

Working Women in South Australia: Progress, Prospects and Challenges

A Report to the Premier's Council for Women

Centre for Work + Life

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Executive Summary

This report examines women's work experience in South Australia.

Improving the situation of women at work, matters for several important reasons:

- Firstly, current arrangements are not fair to women.
- Secondly, our economy needs the labour of women: it increasingly depends upon it, and future growth will require it.
- Thirdly, without participation in paid work, women will end up poor in old age.
- Fourthly, good working conditions (backed up by good care arrangements) are good for children, increasing household income and modeling pathways out of intergenerational poverty and unemployment.
- Fifthly, jobs help women deal with violence. Up to 23 per cent of Australian women are affected by domestic violence. For many, a job is a road out of violence to independence. Workplaces and colleagues can provide some protective effect from the debilitating social and personal effects of violence.
- Finally, long working hours (especially concentrated amongst men) imposes social, personal and health costs. A greater labour market contribution from women is part of the solution to the growth in long hours in Australia.

A fairer, safer, more productive economy requires new work arrangements for women. Engineering these relies on the support and commitment of governments, employers and unions. This report illustrates the compelling case that exists for better work arrangements for women. It details the research evidence underpinning the case for a new effort, and for new champions for working women in South Australia.

Where we are, where we could be

This report shows that women have been increasing their role in paid work. But many do so on unfair terms, resulting in lower pay and higher overall workloads especially when work done in the household is taken into account.

There exists great potential to increase women's contribution to the state's economy, through better use of their skill and more workforce participation amongst those who would like to work more.

It does not have to be like this. A healthy society, with better outcomes for women, men and children, can arise from better terms of work, different work arrangements and cultural change in workplaces. Men will benefit as well as women, if work and its hours and rewards (including unpaid work) are more fairly distributed. The economy will also benefit with more productive, satisfying work that is associated with higher levels of participation in paid work and where work and its conditions matches the preferences of citizens.

A real opportunity exists to improve the terms of work in South Australia, increase equity, and at the same time boost economic and social welfare, with the right supports from governments, employers, and community organisations.

The evidence

This report sets out the evidence on seven aspects of participation in work and compares women and men, and - where practical - South Australia with national outcomes, set in historical context.

In this report, 'work' is defined broadly to include both paid and unpaid work. These seven themes are:

1. Participation and hours of work
2. Skill and education
3. Wages
4. Sex segregation
5. Working conditions, carers and flexibility
6. Unpaid work and care
7. Work-life balance

Participation

The steady increase in women's participation in paid work in the most significant change in the Australian labour market in the past three decades.

The Australian participation rate for women has increased from 43.7 per cent in 1978 to 58.2 per cent in September 2008. Most women at work are paid as employees. Only 12.6 per cent are owner managers or contributing family workers.

In 1978, South Australian women had a higher rate of participation than the Australian average, but it began to fall behind in the 1980s and in September 2008 was 56.3 per cent compared to 58.2 per cent nationally. If South Australian women matched the national average, an additional 12,000 women would be in the state labour market.

Men's participation has moved in the opposite direction. South Australian men now participate at a lower rate (70.7 per cent) than men nationally (72.3 per cent). If South Australian men participated at the national average there would be an additional 10,000 men in the labour market.

Men's participation does not change in the prime years of family formation and parenting. Women's participation dips from their 20s through until their fifties. However this dip is much more shallow in 2008 than thirty years earlier. The rate of women's withdrawal from paid work in the childrearing years is much less than in earlier decades in both South Australia and nationally.

Women who are 40+ have increased their share of employment relative to other age groups of women.

Scope for increasing women's participation?

There is certainly scope for increasing women's participation in South Australia, relative to Australia (i.e. the entry into work of women who are not currently in paid work), to increase hours worked by part-timers and to encourage discouraged female job-seekers to enter work.

There is also scope for increases beyond the current national participation rate, given how much higher such rates are in comparable industrialised countries. However, given

evidence about the importance of a good fit between actual and preferred working patterns to work-life outcomes, it is vital to take women's own wishes and preferences into account, and provide mechanisms that help reconcile work and family.

Labour market participation rates are higher in countries that have generous subsidies for child care, significant child benefits, generous parental leave, the same tax treatment of the earnings of 'first' and 'second' earners' wages, education and skill development for women, and cultures that support working women (especially mothers).

Hours of work

Over the past 30 years the pattern of working hours in the state and nationally has moved away from a standard around 40 hours a week to much more part-time (especially amongst women) and much more long hours work (especially amongst men). Both of these patterns are internationally distinctive. In a nation where part-time work is much higher than in comparable countries, South Australian women are even more likely to work part-time. In September 2008, 48.6 per cent of South Australian women workers worked part-time compared to 44.5 per cent nationally. They are also less likely to work long hours compared to the national average.

Women make up three-quarters of all part-timers in both South Australia and Australia.

Part-time jobs are more precarious, lower paid and have on average poorer conditions like access to training and leave. The majority of part-time jobs in Australia are casual.

Long hours

Long hours of work have measurable negative effects on the physical and mental health of workers, especially where they are worked over longer periods and are not the preference of workers. Many Australian men are now working long hours, with very direct effects upon their partners and children. While the proportion of South Australians working long hours is lower than nationally (15 compared to 20 percent), such hours have important negative effects on many South Australians (including children) and particular negative consequences on work-life outcomes.

Casual employment

Australia has a high rate of casual employment. The proportion has hovered around 25 per cent across Australia since 1994. It is higher than this - at about 30 per cent - in South Australia. However it has declined a little amongst women since 2004.

Preferred and actual hours

At least a third of Australians do not work their preferred hours. A poor fit between actual and preferred working hours is associated with much poorer work-life outcomes.

Working from home

At present, just under a third of all workers usually do some work from home, which has not much changed from the level in 2000. Most of this is catching up on things not done in core hours of work, rather than working core hours from home.

Unemployment and underemployment

Unemployment has fallen for both men and women in South Australia and Australia in the past ten years. In October 2008, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for Australian women was 4.8 per cent (4.0 per cent for men). In South Australia, the rate for women was 5.7 per cent (5.0 per cent for men).

There is also significant underemployment, and this is concentrated more amongst

women, especially part-timers. In 2007, 7.7 per cent of South Australian part-time women would have liked more hours – the highest proportion in the country (6.2 per cent nationally). Underemployment has fallen a little in South Australia since 1994, though it remains persistently above the national average by 1-2 percentage points.

More inclusive measures of total labour force underutilisation reveal that South Australia has a higher rate of overall underutilisation than all other states amongst both men and women. In 2007, the extended labour force underutilisation rate was 13.5 per cent amongst women in South Australia (12.2 per cent nationally) and 9.5 per cent amongst men (8.0 per cent nationally).

In 2007 around 108,200 South Australian women would have liked to increase their hours of work or enter the labour market. This compared to 63,600 men. Clearly there is real potential to draw more women into paid work in the state in accord with women's own preferences. This requires a multi-faceted effort providing further training and skill development opportunities as well as opportunities for self development and individual, case management support to deal with personal aspects of life that pose barriers to employment and training.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in Australia (and South Australia) is much lower than for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians of both sexes and their unemployment rate is several times higher. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment is also highly segmented, with half of all Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (and 30 per cent of men) employed in three industry categories (public administration and safety, education and health care and social assistance). Employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are an important labour market challenge in South Australia, especially in light of high regional concentrations of unemployment.

Employment and culturally and linguistically diverse workers

Non-English speaking background male and female immigrants have much lower participation rates and higher unemployment rates than other immigrants or native born. However, recent analysis suggests that once in employment, NESB immigrants do not fare very differently from others in terms of pay rates.

Skill, education and work

Most net new employment in South Australia is amongst higher skilled jobs. This makes increased access to skills and qualifications vitally important to women's employment. However, women's jobs need to reward the acquisition of skills if obtaining qualifications is to make sense.

Women have been energetically increasing their acquisition of skills and qualifications. Between 1996 and 2006, the proportion of women with post graduate degrees, bachelor's degrees and certificates increased significantly. Unfortunately this investment in qualifications is not mirrored in commensurate increases in earnings for women and men. Women generally face poorer wage returns to education than men. The earnings of males are higher than the earnings of females across all educational attainment categories in Australia.

Wages

In May 2008 the gap in earnings between full-time women and men in the Australian labour market was 16 per cent, equivalent to about \$10,000 a year. There has been little

movement in the gender pay gap in recent decades. However, there are state differences with widening gaps in South Australia, Western Australia and Victoria.

The gender pay gap in South Australia - like the national ratio - has remained very resistant to improvement over the past twenty years. Considering adults and full-timers only, the South Australian ratio barely moved from 85.0 in 1988 to 85.1 per cent in 2008 (from 82.7 to 84.0 per cent nationally). The South Australian ratio has declined significantly (i.e. become worse) in the past four years.

The biggest gender pay problems affect mining, finance and insurance, electricity, gas and water, and property and business services. Since some of these are significant employers of women, there may be good reason to concentrate initiatives to improve women's pay in particular industry sectors (e.g. in the finance, property and business areas, as well as mining, given its rapid expansion in South Australia).

Retirement incomes

Lower earnings cast a long shadow into retirement in an increasingly employment-based retirement system like Australia's. Of those in the accumulation phase of the superannuation system, only 11.1 per cent of women had a superannuation balance of more than \$100,000 in 2007 compared to 19.7 per cent of men.

The Working Poor

South Australia has a higher proportion of low pay than nationally especially amongst part-timers and those in rural areas. Attention to low pay makes sense in view of its higher incidence in the state, and regional South Australia might be worth particular attention, especially amongst part-time workers, most of whom are women.

Sex-segregation at work

In the twenty year period 1987-2008, Australia's labour market has remained highly sex-segregated by occupation and industry. More than half of South Australian women are employed in just three occupations - lower level occupations at that.

The overall concentration of women in feminised occupations has fallen a little in the past 20 years but remains very disproportionate. Women are moving into men's jobs at a snail's pace across Australia, and South Australia reflects the national trends.

Men are less concentrated in male-dominated occupations. However, over the past 20 years men's concentration in male-dominated jobs has actually increased slightly, rather than fallen. Once again, South Australia replicates the national trend. There are also indications that Australian women are not increasing their share of higher level leadership in private sector positions, so that vertical segregation is also increasing rather than in decline.

To summarise, women are slowly increasing their entry to male-dominated occupations, but men are not entering women's jobs very much. There are few signs of change in the training pipeline with the proportion of engineers and engineering trades persons, for example, remaining very male-dominated, and women are not finding their way into senior leadership in greater numbers in the private sector.

Flexibility at work

Nowadays, on any day of the week four in ten people at work in Australia have responsibility for the care of another person. Key workplace provisions assisting workers to balance work and family include flexible working hours and employer-provided leave. However, across Australia, basic provisions like having a say over start and finish times are

not generally accessible to the majority: sixty percent of women and men lacked any such say in 2007.

Many Australian workers have limited 'employee-centred' flexibility. Almost half of employees say that they have low flexibility in their jobs. Low flexibility is strongly associated with poorer work life outcomes. Women (both part-time and full-time) appear to have less flexibility than men: it seems that those who need it most have it least.

Leave

Access to paid leave is essential to achieving any form of personal work-life balance, and to the reconciliation of work and household life. In Australia in 2007 40 per cent of all Australian employees had access to the most common forms of paid leave (including paid holiday, sick, long service and parental leave). Most do not. Women have less access than men.

More than a quarter of Australians do not get a paid holiday and the same proportion also lack paid sick leave. Leave availability is also very affected by industry, occupation, sector and form of employment. Part-timers have much less access: in 2007, 52.1 per cent of part-time workers had no leave entitlements compared to 9.4 per cent of full-timers. Work pressures prevent many workers from making use of their formal leave rights.

Unpaid work and care

Domestic work, unpaid childcare and other forms of care are of vital significance in the working lives and well-being of women. Men's and women's unequal contributions to unpaid work and childcare have remained consistent for the past decade and a half. In 2006, women contributed on average around double men's hours to domestic work and childcare (27 hours a week compared to 14).

Childcare

Childcare is a critical issue affecting the participation of many women. Despite increases in childcare provision, Australia under-invests in early childhood education and care relative to many OECD countries. Unmet demand and cost are also important issues. Many Australian families face particular difficulties when a child is sick.

Time pressure and work-life outcomes

Time pressures affect many Australian workers. Almost half of all employees in 2007 felt often or always rushed and pressed for time. One in four working women *always* feel rushed and pressed for time.

More women feel this pressure than men. There is little difference between casual and permanent women on this. The main reason employed people feel rushed and pressed for time is work and family responsibilities

Many Australians are affected by work-life spillover. In 2008, a quarter felt that work interfered with time with family and friends often or almost always. This draws attention to the effects of work-life pressures, not only on individuals, but on family and friendship networks.

South Australians are slightly less likely to report frequent negative spillover from work to life. Around 4 per cent to 6 per cent more employees experience frequent negative spillover nationally compared to South Australian residents and around 3 per cent more South Australian residents are satisfied with their work-life balance compared to the Australian average. Nonetheless work and life pressures affect many South Australians.

Negative work-life spillover is more common for those working in unsupportive work

cultures, feeling overloaded at work, doing long hours, working regular evening/night work, lacking employee-centred flexibility or experiencing a poor fit between their actual and preferred working hours.

What to do?

Some issues affecting women's employment are long-lived, long-recognised and persistent, like the gender pay gap and job segregation. Others are growing in significance and recognition, including a gender earnings gap in retirement, the poor quality of part-time work, work-life pressures and time poverty, and men's unchanging contributions to unpaid domestic work and care.

On the positive side work-life pressures are less pronounced in South Australia.

However, South Australia lags behind other states and other countries in terms of women's participation in paid work. Some women want to work who do not at present and others would like to work more if they could. Labour market projections foreshadow shortages of labour in South Australia in the coming decade. While the global financial crisis is likely to defer such shortages, they may well return in future years. These prospective shortages are national in character and addressing them requires a national as well as a state strategy that encompasses attention to tax/benefits arrangements, child care, leave arrangements and retirement earnings.

Recent reports look to women's under-participation in paid work as part of the long term solution to future labour shortages that are associated with an aging population. If this goal is to be reconciled with the state's strategic goals of increasing work-life balance and the well-being of citizens (including women, children and other dependents) then – as international agencies like the OECD increasingly recognise – the terms of work, and the terms under which work is combined with care over the life-cycle, need to change.

The state also faces challenges in relation to pay equity, the security of part-time work and occupational and industry segregation. Improving outcomes for women on each or any of these would be of great benefit to women's long term economic independence.

Introduction

This report provides an overview of women's employment in South Australia, set within national context. It has been prepared as background to contribute to a major initiative of the Premier's Council for Women. The Premier's Council for Women is working in association with the SafeWork SA Work-Life Balance Strategy on this issue.

As the OECD has recently noted, all governments want to enhance the well-being of workers and larger society, and to give citizens more choices in finding their preferred work and household arrangements over the life-cycle (OECD 2007: 12).

