1 155	8
2	1 348	10	2 270	17
1	2 244	16	5 079	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 792</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>10 903</b>	<b>80</b>

Source: DEWR, Workplace Agreements Database

Notes: (a) Family-friendly provisions used in this analysis are: flexible use of annual leave, access to single days annual leave, 48/52, career break, unlimited sick leave, all purpose paid leave, paid family leave, access to other (paid) leave for caring purposes, unpaid family leave, extended unpaid parental leave, paid maternity leave, paid paternity leave, paid adoption leave, part-time work, job sharing, home based work, family responsibilities, and child care.

(b) Flexible hours provisions used in this analysis are: make up time, time off in lieu at either ordinary rates or penalty rates, hours averaged over an extended period, compressed hours, flexible start/finish time, flexitime system, negotiable hours of work, hours decided by majority of employees, and banking/accrual of rostered days off.

(c) # Agreements recorded a maximum of 12 family friendly provisions

(d) \* Represents less than 0.5 per cent

**TABLE 16: WORK AND FAMILY PROVISIONS IN FEDERAL CERTIFIED AGREEMENTS, 2000-2001 AVERAGE**

Provision	Per cent of agreements	Per cent of employees covered
<b>Family-related leave</b>		
Family/carer's leave	27	59
<i>Access to other leave for caring purposes</i>	19	40
<i>Paid family leave</i>	3	15
<i>Unpaid family leave</i>	9	23
Paid maternity/primary carer's leave	7	32
Paid paternity/secondary carer's leave	4	16
Paid adoption leave	2	14
Extended unpaid parental leave	2	6
Access to single days annual leave	13	23
Flexible annual leave	6	10
48/52 career break	3	17
All purpose paid leave	3	9
Unlimited sick leave	1	2
<b>Assistance with children</b>		
Child care provisions	1	7
<b>Other family-friendly provisions</b>		
Part-time work <sup>(a)</sup>	25	67
<i>Regular part-time work</i> <sup>(a)</sup>	7	28
Job sharing	3	16
Family responsibilities clause	3	17
Home based work	1	10

Source: DEWR, Workplace Agreements Database

Note: (a) 'Part-time work' refers to all part-time employment provisions. 'Regular part-time work' refers to a commitment to and/or provisions that encourage regularity and stability in part-time working hours.

**TABLE 17: WORK AND FAMILY PROVISIONS IN FEDERAL CERTIFIED AGREEMENTS, 1997-2001**  
(as a % of agreements certified in each year)

Provision	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Family/carers leave	30	27	29	24	30
Paid maternity leave	4	10	9	6	7
Paid paternity leave	2	3	2	3	5
Paid adoption leave	2	1	1	2	3
Extended unpaid parental leave	2	#	1	1	3
48/52 career break	1	2	2	2	3
Part-time work^^	16	20	24	23	27
Job-sharing	2	2	2	2	3
Working from home	1	2	1	1	1
Child care	2	1	#	1	1
Family responsibilities	2	3	4	4	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>5122</b>	<b>7007</b>	<b>6161</b>	<b>6876</b>	<b>6672</b>

# Represents Less than 1%

^^Excludes casual part-time work. Between 4-8% of certified agreements specifically provide for regular part-time hours

Source: DEWR Workplace Agreements Database

**TABLE 18: WORK AND FAMILY PROVISIONS IN AWAs, 1998-99 AVERAGE<sup>a</sup>**

Provision	% of employers	% of employees
<b>Family-related leave</b>		
Sick/personal/carer's leave <sup>b</sup>	c	26
Paid maternity leave	4	17
Paid paternity leave	4	15
Extended unpaid parental leave	c	4
<b>Working-time flexibility</b>		
Rostered days off	c	3
Employee choice over distribution of hours	c	14
Start and finish times not set by agreement	c	14
<b>Number covered</b>		<b>81,932</b>

a. For caveats relating to estimates of provisions in AWAs and the number of employees affected, see DEWR SB & OEA 2000 p. 75

b. Increased compared to award provisions

c. Data not available

Sources: DEWR SB & OEA 2000, Tables 3.3.3, 3.3.6 and data drawn from Australian Workplace Agreements Management System and Australian Workplace Agreements Research Information System