The past thirty years have seen very significant change in the work patterns of Australians. In South Australia, this has meant much greater participation of women in paid work across the life cycle and less participation by men. Women's jobs have characteristics that are often different from men's – in hours, pay, security, conditions – and they occur against the background of very different household and care responsibilities. This paper takes six aspects of participation in paid work – and adds the aspect of unpaid work - and considers the current situation against the background of the past three decades. These themes are:

1. Participation and hours of work
2. Skill and education
3. Wages
4. Sex segregation
5. Working conditions, carers and flexibility
6. Unpaid work and care
7. Work-life balance

This report makes a particular study of women's employment situation. There are also particular issues that affect men's labour market status, especially low skilled men. Some argue for a 'holistic' approach to analysis of labour market challenges rather than a sector-and/or gender-specific approach (Moskos 2007). However, given the very specific differences between women and men at work it is important to analyse their distinctiveness. That said, the experience of one sex inevitably shapes that of the other – most obviously in relation to hours of work, the distribution of unpaid work and care and the sex-segregation of jobs. Men's advantage constructs women's disadvantage (Eveline 1994). This is not to deny the very significant disadvantage that individual men and groups of men (especially the low skilled and low paid) suffer in the labour market. Distinctive gender experiences make consideration of both women's and men's work experience important. To this end, most of the analysis throughout this report compares men and women.

The relationship between work and the rest of life is a topic of increasing public discussion in South Australia and internationally (Warhurst 2008). The state strategic plan includes a number of goals that touch on this issue including goals to exceed the national economic and employment growth rates by 2014, to keep unemployment equal to or lower than the Australian average, maintain the birth rate, reduce the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal unemployment, reduce the use of government benefits, increase women's share of public sector executives as well as the participation of Aboriginal people in the public

sector. The state also aims to improve the quality of life of all South Australians through maintenance of a healthy work-life balance. The plan recognizes that quality of life is:

determined by a number of things, including education and employment opportunities, a healthy environment, a rich cultural life, and good health...Problems with balancing one's work and social life affect many South Australians due to an increased number of double income households and an increase in the population of older people who depend on their children for care. Promoting a culture and environment that strikes the right balance between work and other pursuits benefits health and well-being, and helps build stronger communities.

These strategic state goals give improvements in the working lives of women in South Australia particular public policy significance.

In many key respects, South Australian data closely parallels the Australian experience. In some cases, reliable state data is not available or is not easily accessible. For this reason, analysis through this report at times relies on national data alone. Wherever practically feasible, a comparison of South Australia with the national picture is offered.

Data sources

This report draws on pre-existing literature and analysis and undertakes new analysis of a range of sources including ABS data, the Household Income and Labour Dynamics Survey (HILDA) and the Australian Work and Life Index (AWALI).

The HILDA survey is managed by the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research (MIAESR), University of Melbourne. The HILDA project was initiated and funded by the Australian Government Department of Families, Communities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (FaCSIA). The findings and views reported in this paper are those of the author and should not be attributed to either FaCSIA or MIAESR.

AWALI is collected by the Centre for Work + Life at the University of South Australia and funded (2007-2010) by the University of South Australia, the Australian Research Council and the SA (SafeworkSA), Victorian and WA Governments, and the National Centre for Vocational Education and Training (see Pocock, Willams and Skinner 2007).

1. Participation and working hours

Women's role in economic activity has increased steadily in recent decades around the world. In terms of work, for most women this means employment as an employee. However, a significant number of women are taking up self-employment in one form or another. Table 1 shows that most women who work in Australia are employees. However, 10 percent of women in both Australia and South Australia are running their own businesses, and a further 2 per cent are contributing to family businesses, many of them farms.

Table 1 Employment type, Australia and South Australia Women 2006, (%)

| | Australia | SA |
|--|-----------|-------|
| Employee not owning business | 85.9 | 86.4 |
| Owner managers of incorporated enterprises | 4.5 | 3.5 |
| Owner managers of unincorporated enterprises | 6.7 | 7.2 |
| Contributing family workers | 1.9 | 1.9 |
| Not stated | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: 2006 Census

Women's participation as employees increased over the past three decades in Australia while men's has fallen. These changes have had major implications for fertility and household composition. As the OECD recently observed:

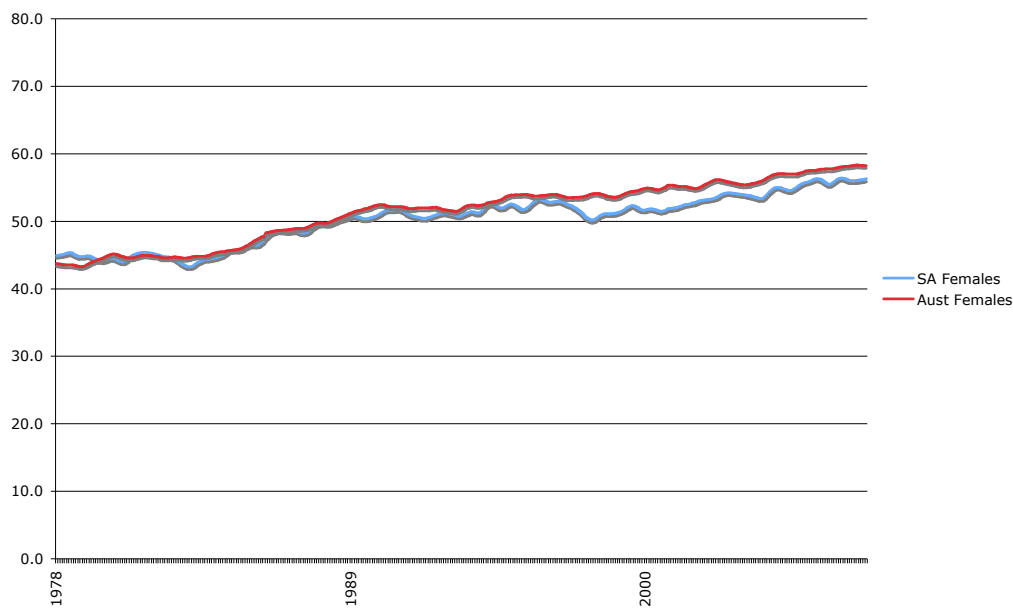
It all used to be so simple. The male breadwinner model involved a clear allocation of responsibilities and time: men spent their time at work providing family income, while women spent their time caring for children at home. However, with changing female aspirations and female labour market behaviour since the late 1960s, the single-breadwinner model has lost much of its relevance. Female employment rates have increased across the OECD, and nowadays only in a few countries, including Greece, Italy, Mexico, Spain and Turkey, are single-income couples nearly as common as dual-earner families. (OECD 2007: 15).

While this portrait is a simplification of reality – there were always working women in OECD countries, especially sole mothers – it captures one of the most significant labour force changes of the 20th Century: the feminisation of the labour force and the consequent change in household form.

In accord with this international change, participation in paid work has increased amongst South Australian women significantly over the past 30 years, while men's has fallen (Figure 1).

Figure 1 shows how the Australian participation rate for women has increased from 43.7 per cent in 1978 to 58.2 per cent in September 2008. In 1978, South Australian women had a higher rate of participation than the Australian average, but it began to fall behind in the 1980s and in September 2008 was 56.3 per cent compared to 58.2 per cent nationally. If South Australian women matched the national average, an additional 12,000 women would be in the state labour market.

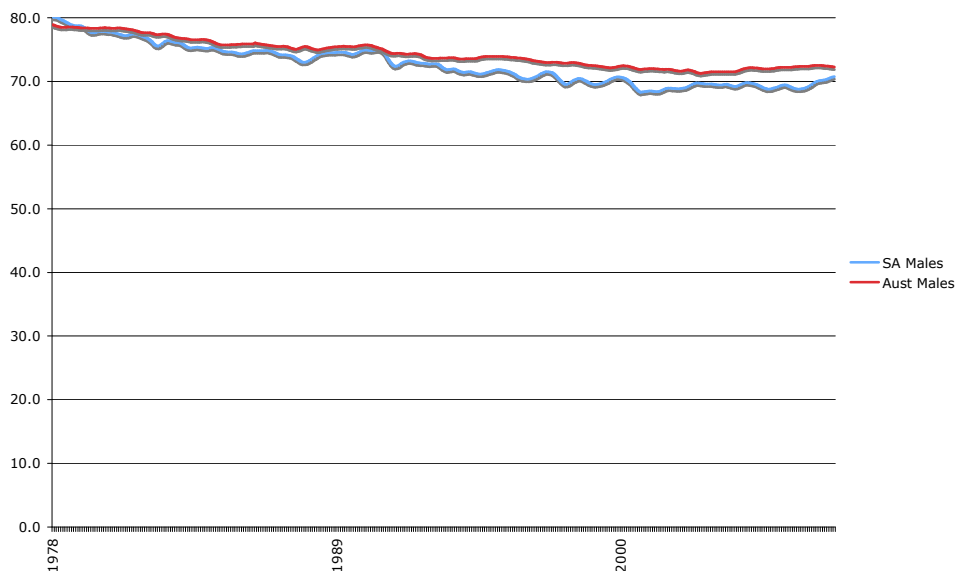
Figure 1 Female participation rates in Australia and South Australia, 1978-2008 (%)



Source: ABS Labour Force, Australia, Spreadsheets, Sep 2008. Cat No 6202.0.55.001

Men's participation has moved in the opposite direction as Figure 2 shows. Once again, despite beginning the period ahead of the national average, South Australian men now participate at a lower rate (70.7 per cent) than men nationally (72.3 per cent). If South Australian men participated at the national average there would be an additional 10,000 men in the labour market.

Figure 2 Male participation rates in Australia and South Australia, 1978-2008



Source: ABS Labour Force, Australia, Spreadsheets, Sep 2008. Cat No 6202.0.55.001

The effect of children

One of the most interesting characteristics of women's employment is the way in which it changes by age, and how this has shifted in recent years. Figure 3 illustrates this. Women's participation is lower than men's for most of the life course. Men's participation does not

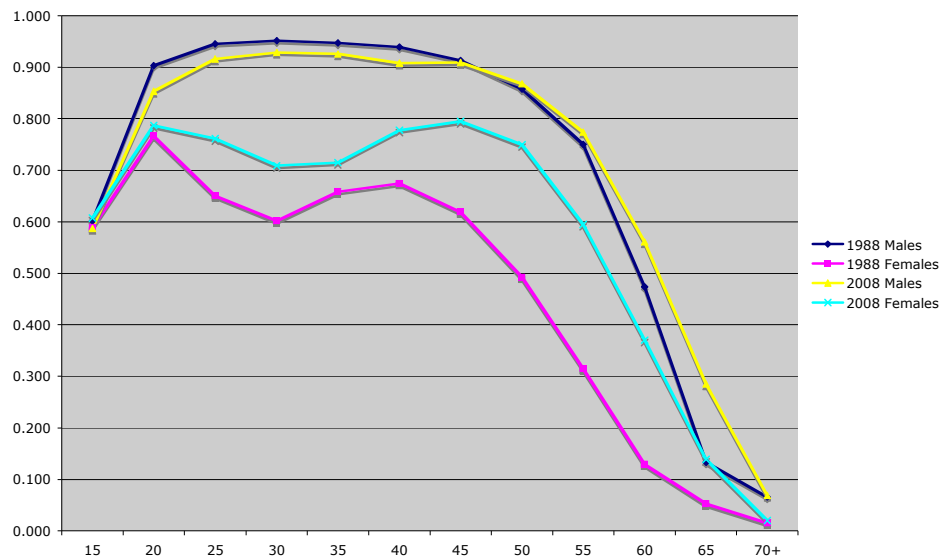
change in the prime years of family formation and parenting. However, there is an ‘M’ shape for women, reflecting their withdrawal from paid work as children arrive, while men have an inverted U shape over the life-course with persistent high participation from their 20s into their 50s.

Comparing 1988 with 2008, there is very little change for men. More of them are working into their mature years, but otherwise their participation over the life course remains very consistent, with little change in the childrearing years in both periods.

Women, however, show a major shift with a much shallower ‘M’ in 2008 than in 1988, reflecting the fact that the major change in their labour force participation has occurred. In 2008 they have much greater labour market participation from their 20s throughout their lives, with much less withdrawal from paid work in the childrearing years.

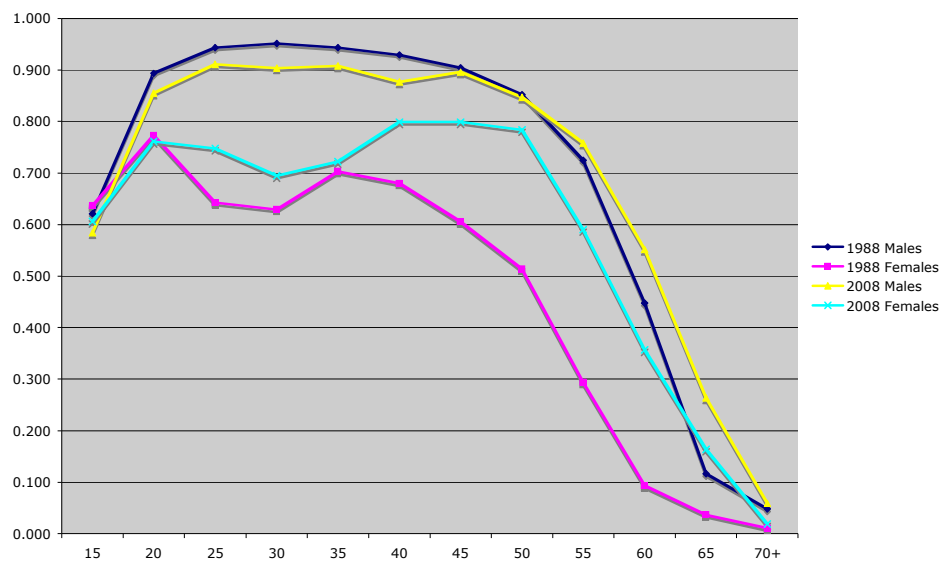
Figure 3 shows these patterns for all Australians and Figure 4 that for South Australia. South Australia reflects the national trends for both sexes.

Figure 3 Participation rates by age and sex, Australia 1988 and 2008



Source: ABS Labour Force, Australia, Spreadsheets, Sep 2008. Cat No 6202.0.55.001

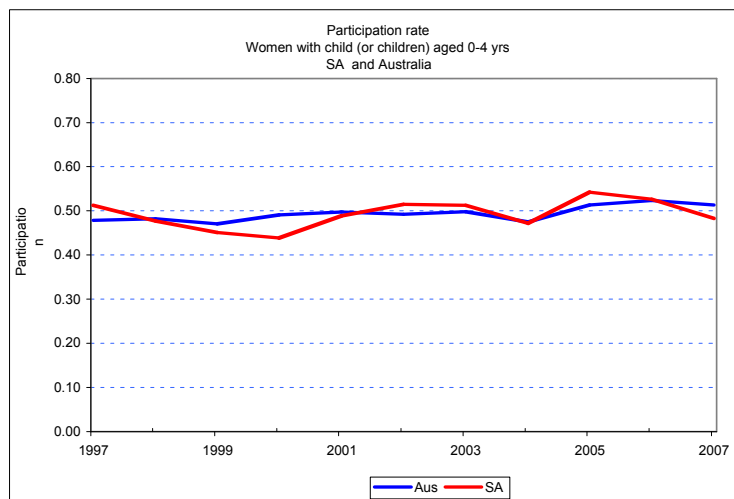
Figure 4 Participation rates by age and sex, South Australia 1988 and 2008



Source: ABS Labour Force, Australia, Spreadsheets, Sep 2008. Cat No 6202.0.55.001

Not surprisingly, the participation rate of women with a child under four years is lower than for women on average. Figure 5 shows that this effect is fairly comparable in both South Australia and Australia over the past decade.

Figure 5 Participation rates for women with children under four years, South Australia and Australia, 1997-2007



Source: ABS Labour Force, Australia, Spreadsheets, Sep 2008. Cat No 6202.0.55.001

The effect of children on women’s participation is much more marked in Australia (and South Australia) than in most OECD countries. The employment/population ratio of Australian mothers with a child under five was 48.3 per cent in 2005, much lower than in comparable countries like Canada, the US or the UK (see Table 2). The low participation rate for sole mothers in Australia is particularly striking.

Table 2 Employment to population ratios for women with young children, various countries, 2005

| | Child/woman | Employment to population ratio, 2005 | | |
|-------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| | | Youngest child<2 | Youngest child 3-5 | Sole parent |
| Australia | 1.81 | 48.3* | 48.3* | 49.9 |
| Canada | 1.53 | 58.7 | 68 | 67.6 |
| France | 1.94 | 53.7 | 63.8 | 70.1 |
| Netherlands | 1.73 | 69.4 | 68.3 | 56.9 |
| Sweden | 1.77 | 71.9 | 81.3 | 81.9 |
| UK | 1.8 | 52.6 | 58.3 | 56.2 |
| US | 2.05 | 54.2 | 62.8 | 73.8 |
| OECD | 1.63 | | | 70.6 |

Source: OECD 2007:16. *Australian data is the average for ages 0-5

It is interesting to note that the relationship between female labour market participation and fertility has changed dramatically since 1980. The OECD analysis of the relationship between female employment rates and fertility reveals that ‘in 1980 there was a clear negative correlation between female employment and fertility rates, while in 2005, OECD countries with higher rates of female employment also had relatively high fertility rates’ (OECD 2007: 35-36). While the relationship varies between countries there is no longer an inverse relationship between having a job and having children. Instead, the two move in positive correlation, especially where supports like child care, parental leaves and appropriate tax/benefit policies are in place (OECD 2007, Jaumotte 2005).

Employment and household structures

The greater entry of women into paid work in Australia in recent decades has reshaped household forms in Australia, with significant growth in dual earner and sole parent/worker households (Table 3). In 2006 only 32.6 per cent of all couple households where at least one person is in the labour force had a breadwinner shape (i.e. one earner). The remaining two-thirds were dual earner households. Many of these were ‘one-and-a-half’ earner households: 27.0 per cent of all couple households (with at least one person in the labour force) had this shape.

Amongst couple households with children, 35.6 per cent were breadwinner households while the remainder were dual earner households. The proportion of breadwinner households is lower in South Australia than nationally: 29.0 per cent compared to 32.6 per cent).

Table 3 Family composition and labour force status of parents/partners for all households where at least one person is in the labour force, South Australia and Australia 2006

| Household type | Australia 2006 | | SA 2006 | |
|--|------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| | Number | % | Number | % |
| Couple family with no children, of which: | 1,021,725 | 30.4% | 91,774 | 33.3% |
| Both employed, full-time(d) | 416,173 | 12.4% | 34,284 | 12.4% |
| Both employed, part-time | 53,767 | 1.6% | 5,611 | 2.0% |
| One employed full-time(d), one part-time | 209,547 | 6.2% | 21,570 | 7.8% |
| One employed, one away from work(e) | 45,333 | 1.4% | 3,949 | 1.4% |
| One employed full-time(d), one not working(f) | 172,869 | 5.2% | 14,414 | 5.2% |
| One employed part-time, one not working(f) | 21,775 | 0.6% | 8,735 | 3.2% |
| One away from work(e), one not working(f) | 81,895 | 2.4% | 1,752 | 0.6% |
| Both employed, away from work(e) | 20,366 | 0.6% | 1,459 | 0.5% |
| Couple family with children, of which | 1,931,868 | 57.6% | 146,427 | 53.1% |
| Both employed, full-time(d) | 448,624 | 13.4% | 32,308 | 11.7% |
| Both employed, part-time | 73,173 | 2.2% | 6,245 | 2.3% |
| One employed full-time(d), one part-time | 598,555 | 17.8% | 53,465 | 19.4% |
| One employed, one away from work(e) | 94,850 | 2.8% | 8,005 | 2.9% |
| One employed full-time(d), one not working(f) | 518,127 | 15.4% | 32,916 | 11.9% |
| One employed part-time, one not working(f) | 118,305 | 3.5% | 8,219 | 3.0% |
| One away from work(e), one not working(f) | 50,773 | 1.5% | 3,092 | 1.1% |
| Both employed, away from work(e) | 29,461 | 0.9% | 2,177 | 0.8% |
| One parent family, of which: | 402,861 | 12.0% | 37,363 | 13.6% |
| Employed full-time(d) | 181,877 | 5.4% | 16,655 | 6.0% |
| Employed part-time | 146,423 | 4.4% | 15,270 | 5.5% |
| Employed, away from work(e) | 21,964 | 0.7% | 1,958 | 0.7% |
| Unemployed | 52,597 | 1.6% | 3,480 | 1.3% |
| Total | 3,356,454 | 100.0% | 275,564 | 100.0% |

Source: ABS Census 2006. Table excludes all households where no adult is working.

(d) 'Employed, worked full-time' is defined as having worked 35 hours or more in all jobs during the week prior to Census Night.

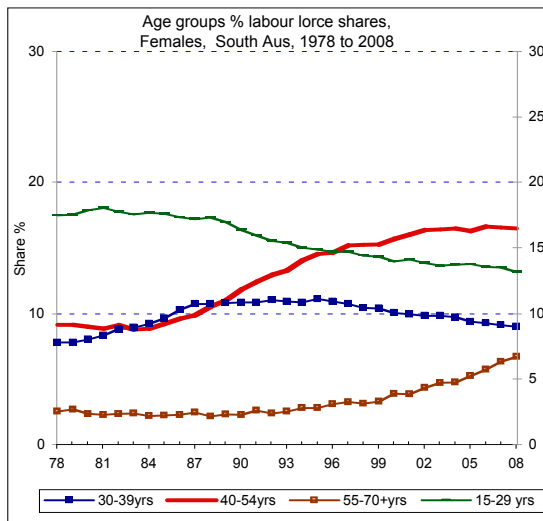
(e) Comprises employed persons who did not work any hours in the week prior to Census Night or who did not state their number of hours worked.

(f) Includes families where one partner was employed and the other was unemployed or not in the labour force.

Participation and age

How is the composition of the labour force changing by age in South Australia? Figure 6 shows this for men and women, illustrating how women 40+ years have increased their share of employees relative to other groups. A similar shift is also evident – to a lesser extent – amongst men.

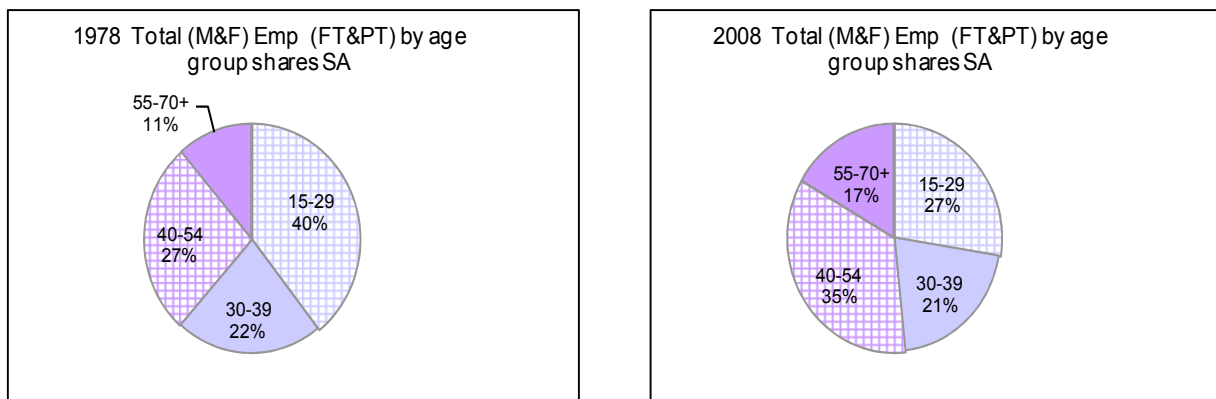
Figure 6 Proportion of labour force by age group, SA 1978-2008



Source: ABS Labour Force, Australia, Spreadsheets, Sep 2008. Cat No 6202.0.55.001

An alternative way of viewing this change between 1978 and 2008 is shown in the two cross-sectional age profiles for workers in South Australia in **Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference.** below.

Figure 7 Proportion of South Australian labour market by age 1978 and 2008



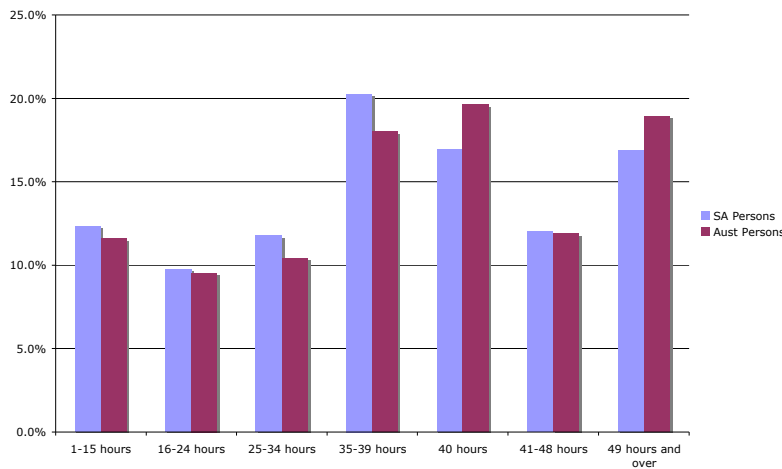
Hours of work: growth in long hours, short hours

Hours of work have shown very significant change in Australia in the past two decades with rapid growth in those working both shorter and longer hours. While a large number of Australians work around the old standard of between 35 and 48 hours, many now do not. These changes are highly gendered, with men increasing average working hours and women decreasing them. Each of these patterns is distinctive in international comparison. With respect to long hours the number of hours worked is higher than in ‘most other western countries’ (Headey and Warren 2008: 80, OECD 2007: 172-173). When it comes to part-time work, many more Australian women work shorter hours than women in other OECD countries.

In the week of the most recent census in 2006, almost one in five Australians worked 48 hours or more (16.9 per cent in South Australia) (Figure 8). Australian men in particular

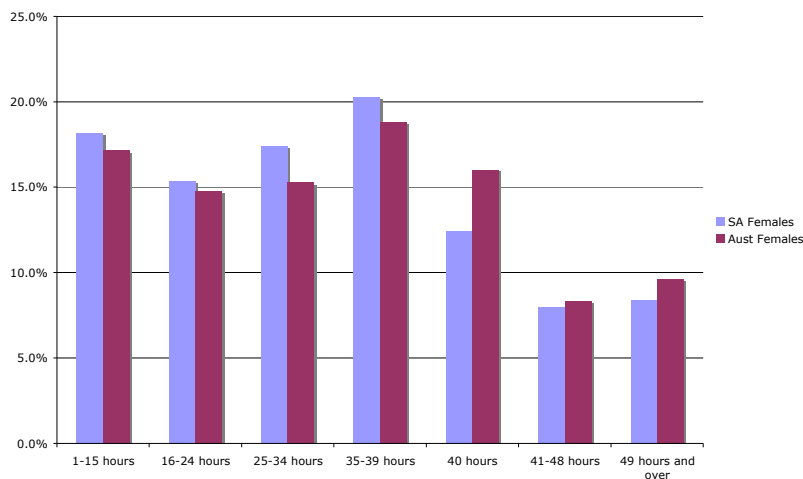
increasingly work long hours while women are less likely to: Figure 9 compares women in South Australia and nationally showing how women in the state are more likely to work part-time and less likely to work long hours compared to the national averages.

Figure 8 Hours worked in South Australia and Australia 2006, Persons



Source: 2006 Census

Figure 9 Hours worked in South Australia and Australia 2006, women



Source: 2006 Census

South Australians are slightly less likely to work long hours and slightly more likely to work shorter hours than the Australian average. The costs of long working hours on workers have been widely documented (Spurgeon 2003). They also exact a cost for families: ‘Workplace cultures which involve long-working hours can cause stress in the home life of their employees’ (OECD 2007: 176). Long hours are widespread in Australian workplaces. Amongst the 2008 AWALI respondents, 31.7 per cent of men and 11.9 per cent of women usually worked 48 hours or more. Analysis of how these long hours affect workers shows that those who do long hours have much worse work-life outcomes than those who do not: their scores on the AWALI composite measure of work life outcomes are significantly worse. On the other hand, work-life outcomes for those working shorter hours are better than average. However, the negative effects of long hours on work-life outcomes are much larger than the protective benefits arising from working part-time. (Pocock, Skinner and

Williams 2007; Skinner and Pocock 2008)

The fit between preferred and actual hours of work

Different data sources suggest that many Australians do not work their preferred hours. The most reliable large survey is provided by the ABS's survey of employment arrangements, retirement and superannuation (SEAS) survey. This shows that in 2007 a third of employed persons (including employees and owner managers) are not working their preferred hours: 22.2 per cent would like to work less hours and 13.2 per cent would like to work more (Table 1 ABS 2008: 34). Not surprisingly, more casual workers (29.0 per cent) seek more hours than permanents, while more permanents (22.9 per cent) seek fewer hours.

Table 4 Employees' preferred working hours by sex Australia 2007 (%)

| | Male employees | Female employees | All employees |
|-----------------------------|----------------|------------------|---------------|
| Prefer more hours | 14.3% | 14.9% | 14.6% |
| Prefer fewer hours | 19.4% | 18.5% | 19.0% |
| Prefer actual/current hours | 66.3% | 66.6% | 66.4% |

Source: ABS Employment arrangements, retirement and superannuation Cat. No. 6361.0

The AWALI survey data gives a higher estimate of hours mismatches, probably reflecting its higher proportion of professional and managerial workers than in the actual workforce. Analysis of AWALI in 2008 shows that those who are not working their preferred hours (to within half a day) have much poorer work-life outcomes. Long hours are especially damaging when they are reluctantly worked.

The HILDA survey in 2002 and 2004 found that 'around 40 to 45% of employed [people] were not working their preferred hours' (Headey and Warren 2008: 80). While some moved closer to their preferences in subsequent years, this was much less likely for those working long hours: of prime aged workers (25-55 years) who were working full-time in 2001 and preferred fewer hours, 51 per cent of men and 43.6 per cent of women were still in the same situation in 2005 (Headey and Warren 2008: 80).

Analysis of AWALI results shows that work-life interference is high amongst people who do not have a good match between their preferred and their actual hours of work. It seems that many workers who work long hours are in this situation for extended periods of time: it seems that their preference to work less is weak in the face of workplace cultures that demand long hours.