## 8. Glossary

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ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACCI	Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
ACIRRT	Australian Centre for Industrial Relations Research and Training
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions
AFLCS	Australian Family Life Course Study
AIFS	Australian Institute of Family Studies
AIRC	Australian Industrial Relations Commission
AWA	Australian Workplace Agreement
AWIRS	Australian Workplace and Industrial Relations Survey
CCB	Child Care Benefit
CDEP	Community Development Employment Projects
CPI	Consumer Price Index
DAIS	Department of Administrative and Information Services (South Australia)
DEWRSB	Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business (Federal)
DEWR	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (Federal)
DIMA	Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (Federal),
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
EOWA	Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency
FaCS	Department of Family and Community Services (Federal)
FAO	Family Assistance Office
FCPO	Family and Children's Policy Office
FDC	Family Day Care
FTB	Family Tax Benefit
HREOC	Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
ILO	International Labour Organisation
JET	Jobs, Education and Training
LDC	Long Day Care

MTAWE	Male Total Average Weekly Earnings
OEA	Office of Employment Advocate
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSHC	Outside school hours care
PPP	Parenting Payment (partnered)
PPS	Parenting Payment (single)
SPRC	Social Policy Research Centre
WFU	Work and Family Unit
WRA	<i>Workplace Relations Act 1996</i>
YA	Youth Allowance

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> OECD 2001. To make the Australian statistics directly comparable with those of other OECD countries, the statistics provided in this paragraph relate to the OECD's definition of the working age population. In calculating its labour force statistics, the OECD uses the civilian population aged 15 to 64. In the rest of this report, however, the ABS definition of the working age population—namely, the civilian population aged 15 and over—is used. This distinction between definitions is very important for participation and employment to population rates, since few people aged 65 or over are employed or unemployed. In comparison with the participation rate provided above using the OECD definition, the ABS estimated that the seasonally adjusted participation rate was 63.6 per cent for persons and 54.9 per cent for women in calendar year 2000.
- <sup>2</sup> OECD 2000, p. 4
- <sup>3</sup> Non-resident parents are parents who do not live on a daily basis with their children.
- <sup>4</sup> OECD 2000, p. 5
- <sup>5</sup> ABS 2000a
- <sup>6</sup> Ironmonger & Lloyd 1990 and McDonald 1995
- <sup>7</sup> ABS 1999a, p. 5
- <sup>8</sup> McDonald 1995, p. 59
- <sup>9</sup> McDonald 1995, p. 46
- <sup>10</sup> ABS 1999b
- <sup>11</sup> ABS 1999b
- <sup>12</sup> Barnes 2001
- <sup>13</sup> ABS 1999c. Many analysts believe that it is more meaningful to talk about the rate of divorce per 1,000 marriages rather than the crude divorce rate (divorces expressed as proportion of the population). In 1999, the divorce rate per 10,000 of currently married people was 127.
- <sup>14</sup> James 1979, p. 205, Joint Select Committee on the *Family Law Act 1980*, p. 45 and ABS 2000b
- <sup>15</sup> McDonald 1995, p. 53
- <sup>16</sup> McDonald 1995, pp. 52-53
- <sup>17</sup> ABS 2000a
- <sup>18</sup> Hugo 1992, p. 30
- <sup>19</sup> ABS 2001b
- <sup>20</sup> Figures for May 1970 were obtained from ABS 1987, *The Labour Force, Australia: Historical Summary 1966 to 1984*, Cat. No. 6204.0. The figures for May 2001 were obtained from ABS 2001b *Labour Force, Australia: Preliminary*, Cat. No. 6203.0. Note that there have been two redefinitions of labour force data by the ABS between these two dates.
- <sup>21</sup> ABS 2000f
- <sup>22</sup> ABS 2000f
- <sup>23</sup> ABS 2000f
- <sup>24</sup> ABS 2000a
- <sup>25</sup> Morehead et al, 1997, p. 264
- <sup>26</sup> ABS 2001d
- <sup>27</sup> See for example, ABS 1998b, p. 44
- <sup>28</sup> ABS 1998b
- <sup>29</sup> ABS 2000f
- <sup>30</sup> ABS 2000h
- <sup>31</sup> ABS 2000h
- <sup>32</sup> ABS 1997
- <sup>33</sup> ABS 2001c, p. 8
- <sup>34</sup> ABS, 2001b, month of August, unpublished data.
- <sup>35</sup> Keese & Puymomen
- <sup>36</sup> ABS 2001d
- <sup>37</sup> ABS 2001h
- <sup>38</sup> ABS 2001d
- <sup>39</sup> ABS 2000f
- <sup>40</sup> ABS 2000a
- <sup>41</sup> Gregory 1999
- <sup>42</sup> Dependent children include all children aged under 15 and children aged 15 to 19 attending school or aged 15 to 24 attending a tertiary institution full-time.
- <sup>43</sup> These data do not represent actual life course patterns, which can only be derived from longitudinal data or the next best thing—an analysis of birth cohort (see *Figure 3*).
- <sup>44</sup> Chapman et al., 2001, p. 379
- <sup>45</sup> Young 1990, p. 16
- <sup>46</sup> McDonald 2001 showed that the age of the youngest child is a more important guide to the participation rate of mothers than is the number of children.
- <sup>47</sup> McDonald 2001, p. 19
- <sup>48</sup> Chapman et al., 2001, p. 383
- <sup>49</sup> Chapman et al., 2001, p. 384
- <sup>50</sup> Galinsky 1999, cited in Work and Family Unit (WFU) Newsletter, 4/2001
- <sup>51</sup> Pocock, 2001, pp. 48-49
- <sup>52</sup> Glezer & Wolcott 1999
- <sup>53</sup> Wolcott & Glezer 1995, pp. 64, 67
- <sup>54</sup> Glezer & Wolcott 1999
- <sup>55</sup> The 1974 survey was conducted by the Cities Commission; the 1987, 1992 and 1997 surveys were conducted by the ABS.
- <sup>56</sup> The ABS' 1987 Pilot Survey of Time Use was conducted exclusively in the Sydney Statistical Division, but subsequent analysis of the two national surveys shows that while time-use is different in rural and urban areas, differences between metropolitan centres are negligible. Limiting the population to prime working age removes the confounding effects of longer education and earlier retirement from the analysis.
- <sup>57</sup> The small proportion of male sole parents in the sample precludes any meaningful statistical analysis, so this section concentrates on the time-use of sole mothers.
- <sup>58</sup> Sole parents have been excluded from this analysis because of the small number in the metropolitan sample 1974 Time Use Survey.
- <sup>59</sup> In 1995, the Australian Workplace Industrial Relations Survey (AWIRS) surveyed 2,001 workplaces with 20 or more employees.
- <sup>60</sup> Morehead et al, 1997, p. 554
- <sup>61</sup> Glezer & Wolcott 1997, p. 28
- <sup>62</sup> This perception applies despite the fact that female sole parents spend less time in total work than mothers in