Part-time participation

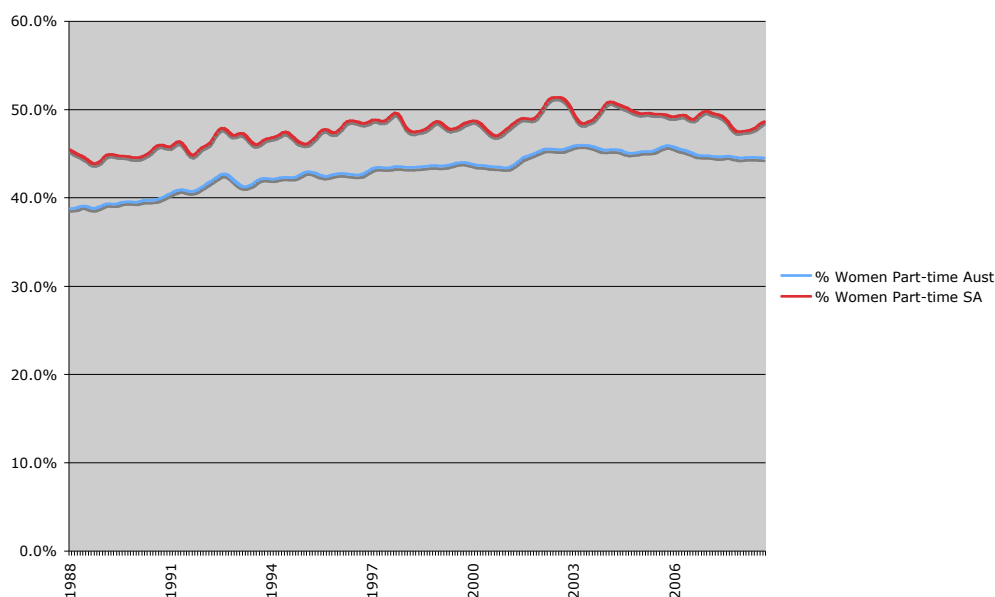
Working women in Australia are much more likely to work part-time than women in many other countries: in 2006, 27.1 per cent of Australian workers were employed for 30 hours or less per week, compared to 16.1 per cent in the OECD as a whole (OECD 2007).

In South Australia, the proportion of women working part-time has consistently been above the national average for the past 20 years as Figure 10 shows. In September 2008, 48.6 per cent of South Australian women workers worked part-time compared to 44.5 per cent nationally. There is little difference for men: 14.7 per cent across Australia and 15.9 in South Australia in September 2008.

While women's share of all part-timers has fallen a little over the past decade (Figure 11) as men's share has risen a little, women in both South Australia and Australia have consistently made up nearly three-quarters of all part-timers. Like its share of the

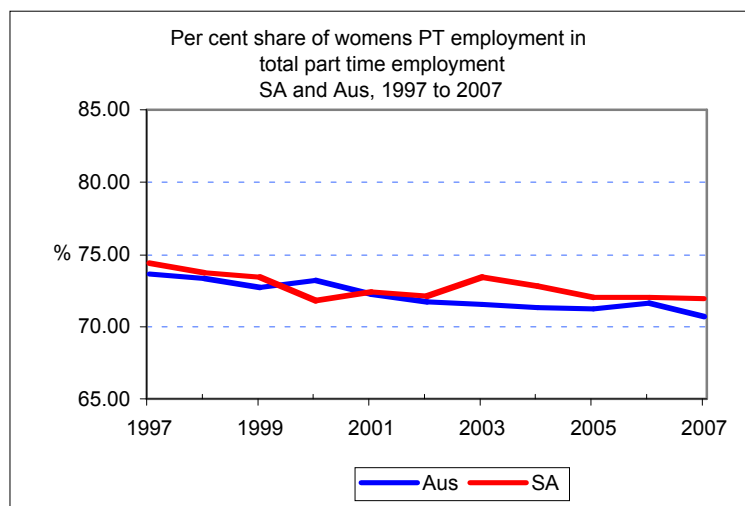
workforce, the characteristics of part-time work in Australia are distinctive. Part-time jobs are more precarious, lower paid and have on average poorer conditions like access to training and leave. The majority of part-time jobs in Australia are casual.

Figure 10 Percent of South Australian and Australian women working part-time 1988-2008



Source: ABS Labour Force, Australia, Spreadsheets, Sep 2008. Cat No 6202.0.55.001

Figure 11 Percent of women working part-time as proportion of total labour force, South Australia and Australia 1997-2008



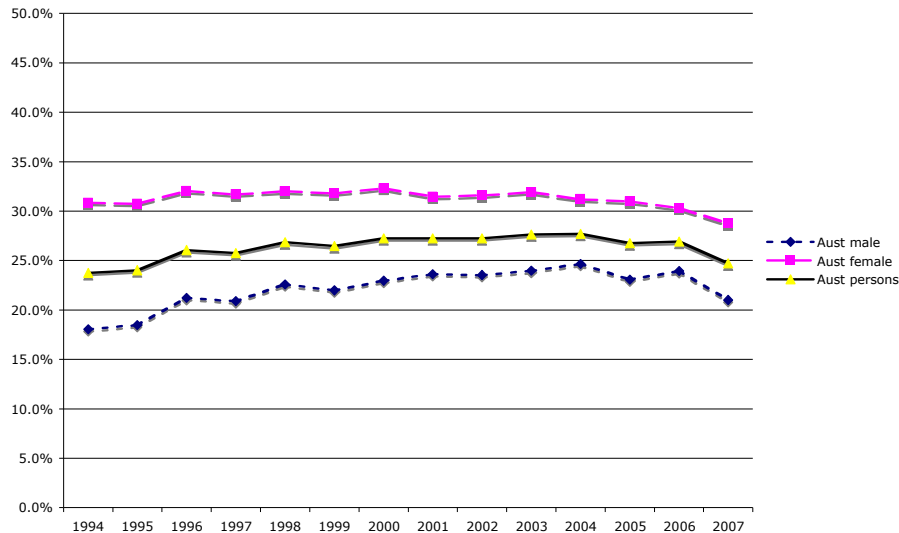
Source: ABS Labour Force, Australia, Spreadsheets, Sep 2008. Cat No 6202.0.55.001

Form of employment

Australia has seen a high level of casual employment for the past twenty years. Figure 12 and Figure 13 show this for Australia and then South Australia, indicating that the proportion of all employees who lack leave entitlements (the best and most widely used proxy for working on casual terms) has hovered around 25 per cent across Australia since 1994. In 2007, 25.4 per cent of all employees were casual across Australia, the rate virtually unchanged from 2000 (ABS 2008). However, it is higher than this at about 30 per cent in South Australia.

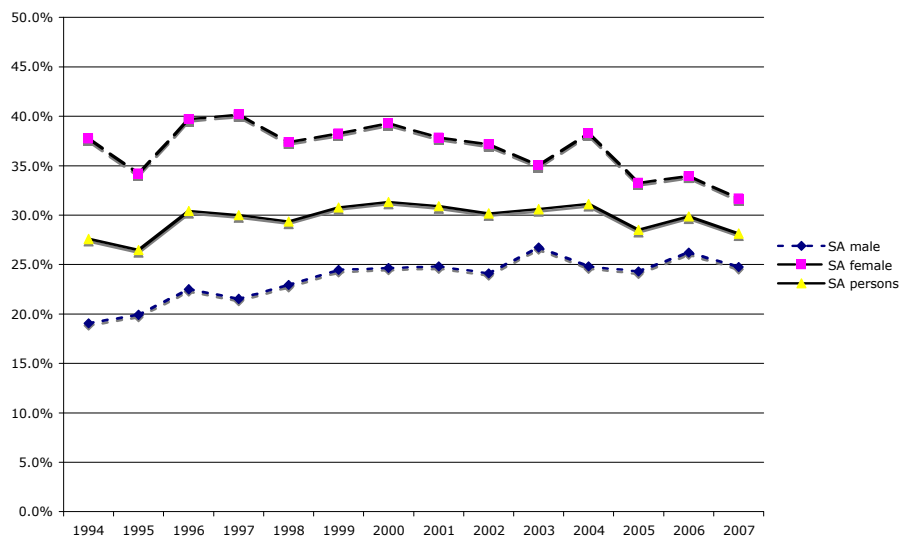
The proportion of women employed casually is higher than amongst men, reflecting their concentration in part-time work. Since 2005 there has been a slight decline in casual employment nationally and in South Australia. In South Australia, this decline has been mostly amongst women.

Figure 12 The proportion of employees who are casually employed, Australia 1994-2007



Source: Source: ABS Cat. No. 6361.0 - Employment Arrangements, Retirement and Superannuation, Australia.

Figure 13 The proportion of employees who are casually employed, South Australia 1994-2007



Source: Source: ABS Cat. No. 6361.0 - Employment Arrangements, Retirement and Superannuation, Australia Casual is defined as employees who lack entitlements to either paid sick leave or paid holidays.

Working from home

In recent years there has been considerable interest in the possibility of working some hours of work from home, and the potential that this spatial flexibility can give workers to reconcile work and family. Some companies are moving to allow more workers to do some work from home, for example IBM and some financial institutions. In 2007, 31.5 per cent of all employed people usually worked at least some hours from home. Interestingly, this

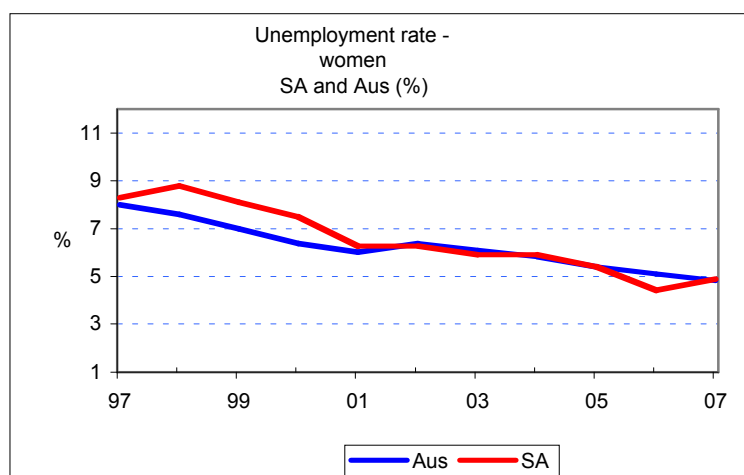
has barely changed from 2000. Most worked from home for 15 hours or less per week. Only 5 per cent of all employed persons worked all hours from home (ABS 2008: 6).

The incidence was much higher amongst those running their own businesses, but a quarter of employees in 2007 (24.2 per cent) usually worked some hours from home, up very slightly from 23.8 per cent in 2000. Permanent workers are much more likely to do this than casuals. The most commonly reported main reasons for doing this ‘was to catch up on work or to meet deadlines’: 60.1 per cent of respondents gave this as their reason (58.7 per cent in 2000) (ABS 2008: 110). Only 5.4 per cent said they worked from home for ‘control over work-life issues/pursue their own ideas’. These results suggest that working from home in Australia is more about catching up on work, probably working extra hours, than on shifting core work activities (and core contracted hours) to home. Further, we do not appear to be seeing significant increases in the proportion of workers who work from home, although one in four now do so regularly at least some of the time.

Unemployment and under-employment

Up until December 2008, official measures of unemployment fell amongst both women and men in Australia for the past decade, with South Australia mirroring national trends for the most part (Figure 14). Women and men’s rates of official unemployment do not vary widely. Nationally, women’s official unemployment rate tended to be lower than men’s from the early 1990s through to 2003; since then it has been slightly higher (by less than a percentage point). In December 2008 the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for women was 4.5 per cent (4.4 per cent for men) (ABS cat no 6202.0). In South Australia the rate for women was 5.7 per cent (4.9 for men).

Figure 14 Unemployment rate, South Australian and Australian women 1997-2008

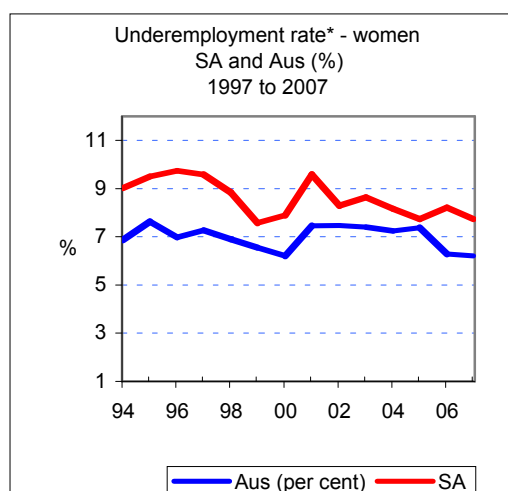


Source: ABS Labour Force

However, official unemployment measures only part of total labour underutilisation. The ABS provide further measures including a head count of the underemployed (defined as those who would like to work more hours). In 2007, 7.7 per cent of South Australian part-time women would have liked more hours – the highest proportion in the country (6.2 per cent nationally). The gap is much narrower, and underemployment much lower, amongst men

Figure 15 shows that underemployment has fallen a little in South Australia since 1994, though it remains persistently above the national average by 1-2 percentage points.

Figure 15 Underemployment rate South Australian and Australian women 1997-2008



Source: ABS Labour Force Cat. no. 6202.0

The ABS combines further measures of underemployment to arrive at an extended labour force underutilisation rate (which includes the unemployed, the underemployed and two groups of persons marginally attached to the labour force: persons actively looking for work, not available to start work in the reference week, but available to start work within four weeks, and those who want to work, and are available to start work within the next four weeks but are not actively looking for work, because they are discouraged).

South Australia has a higher rate of overall underutilisation amongst both men and women than all other states. In 2007, the extended labour force underutilisation rate was 13.5 per cent amongst women in SA (12.2 per cent nationally) and 9.5 per cent amongst men (8.0 per cent nationally).

Taking various kinds of underutilisation into account, in 2007 around 108,200 South Australian women would have liked to increase their hours of work or enter the labour market (Table 5) (ABS, 2007). This compared to 63,600 men. There is real potential to draw more women into paid work in the state in accord with women’s own preferences.

Table 5 Number of men and women who would like to increase participation, 2006-2007 (000s)

| | SA females | SA males | Australia males | Aust females |
|---|------------|----------|-----------------|--------------|
| Persons not in the labour force who wanted a paid job | 73.9 | 40.8 | 640.3 | 1007.1 |
| Persons who usually worked 0–15 hours, and preferred to work more hours | 34.3 | 22.8 | 172.8 | 273 |
| Total who want work or more work | 108.2 | 63.6 | 813.1 | 1280.1 |

Source: ABS cat no 6239.0 Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation, Australia, Jul 2006 to Jun 2007

Clearly there is greater scope for increasing the participation in the workforce of South Australian women who want work, or want more work than they currently have.

Available ABS labour force survey data, however, only allows a partial understanding of why aspirations for employment are not currently being met. This data suggests that skills and experience are crucial to the employment prospects of unemployed persons, with 46 percent of unemployed people considering that the main barriers they faced in securing employment were lacking the necessary skills and experience and/or insufficient vacancies for people with their skill level (ABS, cat. no. 6222.0, Job Search Experience, Australia, Jul

2006).

However, findings from a recent South Australian study (Moskos 2007), involving in-depth interviews with 109 people who were not participating or were under-participating in paid employment, allows us a more comprehensive understanding of the reasons why aspirations for employment are not currently being met.

This research found that those currently marginal to the workforce experience numerous and multiple barriers to employment. Moreover the research shows that, individual barriers, such as lacking necessary formal education, having significant caring responsibilities, being of older or younger ages or suffering from ill health and or a disability, do not operate independent from one another but interact with each other in ways that compound labour market disadvantage.

The report concludes by discussing the implications these findings have for policy and labour market program development. The author suggests that any effective initiative aimed to increase workforce participation of groups currently marginal to the workforce needs to include the (affordable) opportunity for further training and or skill development as well as incorporate self development models and a case management approach to ensure that the individual is able to deal with personal aspects of life that pose barriers to employment at the same time as they undertake training.

Interestingly, these same principles for improving the effectiveness of strategies to increase workforce participation, have more recently been found to be integral components of successful employment programs in South Australia (O'Neil & Kosturjak 2008).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participation

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in Australia (and South Australia) is much lower than for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians of both sexes and their unemployment rate is several times higher (Table 6). Obviously employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are an important labour market challenge in South Australia, especially in light of high regional concentrations of unemployment.

Table 6 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander unemployment rates, Australia and South Australia 2006

| | Australia | South Australia |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| | Males | |
| 15-24 years | 22.3% | 22.9% |
| 25-34 years | 15.9% | 17.7% |
| 35-44 years | 13.7% | 18.1% |
| 45-54 years | 9.7% | 8.7% |
| 55-64 years | 8.5% | 5.5% |
| 65 years and over | 7.2% | 5.9% |
| Total | 15.7% | 17.1% |
| | Females | |
| 15-24 years | 22.4% | 21.7% |
| 25-34 years | 15.6% | 15.8% |
| 35-44 years | 13.2% | 12.2% |
| 45-54 years | 9.7% | 8.5% |
| 55-64 years | 7.5% | 8.3% |
| 65 years and over | 10.1% | 7.9% |
| Total | 15.4% | 14.7% |

| | Persons | |
|-------------------|---------|-------|
| 15-24 years | 22.4% | 22.3% |
| 25-34 years | 15.8% | 16.8% |
| 35-44 years | 13.5% | 15.1% |
| 45-54 years | 9.7% | 8.6% |
| 55-64 years | 8.1% | 6.9% |
| 65 years and over | 8.5% | 6.7% |
| Total | 15.6% | 16.0% |

Source: Census 2006

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment is also highly segmented, with half of all Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (and 30 per cent of men) employed in three industry categories (public administration and safety, education and health care and social assistance) at the time of the 2006 census. Forty-three per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women were employed in just two occupations: community and personal service workers and clerical and administrative workers.

In terms of education, the difficulties facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are well documented. They affect both women and men severely. In 2001, 31 per cent of non-remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women had an educational attainment level of year 8 or lower (37 per cent of men) compared to 12 per cent of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian women and men. The rates are even higher amongst those who live remotely. The gap on post school qualifications is also very wide, with 5.6 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women having a degree (13.8 per cent of men), around a third of the level for non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

Participation amongst culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) Australians

There are also distinctive aspects of the work participation of CALD Australians. It seems that most of these relate to entry to paid work: non-English speaking background (NESB) male and female immigrants have much lower participation rates and higher unemployment rates than other immigrants or native born Australians. However, recent analysis of HILDA data suggests that once in employment, NESB immigrants do not fare very differently from others in terms of pay rates (Wilkins 2008).

Scope for meeting labour shortages through greater female participation

In recent years, a number of commentators have drawn attention to the scope for meeting future labour shortages arising from the aging of the population through greater labour market participation by women (COAG 2006, EOWA 2008, Keating 2008). Prior to the onset of the global financial crisis, Keating estimated that over the coming decade South Australia will require an additional 133,000 workers to work on the projected \$45 billion of planned projects, with a further 206,000 required to replace those leaving their occupation or paid work altogether. Keating proposed that in order to meet the labour shortages expected to take effect from 2009, South Australia should aim to increase female participation rates from around 53 per cent to 61.1 per cent by 2017/18 (Keating 2008: 35).

There is certainly scope for increasing women's participation in South Australia, relative to Australia (i.e. the entry into work of women who are not currently in paid work), to

increase hours worked by part-timers and to encourage discouraged job-seekers to enter work.

There is also scope for increases beyond the national Australian participation rates, given how much higher such rates are in comparable industrialised countries (see Table 7).

Table 7 Female participation rates, various countries, 2004-2006 (%)

| Country | Participation rate |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Australia | 57.2 |
| Canada | 62.1 |
| New Zealand | 60.6 |
| Papua New Guinea | 71.3 |
| Sweden | 76.1 |
| United States of America | 59.4 |
| Viet Nam | 67.6 |

Source: ABS cat no 4102.0 Australian Social Trends - Data Cube, 2008. Years: 2004-2006

International studies suggest that labour market participation rates are high in countries like those in Scandinavia because of generous subsidies for child care, significant child benefits, generous parental leave, the same tax treatment of the earnings of ‘first’ and ‘second’ earners’ wages, education and skill development for women, and cultures that support women (and mothers) working (Jaumotte, 2005: 2). Jaumotte’s analysis cites the simultaneous high rates of part-time work and low rates of female participation in Japan and Australia as a result of ‘lower levels of support for families with young children’.

Clearly, increasing South Australia’s labour market participation by 8 percentage points, or over 30,000 women from its September 2008 level – as Keating recommends - would require a significant new suite of policies that touch on education and child care at state level, as well as national tax and family support settings, and the cultural values that surround the employment of women and mothers in Australia.

2. Skill, education and training

Most net new employment in South Australia is amongst higher skilled jobs. For example, between 1994 and 2006, 46 per cent of new net job growth was in occupations with a level of skill at degree level or above, leading Moskos to conclude:

The trend towards increased demand for high skilled workers seems likely to continue in the future, with projections for South Australia showing that employment growth over the next 15 years will continue to be strongest for professionals and associate professionals (Moskos 2007: 21).

This makes increased access to skills and qualifications vitally important to women’s employment and their lifetime careers and work patterns. However, it is not a question only of increasing qualifications amongst women, but ensuring that these skills are appropriately employed and rewarded and that the labour market is appropriately and fairly structured. Issues related to the terms and conditions of employment (whether casual or permanent, low or high paid, part-time or full-time) are very important as each of these significantly shapes both access to job training when in employment, and to the returns that accrue to skills and qualifications once they are secured. Women’s jobs need to reward the acquisition of skill if obtaining qualifications is to make sense.

Women have been energetically training

One of the most surprising results in the first five years (2001-2005) of HILDA data collection is the commitment of Australian workers to education and training (Headey and Warren 2008). More than a third of prime aged (25-54 years) women (or 35.7 per cent) and almost a third of similar men spent some time in education between 2001 and 2005. Their participation increased over the period: from 8.4 per cent in 2001 to 10.5 per cent in 2005 amongst women and from 7.5 to 10.3 per cent amongst men.

In addition, almost three-quarters of women and men undertook some on the job training between 2001 and 2005.

Women have been energetically increasing their acquisition of skills and qualifications. Table 8 shows that in 2006 women made up more than half of those in the Australian (and South Australian) population with graduate diplomas, degrees and advanced diplomas.

Table 8 Proportion of all those with qualifications that were women, Australia and South Australia 2006 (%)

| | Aust 2006 | SA 2006 |
|---|-----------|---------|
| Postgraduate Degree | 42.9 | 41.9 |
| Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate | 62.9 | 62.5 |
| Bachelor Degree | 55.1 | 55.9 |
| Advanced Diploma and Diploma | 57.5 | 55.8 |
| Certificate: | | |
| Certificate nfd | 65.5 | 61.0 |
| Certificate III & IV | 25.8 | 27.0 |
| Certificate I & II | 66.3 | 62.8 |
| Total | 32.5 | 33.0 |
| Level of education inadequately described | 56.6 | 55.4 |
| Level of education not stated | 52.3 | 52.8 |
| Total | 47.2 | 46.7 |

Source: Census 2006

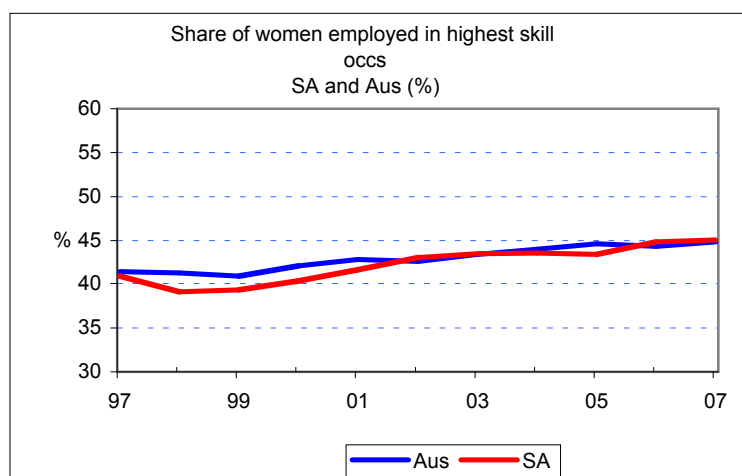
Between 1996 and 2006, the proportion of women with post graduate degrees, bachelor's degrees and certificates increased significantly (Table 9). Figure 16 shows that this has contributed to growth in the proportion of women, both in South Australia and nationally, who are employed in higher skilled occupations.

Table 9 Percent of South Australian and Australian women with qualifications, as proportion of all women 1996-2006

| | Australia | | South Australia | |
|---|-----------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| | 1996 | 2006 | 1996 | 2006 |
| Postgraduate Degree | 2.5 | 4.5 | 1.9 | 3.5 |
| Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate | 4.4 | 3.6 | 3.9 | 3.6 |
| Bachelor Degree | 20.9 | 25.7 | 19.6 | 24.3 |
| Advanced Diploma and Diploma | 18.9 | 16.4 | 19.4 | 16.0 |
| Certificate | 17.7 | 21.9 | 20.7 | 25.2 |
| Level of education inadequately described | 3.0 | 3.4 | 2.4 | 3.2 |
| Level of education not stated | 32.6 | 24.5 | 32.0 | 24.2 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100 | 100.0 |

Source: Census

Figure 16 Share of women employed in highest skilled occupations South Australia and Australia 1997-2007



Source: Census

Does training and qualification pay fairly for women?

This investment in qualifications is not, however, mirrored in commensurate increases in earnings for women and men. Investment in education and skill has very gendered outcomes: it rewards men much better than women.

A large body of research confirms that around the world, women generally face poorer wage returns for education than men (Austen 2003; Karlin, England and Richardson 2002; Miller 2005). The Australian Bureau of Statistics noted in 2005 that ‘the earnings of males were higher than the earnings of females across all educational attainment categories’ (ABS 2005: 5). An Australian study of the differences between low-paid men and women estimates the education to earnings pay-off for low-paid men is 10 per cent higher than for low-paid women (Miller 2002: 413). Analysis of HILDA data (2001, Wave 1) shows 18 per cent of women with post-school qualifications are earning low wages, including 10 per cent of graduate women. The figures are lower for men at 14 per cent and 8 per cent respectively (Masterman-Smith and Pocock: 2008).

Recent multivariate analysis of HILDA data, investigating changes in earnings a few years after training, shows that ‘education courses taken in 2001 and 2002 contributed significantly to earnings increases gained by men but not by women’ (Headley and Warren 2008: 91). This analysis takes account of qualifications, age, education in earlier school years, years of work experience and health.

The same gendered results occur for skills-related job training after a one or two-year time lag:

The gains for men who undertook skills training remained statistically significant after ‘controlling for’ age, education and health. For women there was no significant difference in earnings increases between those who received skills training and those who did not. (Headley and Warren, 2008: 91).

There is no reason to expect better outcomes in South Australia compared to this national result. Indeed the reverse may be true as casual and part-time workers generally recoup lower wage returns for their skills and qualifications, and there are higher proportions of each of these amongst women in South Australia as we have seen.

Many women (and men) do not find their way into jobs that appropriately utilise their qualifications and skills.

This gendered picture is confirmed internationally, and it seems to be getting worse, not better. In the United Kingdom, the proportion of women graduates in low-level jobs, defined as those in the bottom 25 per cent of all jobs, ‘almost trebled, from 5 percent in 1995 to 13 percent in 2005’ (EOC 2007: 9). The UK Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) found that the combination of a poor rate of return on education for women and a ‘straining at the seams’ in trying to juggle work and care commitments are the main causes for this trend. The EOC report demonstrates that a good education is not necessarily sufficient for career and pay advancement in the face of their ongoing responsibilities for care and domestic work, inflexible public and workplace institutions, and gender pay inequities that sometimes severely under-reward traditionally feminised jobs and qualifications.

3. Wages

In May 2008 the gap in earnings between full-time women and men in the Australian labour market was 16 per cent (seasonally adjusted ordinary time earnings). This is equivalent to about \$10,000 a year (ABS cat no 6302). This gap varies from state to state. Western Australia has the widest gap, at 27 per cent or about \$15,000 a year.

Table 10 summarises the variation in the gender pay gaps across states in 1992 and 2007. There has been little movement in the gender pay gap over this period. However, there are state differences with widening gaps in South Australia, Western Australia and Victoria.

Table 10 Annual Average Weekly Ordinary Time Earnings Gender Wage Ratio (in Full-Time Employment) by States and Territories, 1992 and 2007 (%)

| | Aust | NSW | VIC | QLD | SA | WA | TAS | NT | ACT |
|-----------------------------|------|------|-------|------|-------|-------|------|------|------|
| Feb-92 | 83.7 | 82.4 | 84.7 | 83.2 | 90.6 | 81.2 | 84.4 | 81.3 | 82.6 |
| Aug-07 | 83.7 | 84.5 | 83.9 | 84.8 | 86.1 | 72.9 | 90.8 | 88.3 | 85.4 |
| Change 1992-07 (%-point) | 0.05 | 2.09 | -0.75 | 1.59 | -4.57 | -8.26 | 6.35 | 6.98 | 2.81 |

Source: ABS 6302.0. Seasonally adjusted Average Weekly Ordinary Time Earnings (AWOTE) from Preston and Jefferson (2007)

Preston (2003) has considered the complex reasons that underpin these differences. The public/private, industry and occupational composition of the workforce, and different methods of pay setting are all at work. In recent years wages growth in the public sector has outstripped that in the private sector and these increases have varied by sex (see Table 11).

Table 11 Average Weekly Total Earnings Growth of Adults Employed Full-Time, February 1992 to August 2007. (Seasonally Adjusted)

| | Public Sector | | Private Sector | |
|--------------------|---------------|---------|----------------|---------|
| | Females | Males | Females | Males |
| | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| Feb-92 | 593.40 | 684.70 | 495.40 | 654.20 |
| Aug-07 | 1129.20 | 1335.70 | 942.50 | 1217.50 |
| Rate of Growth (%) | 90.3 | 95.1 | 90.3 | 86.1 |

Source: Preston and Jefferson (2007), Table 5. Figures are based on ABS 6302.0 data.