- couple households. Perhaps this reflects the fact that female sole parents have more constant responsibility for children and less opportunity for respite.
- <sup>65</sup> ABS 1999d, p. 42. See also VandenHeuvel, 1993, p. 115.
- <sup>64</sup> *Australians Working Together*, A Statement by Ministers Vanstone & Abbott, May 2001, p. 3
- <sup>65</sup> Centrelink is a government agency delivering a range of services on behalf of Commonwealth and State and Territory government departments to the Australian Community. Centrelink's customers include retired people, families (including sole parents), people looking for work, people with disabilities, illnesses or injuries, carers or widows, primary producers, students, young people, Indigenous peoples, and people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- <sup>66</sup> Whiteford 2001
- <sup>67</sup> Centrelink, Guide to Commonwealth Government Payments, 2001
- <sup>68</sup> Whiteford 2000, p. 4
- <sup>69</sup> FaCS 1999
- <sup>70</sup> Cobb-Clark, Liu & Mitchell 1999, p. 14
- <sup>71</sup> ABS 1999d
- <sup>72</sup> The standard hourly rate in February 2002 was \$2.58 for one child, \$2.69 for two children and \$2.80 for three children. The minimum rate per hour was 43 cents for one child, 86 cents for two children and \$1.30 for three children. In recognition of the relatively higher costs of using part-time care, a part-time loading is also payable to families using less than 38 hours of care per week.
- <sup>73</sup> *Parenting Payment* aims to assist people with children, particularly low income families, by providing an independent income; *Carer Payment* is a payment for carers who, because of the demands of their caring role, are unable to support themselves through full participation in the workforce; *Widow B Pension* is a payment to ensure an adequate level of income to certain older widows who do not qualify for Parenting Payment, have limited means and have lost the financial support of their partners – this payment is gradually being phased out; *Widow Allowance* ensures an adequate level of income for older women who become widowed, divorced or separated later in life and who have no recent workforce experience; *Partner Allowance* is intended to provide adequate income for people facing barriers to finding employment because of their previous limited participation in the workforce and who are partners of people getting income support; *Special Benefit* provides assistance to eligible people in severe financial need due to circumstances outside their control.
- <sup>74</sup> DEWRSB 2001
- <sup>75</sup> This funding is additional to the continuing Community Support Programme funding of \$92 million
- <sup>76</sup> Bray 2000
- <sup>77</sup> Daly & Smith 1995
- <sup>78</sup> Smith & Daly 1996
- <sup>79</sup> Hunter & Gray 1999
- <sup>80</sup> *Ibid* p. 19
- <sup>81</sup> Hunter & Daly 1998
- <sup>82</sup> The replacement rate is the ratio of net income (cash in hand) when out of work to net income when in work.
- <sup>83</sup> FaCS 2000, p. 82
- <sup>84</sup> Smith & Daly 1996
- <sup>85</sup> Hunter & Daly 1998 show that replacement rates do not differ substantially between those in CDEP and those not in the scheme.
- <sup>86</sup> Work for the Dole is a federally funded program that provides work experience opportunities and activities for eligible job seekers.
- <sup>87</sup> Job Network is a national network of around 200 private, community and government organisations dedicated to finding jobs for unemployed people, particularly the long term unemployed.
- <sup>88</sup> HREOC, 1999
- <sup>89</sup> An earlier report (Wolcott & Glezer 1995) summarises the policy debate and key initiatives taken in the first half of the 1990s in Australia. Both Australia's ratification of ILO Convention 156 in 1990 and the United Nations International Year of the Family (1994) were important catalysts of government and non-government sector activity.
- <sup>90</sup> ACTU 2001, Our Future at Work
- <sup>91</sup> The ACTU is also raising work and family balance issues through the *Reasonable Hours Test Case* lodged with the AIRC in May 2001.
- <sup>92</sup> Working Women's Centres and community legal centres receive federal and state government funding, as well as funding from private sources.
- <sup>93</sup> An award is a legally binding industrial instrument registered in an industrial tribunal at federal or state level. Awards usually cover multiple employers and establish minimum standards across substantial sections of an occupation or industry. The award system not only regulates terms and conditions of employment by directly covering employees, it also forms the basis in the federal system for establishing 'no disadvantage' for employees entering into agreements at the enterprise level.
- <sup>94</sup> Under Part VIB of the federal *WRA 1996*, certified agreements covering groups of employees can be negotiated at an enterprise level—agreements can be made between employers and registered organisations of employees, or directly between employers and their employees. Similar types of certified agreements exist in most states.
- <sup>95</sup> Part VID of the federal *WRA 1996* provides for individual 'Australian Workplace Agreements'. Provisions for similar individual agreements have been introduced in some states.
- <sup>96</sup> For example, the *Queensland Industrial Relations Act 1999* includes as a principal object 'helping balance work and family life' (s. 3d), while the South Australian *Industrial and Employee Relations Act, 1994* seeks to 'encourage and assist employees to balance work and family responsibilities'.
- <sup>97</sup> *Maternity Leave Test Case* decision (1979) 218 CAR 120; *Adoption Leave Test Case* decision (1985) 298 CAR 321; *Parental Leave Test Case* decision Print J3596, 26 July 1990.
- <sup>98</sup> Print 904631, 31 May 2001
- <sup>99</sup> Schedule 14 of WRA
- <sup>100</sup> Print L6900, M6700
- <sup>101</sup> DEWRSB & Office of Employment Advocate (OEA) 2000, pp. 48, 93
- <sup>102</sup> Permanent part-time employment as defined by the ABS is roughly equivalent to regular part-time employment as defined by the WRA (S.4). In contrast to casual employees, regular part-time employees work less than