Gender pay ratios also vary by industry, occupation and region. Gaps are especially wide at national level in the finance and insurance industry, and narrower in government

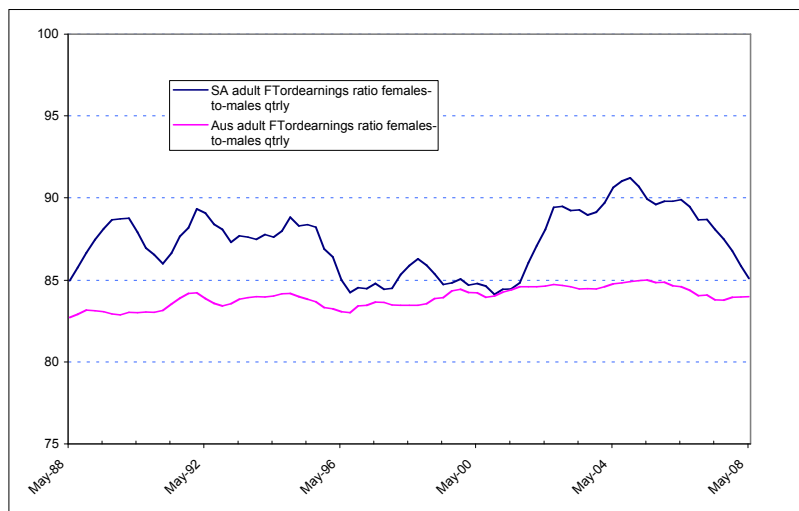
administration. It is also important to note that overall gender pay ratios are less meaningful as wage dispersion increases as has occurred in Australia in recent years. Significant variation between groups can be obscured by steady overall ratios.

The gender pay gap in South Australia - like the national ratio - has remained very resistant to improvement over the past twenty years. This flatness characterises various definitions of pay, including the ratio of ordinary time earnings of all employees (full-time and part-time and all ages) as well as adult, full-timers only.

In May 1988, South Australian women earned 67.1 per cent (65.9 per cent nationally) of men's earnings. Twenty years later they earned 66.5 percent (65.3 per cent nationally) of men's earnings.

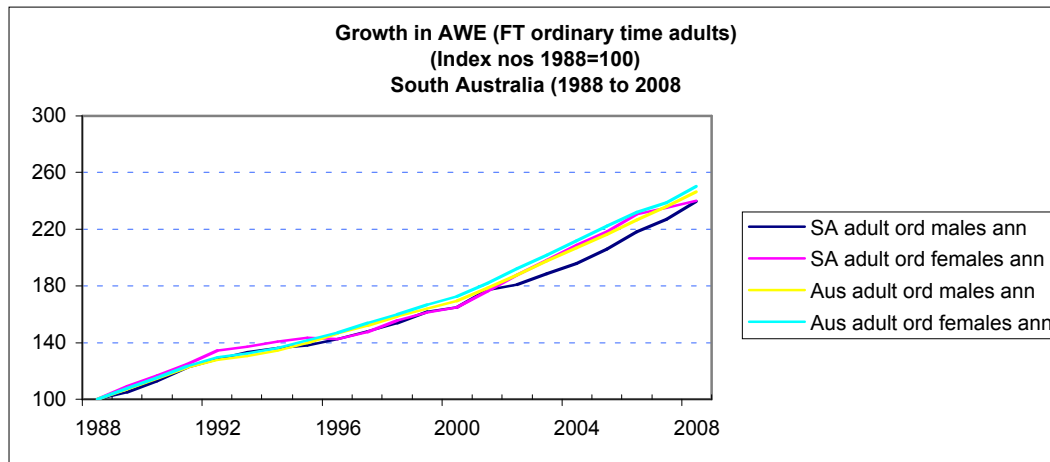
Considering adults and full-timers only, the South Australian ratio barely moved from 85.0 in 1988 to 85.1 per cent in 2008 (from 82.7 to 84.0 nationally). The twenty year comparison between South Australia and Australia is shown in Figure 17. The South Australian ratio has declined significantly in the past four years from its high of 91.2 per cent in November 2004. The South Australian ratio is more volatile and was higher than the national ratio by a few percentage points for much of the twenty year period. This appears to reflect the slower rate of growth in male wages relative to women's in the state (see Figure 18, which shows an index of growth in average weekly ordinary full-time adult earnings 1988-2008 (1988=100)).

Figure 17 Gender pay gap: average weekly ordinary full-time earnings, adults, 4 quarter moving average, Australia and South Australia, 1988-2008



Source: ABS Cat no.6302.0 - Average Weekly Earnings, Australia

Figure 18 Index of growth in average weekly ordinary full-time adult earnings, South Australia and Australia, by sex, 1988-2008 (1988=100)



Source: ABS Cat no.6302.0 - Average Weekly Earnings, Australia

Table 12 shows that the gender pay ratio (for total cash earnings amongst full-time non-managerial employees) is fairly consistent across different income levels in South Australia except at the very top of the income range (90th percentile) where it falls to 85.7 per cent. This is consistent with the national picture although in the higher income groups the gender gap is wider nationally than in South Australia and sets in earlier (Table 12).

Table 12 Gender pay ratio, percentiles, South Australia and Australia, May 2006

| | SA | AUSTRALIA |
|---|------|-----------|
| 10th percentile | 93.8 | 92.1 |
| 20th percentile | 92.9 | 91.1 |
| 25th percentile (1st quartile) | 92.8 | 89.7 |
| 30th percentile | 93.7 | 89.6 |
| 40th percentile | 93.8 | 87.6 |
| 50th percentile (median) (2nd quartile) | 94.9 | 87.3 |
| 60th percentile | 92.9 | 86.2 |
| 70th percentile | 92.8 | 84.5 |
| 75th percentile (3rd quartile) | 92.7 | 83.8 |
| 80th percentile | 93.0 | 83.2 |
| 90th percentile | 85.7 | 78.6 |

Source: ABS cat no 6306.0 Employee earnings and hours, Australia, May 2006.

Gender pay equity and industry and occupation

The gender pay gap varies by industry and occupation nationally. Table 13 shows the gap by industry across Australia for ordinary time earnings amongst full-timers (excluding overtime, part-timers and managerial workers). The table shows that the biggest gender pay problems affect mining, finance and insurance, electricity, gas and water, and property and business services. Since some of these are significant employers of women, there may be good reason to concentrate initiatives to improve women's pay in particular industry sectors (eg in the finance, property and business areas, as well as mining, given its rapid expansion in South Australia).

Table 13 Gender pay ratio by industry Australia May 2006

| Industry | Gender pay ratio |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Accommodation, cafes and restaurants | 99.7 |
| Education | 96.6 |
| Personal and other services | 95.1 |
| Communication services | 91.9 |
| Manufacturing | 90.3 |
| Retail trade | 87.6 |
| Wholesale trade | 85.9 |
| Cultural and recreational services | 84.5 |
| Transport and storage | 84.2 |
| Construction | 81.5 |
| Property and business services | 80.1 |
| Health and community services | 78.3 |
| Electricity, gas and water supply | 77.3 |
| Finance and insurance | 76.0 |
| Mining | 74.8 |
| All industries | 84.8 |

Source: ABS cat no 6306.0 Employee earnings and hours, Australia, May 2006.

Calculations are for total cash earnings amongst full-time non-managerial employees.

Table 14 shows that the national gender pay gap varies quite widely by occupation. It is widest amongst technicians and trade workers and narrowest for those in community and personal services.

Table 14 Gender pay ratio by occupation Australia May 2006

| Occupation | Gender pay ratio gap |
|--|----------------------|
| Community and Personal Service Workers | 88.1 |
| Sales Workers | 84.4 |
| Professionals | 83.8 |
| Labourers | 82.6 |
| Clerical and Administrative Workers | 81.3 |
| Machinery Operators and Drivers | 80.2 |
| Managers (b) | 79.5 |
| Technicians and Trades Workers | 78.3 |
| All occupations | 84.8 |

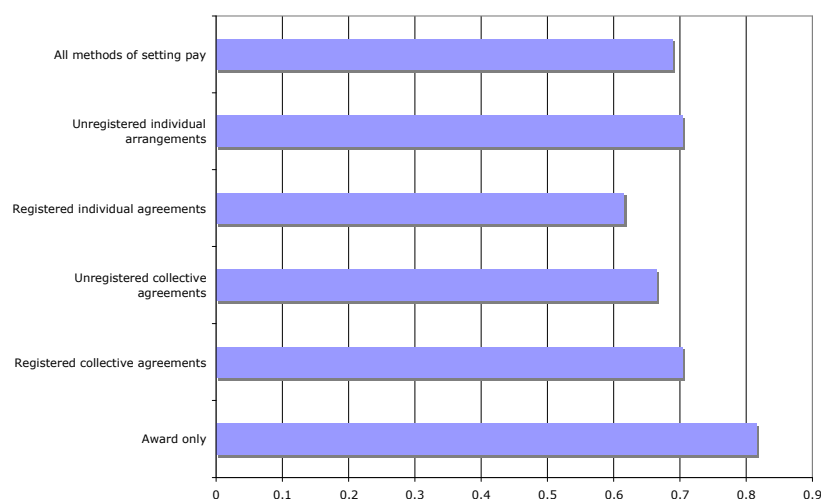
Source: ABS cat no 6306.0 Employee earnings and hours, Australia, May 2006.

Calculations are for total cash earnings amongst full-time non-managerial employees. (b) Employees have been classified as managerial if they have strategic responsibilities in the conduct or operations of the organisation and/or were in charge of a significant number of employees. These employees usually did not have an entitlement to paid overtime. All other employees have been classified as non-managerial. Source: ABS cat no 6306.0 Employee earnings and hours, Australia, May 2006.

Gender pay equity and method of pay setting

The gender pay equity also varies by method of pay setting (Figure 19). Nationally, awards have the narrowest gender pay gap at 81.5 per cent, followed by unregistered individual arrangements and registered collective agreements.

Figure 19 Gender pay gap by method of pay setting Australia



Source: ABS cat no 6306.0 Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia, May 2006

Retirement incomes

Lower earnings cast a long shadow into retirement in an increasingly earnings-based retirement system like Australia's. In 2007, 29.1 per cent of all people did not have any superannuation coverage (32.0 per cent of all women) (ABS cat no 6361.0). Of those in the accumulation phase of the superannuation system, only 11.1 per cent of women had a superannuation balance of more than \$100,000 compared to 19.7 per cent of men (ABS

cat no 6361.0). Not only are women more likely to be low paid than men and to earn less than them in any job, they carry this disadvantage over into retirement and old age.

The working poor

McGuinness, Freebairn and Mavromaras (2007) calculate the proportion of workers who earn close to the minimum wage (i.e. within 10 per cent of it) or less. They find that 9.6 per cent of full-time South Australians meet this definition of low paid compared to 7.2 per cent nationally (2007: 22). Amongst part-timers they find that 23.3 per cent of South Australians are low paid, compared to 17.7 per cent of all working part-timers in Australia. Their calculations show very high levels of low pay amongst non-urban South Australians with 33.3 per cent of part-timers living outside Adelaide earning low pay – much higher than in other regional settings (2007: 33). These findings suggest that attention to low pay in South Australia makes sense in view of its higher incidence in the state, and that regional South Australia might be worth particular attention, especially amongst part-time workers, most of whom are women.

4. Sex segregation

One of the keys to women’s differential status in paid work lies in their concentration in particular occupations. In labour market analysis, ‘sex-segregation’ is commonly understood as the disproportionate concentration of women and men in particular jobs, most commonly in particular occupations and industries. Internationally, the persistence of sex-segregation has been widely observed, and deemed to have ‘special staying power’ despite impulses towards equal opportunity since the 1970s (Charles and Grusky 2004).

Australia has traditionally been viewed as a country with a high level of sex-segregation (OECD 1984). More recent studies suggest that Australia continues to have a high comparative level of gender segregation. Analysis of 1996 data ranks Australia seventh out of 32 countries in terms of the level of segregation, with lower rankings for the USA (13th), New Zealand (18th), Canada (21st) and Japan (26th). Bahrain ranked first, Finland second, and the UK fifth (Blackburn, Jarman and Brooks 2000).

One measure of occupational sex-segregation is an index showing the proportion of employed women and men who would need to change occupations in order to be distributed in each occupation at the same ratio as their overall share of employment (Norris 1997: 165). A lower ratio implies a lower degree of sex segregation.

Previous analysis suggests that the degree of sex segregation across Australia fell between 1978 and 1985 and was fairly flat into the 1990s (Norris 1997; Pocock 1998). Analysing ABS labour force data Table 15 shows these calculations for men and women in Australia and South Australia in 1988, 1998 and 2008, suggesting that since 1988 there have been small declines in overall sex-segregation by occupation and that South Australia reflects the national trend. Just under a quarter of all those in the labour market would need to change their occupation if overall occupational segregation were to reflect men’s and women’s overall shares of employment.

Table 15 Sex segregation by occupation, South Australia and Australia, 1988, 1998 and 2008

| | Australia | South Australia |
|------|-----------|-----------------|
| 1988 | 25.5 | 25.6 |
| 1998 | 24.1 | 24.6 |
| 2008 | 22.3 | 23.7 |

Source: ABS Labour Force

Of course occupational sex-segregation can fall either because women enter male-

dominated occupations or because men enter women's, or both. We look at this in Table 16 by comparing the actual and expected proportions of women (men) that we find in more female (male)-dominated occupations. The first column shows women's share of total employment by year. The second column shows the percentage of women that might be *expected* in female dominated occupations if their sex composition were the same as that of the total labour force. The third column shows the *actual* percentage of the female labour force observed in the disproportionately female occupations. The final column shows the ratio of expected to actual outcomes. The male columns do the same for male-dominated occupations.

The table confirms that in the twenty year period 1987-2008, Australia's labour market has remained highly sex-segmented by occupation. The ratio of expected to actual outcomes in 1987 for women was 2.5: that is, the number of women found in female-dominated occupations was two and a half times higher than what we would expect based on their overall share of employment in that year. In 2008 that ratio remained at a high level of 2.2, suggesting that the overall concentration of women in feminised occupations has fallen a little in the twenty years but remains very disproportionate. Women are moving into men's jobs at a snail's pace across Australia. The ratio change is exactly the same in South Australia.

When we turn to men's employment (the final right hand column in Table 16) we find a slightly different picture. In 1987, men were less concentrated in a narrow range of occupations than women: the number of men found in male-dominated occupations was 1.7 times higher than we would expect, based on their overall share of employment in that year. However, twenty years later, men's concentration in male-dominated jobs has actually *increased* slightly, rather than fallen. Once again, South Australian data replicate the national trend.

What this suggests is that underneath the overall slight decline in sex-segmentation, women are slowly increasing their entry to male-dominated occupations, but men are not entering women's jobs very much.

Table 16 Occupational sex segregation in female and male-dominated jobs, Australia, 1987-2008

| Year | Women's share of total employment | Expected* | Actual** | Ratio expected to actual | Men's share of total employment | Expected* | Actual### | Ratio expected to actual |
|------|-----------------------------------|-----------|----------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------|
| 1987 | 39.6 | 28.7 | 72.3 | 2.5 | 60.4 | 81.2 | 49.0 | 1.7 |
| 1988 | 40.0 | 28.9 | 72.2 | 2.5 | 60.0 | 80.9 | 48.5 | 1.7 |
| 1989 | 40.6 | 29.0 | 71.6 | 2.5 | 59.4 | 82.2 | 48.8 | 1.7 |
| 1990 | 41.2 | 29.3 | 71.1 | 2.4 | 58.8 | 81.8 | 48.1 | 1.7 |
| 1991 | 41.8 | 30.5 | 73.1 | 2.4 | 58.2 | 80.2 | 46.7 | 1.7 |
| 1992 | 42.2 | 30.6 | 72.5 | 2.4 | 57.8 | 79.7 | 46.1 | 1.7 |
| 1993 | 42.5 | 30.6 | 72.1 | 2.4 | 57.5 | 79.5 | 45.8 | 1.7 |
| 1994 | 42.6 | 30.7 | 72.1 | 2.3 | 57.4 | 79.8 | 45.8 | 1.7 |
| 1995 | 42.8 | 30.4 | 71.0 | 2.3 | 57.2 | 80.9 | 46.3 | 1.7 |
| 1996 | 43.1 | 30.5 | 70.7 | 2.3 | 56.9 | 80.8 | 45.9 | 1.8 |
| 1997 | 43.3 | 29.2 | 67.5 | 2.3 | 56.7 | 81.3 | 46.1 | 1.8 |
| 1998 | 43.3 | 31.2 | 72.0 | 2.3 | 56.7 | 77.0 | 43.7 | 1.8 |
| 1999 | 43.5 | 29.4 | 67.7 | 2.3 | 56.5 | 81.4 | 46.0 | 1.8 |
| 2000 | 43.9 | 30.4 | 69.4 | 2.3 | 56.1 | 79.1 | 44.4 | 1.8 |
| 2001 | 44.3 | 29.3 | 66.1 | 2.3 | 55.7 | 81.4 | 45.3 | 1.8 |
| 2002 | 44.4 | 32.2 | 72.5 | 2.3 | 55.6 | 75.0 | 41.7 | 1.8 |
| 2003 | 44.7 | 32.4 | 72.5 | 2.2 | 55.3 | 74.0 | 40.9 | 1.8 |
| 2004 | 44.5 | 32.4 | 72.8 | 2.2 | 55.5 | 74.1 | 41.1 | 1.8 |
| 2005 | 44.8 | 32.1 | 71.6 | 2.2 | 55.2 | 74.3 | 41.0 | 1.8 |
| 2006 | 45.0 | 32.2 | 71.7 | 2.2 | 55.0 | 74.3 | 40.9 | 1.8 |
| 2007 | 45.0 | 32.4 | 72.0 | 2.2 | 55.0 | 73.4 | 40.4 | 1.8 |
| 2008 | 45.0 | 32.2 | 71.5 | 2.2 | 55.0 | 73.6 | 40.5 | 1.8 |

Source: ABS Labour Force

* that is, the proportion of women's and men's total employment we would expect to see if they were employed in these occupations in the same proportion as in the total labour market in that year

** that is, the proportion of all women actually employed in these 'over-feminised' occupations in that year

shows the change in the over-concentration of women in feminised occupations

that is, the proportion of all men actually employed in these 'over-masculinised' occupations in that year

Table 17 shows the occupational concentration of South Australian women in 2008. More than half are employed in just three occupations - lower level occupations at that. More than three-quarters of all women are found in just six occupations. Women's overall occupational depth is very shallow. This contrasts with men. Table 18 shows that to encompass more than half of male employees takes in eight occupations, including several that are in the upper reaches of the occupational scale (managers, professionals and supervisors). There are few signs of change in the training pipeline with the proportion of women engineers and engineering trades persons, for example remaining very male-dominated.

Table 17 South Australian women's occupational distribution, 2008

| | Occupations | Emp (^{000s}) | Cum % |
|----|---|----------------------------|-------|
| 1 | Intermediate Clerical Workers | 52.4 | 20.4 |
| 2 | Intermediate Service Workers | 40.9 | 36.3 |
| 3 | Elementary Sales Workers | 40.8 | 52.1 |
| 4 | Health Professionals | 24.8 | 61.8 |
| 5 | Education Professionals | 19.9 | 69.5 |
| 6 | Business and Administration Associate Professionals | 19.6 | 77.1 |
| 7 | Social, Arts and Miscellaneous Professionals | 12.2 | 81.9 |
| 8 | Other Advanced Clerical and Service Workers | 11.9 | 86.5 |
| 9 | Secretaries and Personal Assistants | 10.7 | 90.6 |
| 10 | Cleaners | 10.5 | 94.7 |
| 11 | Health and Welfare Associate Professionals | 6.4 | 97.2 |
| 12 | Elementary Service Workers | 4.0 | 98.7 |
| 13 | Elementary Clerks | 3.2 | 99.9 |
| 14 | Professionals - nfd | 0.2 | 100.0 |
| | | 257.3 | |

Source: ABS Labour Force

Table 18 South Australian men's occupational distribution, 2008

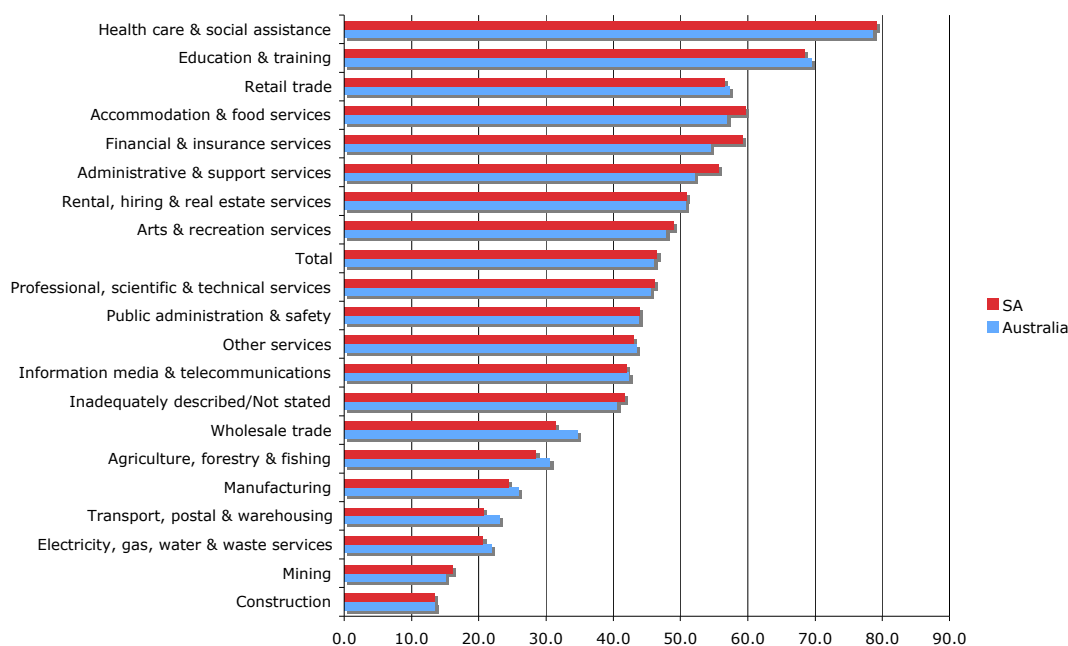
| Occupations | Emp ('000s) | Cum % |
|---|----------------|-------|
| 1 Other Labourers and Related Workers | 25.2 | 8.0 |
| 2 Other Intermediate Production and Transport Workers | 23.0 | 15.4 |
| 3 Business and Information Professionals | 21.9 | 22.4 |
| 4 Managing Supervisors (Sales and Service) | 21.5 | 29.2 |
| 5 Specialist Managers | 20.6 | 35.8 |
| 6 Road and Rail Transport Drivers | 20.6 | 42.4 |
| 7 Construction Tradespersons | 18.4 | 48.2 |
| 8 Intermediate Plant Operators | 16.7 | 53.6 |
| 9 Mechanical and Fabrication Engineering Tradespersons | 16.6 | 58.8 |
| 10 Electrical and Electronics Tradespersons | 16.3 | 64.1 |
| 11 Farmers and Farm Managers | 16.1 | 69.2 |
| 12 Factory Labourers | 15.9 | 74.2 |
| 13 Science, Building and Engineering Professionals | 12.3 | 78.2 |
| 14 Other Tradespersons and Related Workers | 11.5 | 81.8 |
| 15 Generalist Managers | 11.1 | 85.4 |
| 16 Automotive Tradespersons | 10.3 | 88.6 |
| 17 Science, Engineering and Related Associate Professionals | 8.9 | 91.5 |
| 18 Intermediate Sales and Related Workers | 8.2 | 94.1 |
| 19 Skilled Agricultural and Horticultural Workers | 5.6 | 95.9 |
| 20 Other Associate Professionals | 5.3 | 97.6 |
| 21 Intermediate Machine Operators | 4.0 | 98.8 |
| 22 Food Tradespersons | 3.0 | 99.8 |
| 23 Labourers and Related Workers - nfd | 0.2 | 99.8 |
| 24 Managers and Administrators - nfd | 0.2 | 99.9 |
| 25 Professionals - nfd | 0.2 | 99.9 |
| 26 Tradespersons and Related Workers - nfd | 0.2 | 100.0 |
| 27 Intermediate Production and Transport Workers - nfd | 0.1 | 100.0 |
| | 313.5 | |

Source: ABS Labour Force

Sex-segregation by industry

Figure 20 sets out women's share of employment by industry in 2006 in South Australia and nationally. Women's under representation – especially in South Australia - in industries like mining, construction, transport and information, manufacturing, agriculture, wholesale trade and media and telecommunications is very evident. Compared to ten years before, there have been only slight changes in the sex segregation of Australian industry.

Figure 20 Women’s share of employment by industry, Australia and South Australia 2006



Source: Australian census 2006

Table 19 shows the change in women’s share of employment by industry between 1996 and 2006 for South Australia and Australia. It shows that nationally women have increased their total share of employment in the period 1996-2006 by just over 2 per cent in both Australia and Australia. However, in this period their share of manufacturing jobs fell both nationally and in the state. In South Australia women’s share of jobs in the mining industry did not keep pace with the overall growth in their employment share.

On the other hand women continue to increase their employment share - already high – in public administration and safety in particular. There was also growth in their share of electricity, gas, water and waste services (from a low base), rental, hiring and real estate services and education and training. The South Australian picture reflects these patterns with the strongest growth in public administration and safety.

This data suggests that sex-segmentation by industry is also increasing as women increase their share of traditionally feminised areas like the public sector and decrease their share of mining, construction and manufacturing. If women are to increase their role in these fields, which are often the sites of higher paying employment and skill development, then particular interventions and support may be required.

Australian experience suggests that the entry of women to non-traditional jobs works best where they have critical mass (ie form a reasonable group in a workplace or training group). Group training schemes can be of particular benefit in this context.

Table 19 Per cent change in proportion of women’s employment in industries, Australia and South Australia 1996-2006

| | Australia | South Australia |
|---|-----------|-----------------|
| Agriculture, forestry & fishing | 0.17 | -0.42 |
| Mining | 2.55 | 1.48 |
| Manufacturing | -1.73 | -1.32 |
| Electricity, gas, water & waste services | 5.83 | 5.79 |
| Construction | 0.24 | -0.80 |
| Wholesale trade | 3.17 | -0.15 |
| Retail trade | 1.01 | 1.20 |
| Accommodation & food services | 0.81 | 2.23 |
| Transport, postal & warehousing | 0.73 | 1.11 |
| Information media & telecommunications | 1.63 | 2.99 |
| Financial & insurance services | -2.58 | 1.92 |
| Rental, hiring & real estate services | 5.12 | 5.04 |
| Professional, scientific & technical services | 1.26 | 2.84 |
| Administrative & support services | -0.99 | -1.03 |
| Public administration & safety | 7.70 | 8.51 |
| Education & training | 4.37 | 4.41 |
| Health care & social assistance | 0.78 | 0.65 |
| Arts & recreation services | -0.93 | -1.65 |
| Other services | 3.60 | 1.68 |
| Inadequately described/Not stated | -2.69 | -0.31 |
| Total | 2.00 | 2.10 |

Source: Australian Census. Table shows 2006 proportion of employment held by women in each industry, less the share they held in 1996 (eg minus number indicates a decline over the decade).

What of vertical sex-segregation: that is the gender breakdown of higher level, higher paid jobs? Recent reports from the Equal Opportunity in the Workplace Agency show that women’s share of senior leadership positions in Australian companies is stalled or in retreat – from a very low base. Amongst ASX200 companies, in 2008 women made up 2.0 per cent of board chairs (the same as in 2006), 2 per cent of CEOs (3 per cent in 2006), 8.3 per cent of board directors (8.7 per cent in 2006) and 10.7 per cent of executive managers (12.0 per cent in 2006). More than half of all Australian companies (51 per cent) did not have any women directors in 2008 and only a 6 per cent had more than a quarter (EOWA 2008a).

A recent study of women’s experiences in Australia’s board rooms draws attention to a multitude of barriers that affect women and prevent them from becoming senior leaders. It also draws attention to the many ways in which women on boards are treated differently, under-valued or trivialized (EOWAb 2008).

One of South Australia’s strategic goals is to increase women’s share of executive leaders in the South Australian public sector. The above data suggest that this is by no means an easy task, and that efforts are also necessary beyond the public sector if women are to take up – and retain – their place as leaders in Australian institutions.

5. Working conditions, carers and flexibility

Reconciling work and family is a major challenge for working women and men around the world (OECD 2007). While these issues affect many men, women are most affected because of their unchanging main responsibility for all forms of care alongside their growing share of paid work. While men are often affected by long hours of work (frequently accompanied by long commutes), women are affected by general overload, and tend to have much greater need for all forms of leave (especially to care for sick dependents) and flexibility at work. We return to differences in flexibility needs in the work-life section below.

Reconciling work and care commitments has become an increasing focus of public policy as more women join the labour market. The OECD explain why this matters:

Parents in all OECD countries face considerable challenges when they try to reconcile their work and family commitments. Many people manage to achieve their preferred work/family balance, but many others do not. Faced with such difficulties, some people either postpone having children, do not have as many as they might have intended, or even end up having not children at all. Other parents have the number of children they desire, but by taking time out to provide personal care to their children, they sacrifice their careers. Still others may struggle to support their children while holding down a job, but find that there is too little time in the day to provide the nurture that they would like to give their children. One way or another, as long as there are people who are constrained in their choices about work/family balance, the result may be both too few babies and too little employment and /or unsatisfactory careers (2007: 12).

Many Australian workers have care responsibilities. In 2007, 42.9 per cent of all Australian women (34.0 per cent men) provided care to another person. In South Australia, the figures are close to the national average. Over a quarter of these carers did not live in a household with children under 15: many caring responsibilities that Australians shoulder are not related to children.