full-time hours, have reasonably predictable work patterns and access to pay and employment conditions on a pro-rata basis. ABS Cat. No. 6310.0

- <sup>103</sup> DEWRSB 2001, unpublished survey material
- <sup>104</sup> ABS 2000e, p. 44
- <sup>105</sup> The data indicate the incidence of provisions in agreements and employee coverage, but do not provide any indication of employee take up and usage of those provisions. In addition, the data can be affected year to year by the different industry mix of agreements or size of agreements registered in a particular period.
- <sup>106</sup> DEWRSB & OEA 2000, Appendix D, Table 3.
- <sup>107</sup> Unpublished data supplied by OEA, 2001.
- <sup>108</sup> WFU 1999, pp. 53-54
- <sup>109</sup> Other data suggest a lower coverage. Of the mainly private sector organisations reporting to the Equal Opportunity in the Workplace Agency (EOWA) in 1998, fewer than 15 per cent offered paid maternity leave, representing some 16 per cent of employees in reporting organisations (WFU, 1999, p. 18).
- <sup>110</sup> WFU 1999, p. 19. See also pp. 61-66 for details of differences in the data sources used here.
- <sup>111</sup> ABS 2000h, unpublished data.
- <sup>112</sup> EOWA 2001
- <sup>113</sup> In a Tasmanian 1999 survey, some 37per cent of carers who took time off for caring used paid sick and/or carer's leave (ABS 2000c) while in a NSW 2000 survey the figure was 32 per cent (ABS 2001e).
- <sup>114</sup> ABS 2000d, Table 30
- <sup>115</sup> ABS 2001e
- <sup>116</sup> ABS 2000c, Figure 11, derived from ABS unpublished data
- <sup>117</sup> Morehead et al., 1997, p. 266
- <sup>118</sup> ABS 2000c, Figure 12, derived from ABS unpublished data
- <sup>119</sup> Morehead et al., 1997, Table12.6a
- <sup>120</sup> ABS 2001e, pp. 3,5. The second most frequently reported response was more paid leave (25.7 per cent, compared to 29 per cent who wanted flexitime)
- <sup>121</sup> ABS 2001e, Table 3
- <sup>122</sup> ABS 2000a
- <sup>123</sup> ABS 2000d, Table 30
- <sup>124</sup> Family and Children's Policy Office (FCPO) 2000, Figure 2
- <sup>125</sup> WFU 1999, p. 42
- <sup>126</sup> FACS 2001, p. 26
- <sup>127</sup> Morehead et al., 1997, p. 118 and WFU 1999, p. 45
- <sup>128</sup> Whitehouse & Zetlin 1999 and WFU 1999

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