Nowadays, on any day of the week four in ten people at work in Australia have responsibility for the care of another person (ABS 2008: 10). The 2007 survey of workers shows that in the week prior to the survey, 15 per cent of employees used working arrangement to facilitate their care, most commonly flexible work hours. Not all workers who need such flexibility can easily find it. From that survey it is estimated that 122,300 women with children 0-14 years (10.6 per cent) and 118,100 men (9.3 per cent) did not use working arrangements to provide care for someone because of work pressures, actual or expected employer refusal, lack of paid time or 'subtle or other pressures from bosses or other workers not to take leave' (ABS 2008: 41).

The business case for work/family initiatives

The OECD reviewed flexible working conditions in the OECD area (including Australia), drawing attention to the need for more flexible and supportive national and workplace arrangements. They find that the business impetus to adopt family friendly provisions is often weak. 'Hard' evidence about the productivity enhancing nature of family friendly provisions is 'not overwhelming' (2007: 191), creating a case for government action given the externalities that flow from good work/family provisions for men, women and children as well as civil society.

Flexibility at work?

Key workplace provisions assisting workers to balance work and family include flexible working hours and employer-provided leave. How widely are these available in Australia? Table 20 shows that across Australia basic provisions like having a say over start and finish times are not generally accessible to the majority. Sixty percent of women and men lacked any such say in 2007.

Table 20 Access to family friendly working conditions Australia 2007 by sex and part-time/full-time status

| | Men | Women | Full-time | Part-time |
|--|------|-------|-----------|-----------|
| Had no say in start and finish times | 60.4 | 59.7 | 59.0 | 63.0 |
| Could not choose when to take holidays | 13.7 | 17.9 | 13.1 | 15.7 |
| Had no say in the days on which worked/days were set | 11.9 | 13.3 | 7.3 | 12.5 |
| Not able to choose to work extra hours in order to take time off | 56.6 | 57.7 | 53.8 | 57.1 |
| Usually required to be on call or standby | 25.7 | 19.6 | 22.3 | 22.8 |
| Hours vary or usually required to be on call or standby | 39.3 | 33.3 | 34.2 | 36.3 |

Source: ABS Working time arrangements Cat. no. 6342.0 2007.

Analysis of AWALI data confirms that many Australian workers have limited ‘employee-centred’ flexibility. Almost half of employees in the 2008 survey report that they have low flexibility in their jobs (ie they somewhat or strongly disagree that working times can be flexible to meet their needs and they have a lot of freedom to decide when they do their work). Low flexibility was strongly associated with poorer work-life outcomes. Interestingly, women (both part-time and full-time) appear to have less flexibility than men: those who need it most have it least it seems.

Leave

Leave is a vital support for working people, especially working carers. All forms of leave are relevant: especially paid holiday, sick, personal carers, cultural, maternity, paternity and parental.

Forty per cent of all Australian employees had access to paid holiday, sick, long service and parental leave in Australia in 2007 (Table 21). Most did not. Women have less access than men. More than a quarter of Australians do not get a paid holiday and the same proportion also lack paid sick leave. These are essential forms of paid leave to achieving any form of personal work-life balance, and to the reconciliation of work and household life.

Table 21 Availability to employees of leave by sex, Australia 2007

| | Males | Females | Persons |
|--------------------------------|-------|---------|---------|
| Paid holiday leave | 77.9 | 69.9 | 74.1 |
| Paid sick leave | 78.1 | 70.6 | 74.5 |
| Long service leave | 68.7 | 63.4 | 66.2 |
| Paid maternity/parental leave | 35.5 | 45.0 | 40.0 |
| One or more leave entitlements | 81.1 | 74.1 | 77.7 |
| All leave entitlements | 32.6 | 41.3 | 36.8 |
| No leave entitlements | 18.9 | 25.9 | 22.2 |

Source: ABS Employment arrangements, retirement and superannuation cat no 6310.0 2007

Lower paid workers are especially disadvantaged in terms of all forms of paid leave (ABS cat no 6310.0, Headey and Warren 2008). Leave availability is also very affected by industry, occupation, sector and form of employment. Part-timers have much less access: in 2007, 52.1 per cent of part-time workers had no leave entitlements compared to 9.4 per cent of full-timers. Public sector workers had much better access to all forms of leave than those in private firms. A quarter of those in private sector employment have no leave entitlements.

Unfortunately, the theoretical possibility of leave does not ensure its practical availability. For example, many Australians do not make use of their holiday leave. They cite work pressures as a main barrier to its access. Denniss (2003) found that only 39 per cent of full-time employees took all of their annual leave in 2002. The main reasons for not taking all available leave related to being too busy at work, not being able to get time off that suited individuals, and saving up leave to use it later.

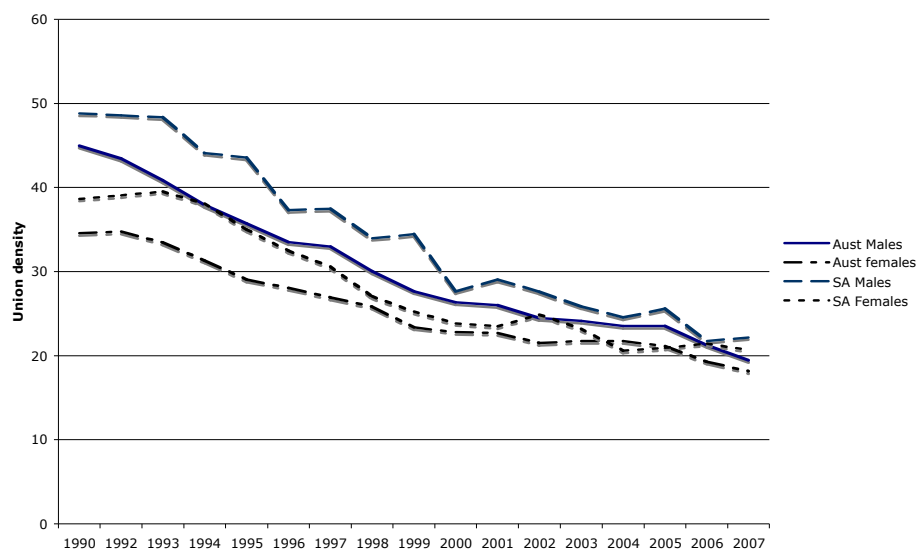
It has been well documented that many Australian mothers continue to lack access to any paid maternity leave (Productivity Commission 2008). The OECD recommends that from a labour market perspective maternity leave of 4-6 months makes sense, while from a children's welfare point of view 6-12 months is justified by the evidence (OECD 2007: 21).

Trade union membership

Union membership is a well-recognised way of increasing workers' voice in the workplace including around employee-centred flexibility.

Union density has fallen across Australia for the past twenty years. Figure 21 shows that this fall has been consistent amongst both women and men, and for South Australia as well as the nation. In 2008, 19.5 per cent of all Australian males workers were in unions compared to 18.2 per cent of women. In South Australia, the figures have been consistently higher by a couple of percentage points and remained so in 2007 at 22.2 per cent amongst men and 20.7 per cent amongst women.

Figure 21 Union density by sex, Australia and South Australia 1990-2007



Source: ABS Employment arrangements, retirement and superannuation cat no 6310.0

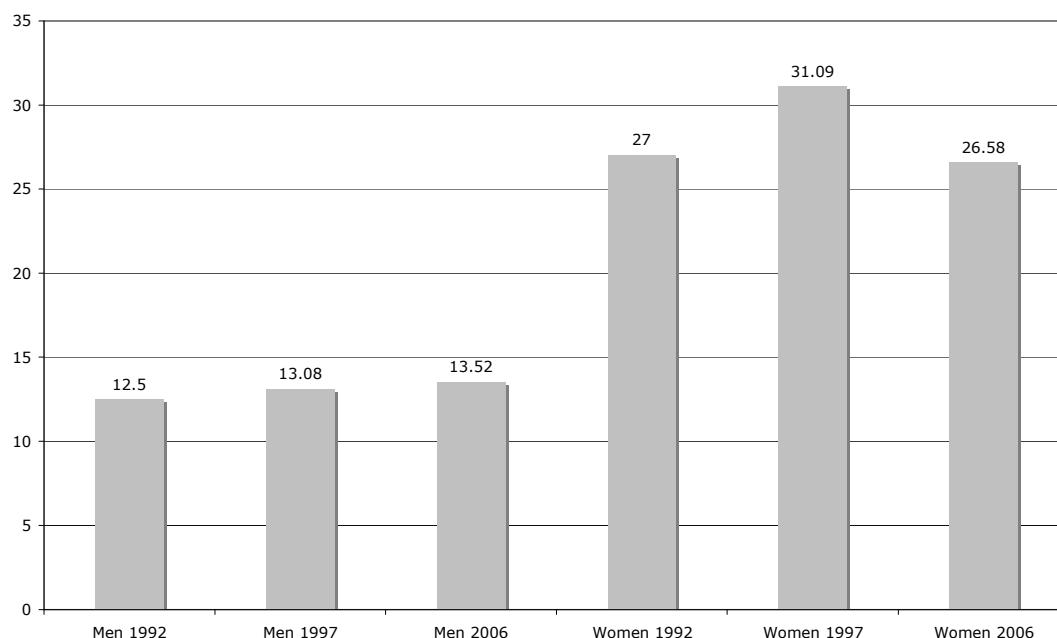
6. Unpaid work and care

Domestic work, unpaid child care and other forms of care are of vital significance to the working lives and well-being of women. Qualitative research tells us that working mothers frequently feel guilty about their paid jobs and, more often than not, are overloaded with a double day of paid and unpaid work (Pocock 2003). However, this issue does not affect only mothers. Many women living with men and with the same labour force participation patterns shoulder much more than their fair share of domestic work. In the future, more women and men will also face increasing responsibility for the care of older family members and friends. Care issues and domestic work are important to household well-being and unlikely to diminish in importance into the future. Not surprisingly, women are much more likely than men to assess their contributions to unpaid work as unfair (Headey and Warren 2008).

Men's and women's unequal contributions to unpaid work and child care have remained consistent for the past decades and a half (ABS 2008b). Several data sources confirm this. In 2006, based on time diary analysis, women contributed on average around double men's hours to domestic work and child care (27 hours a week compared to 14). In terms of unpaid domestic work specifically, men contributed about the same number of weekly hours (11 hours) as they did in 1992. This compares to 20 hours for women in 2006, down an hour from 1992. In terms of child care, both women and men have increased their efforts on average but the gender gap remains wide.

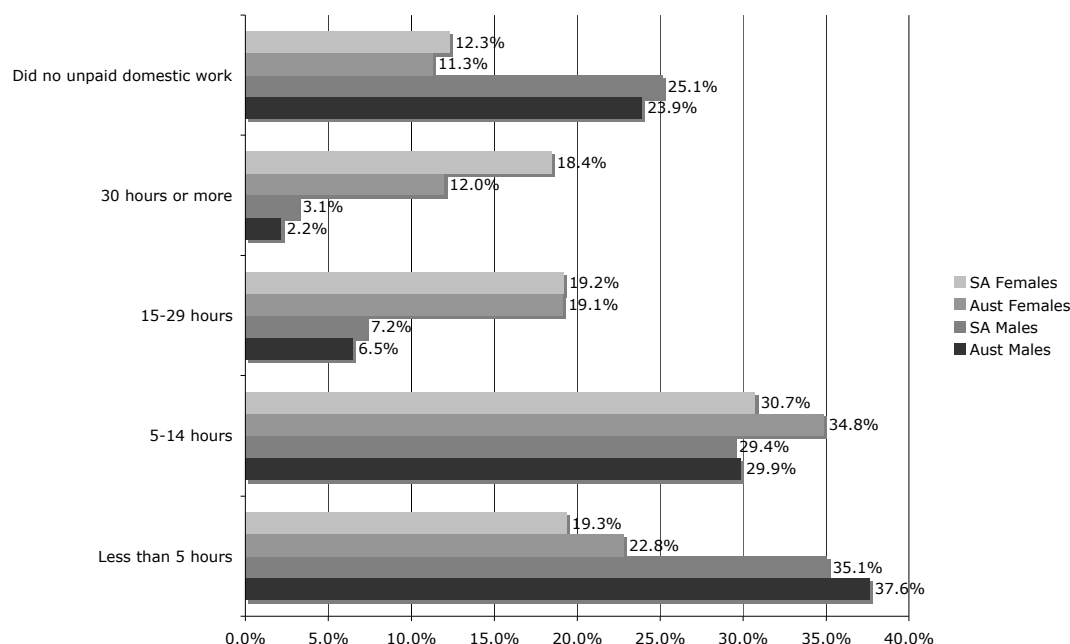
Figure 22 shows the weekly contributions (including both weekend days and week days) of men and women to child care and domestic activities in 1992, 1997 and 2006. The picture shows that women continue to do more than double men's unpaid hours. Other data sources confirm this: the 2006 Census (see Figure 23) and analysis of HILDA data (Headey and Warren 2008).

Figure 22 Hours in unpaid domestic work and child care, men and women, 1992, 1997 and 2006.



Source: ABS (2006) *How Australians Use Their Time*, cat no. 4153.0

Figure 23 Men’s and women’s hours in unpaid domestic work, 2006, South Australia and Australia



Source: Census 2006

Child care

Child care is a critical issue affecting the participation of many women: a recent survey of Australian working women found that ‘nearly half of women (45%) with children under the age of 13 years who are currently working part-time claim they would work more hours in paid employment if they could better access childcare facilities’ (EOWA 2008: 8). Sixty per cent of women with postgraduate degrees agreed they would increase hours of work with increased access to child care.

Relative to many OECD countries, Australian under-invests in early childhood education and care: in 2003 public spending on child care including pre-primary education was 0.4 per cent of GDP in Australia, compared to 0.7 per cent across the OECD (OECD 2007: 135). Unmet demand is an important issue with the 2002 ABS Child care survey showing that about 6 per cent (or 174,500) children aged under 12 needed additional formal care than they received.

Costs of child care are also a concern. HILDA analysis finds that in 2005 it was common for households to report difficulties with the costs of child care: over 20 per cent of couple households reported this difficulty every year between 2001 and 2005. The proportion of lone parent households with this problem ‘ranged from 14.7% in 2002 to 25.6% in 2005’ (Headey and Warren 2008: 27). Australian families also face real difficulties when a child is sick with more than a quarter of families reporting difficulties in this situation in each year 2001-2005 (Headey and Warren 2008: 28).

In addition, the growth in provision of long day care by a single private provider (now in receivership) has exposed the Australian system, and its child and parent users, to very significant risk in continuity of provision. The stability and sustainability of a childcare system that has seen such rapid growth is of considerable concern. While states like Queensland have much greater exposure to such risk, it also affects many South Australian

families. In 2004 48.7 per cent of Commonwealth supported long day care places in South Australia were privately provided, compared to 85.6 per cent in Queensland and 71.6 per cent nationally (Pocock 2006:176).

Analysis of women's participation in paid work across the OECD suggests that better childcare provision in Australia would make a significant difference to participation rates: Jaumotte (2004) estimates that raising spending to the OECD average could result in an increase in the participation rate of 6.4 percentage points.

7. Work-life interaction

How are working women putting together work with the rest of their lives? The Australian index of work and life (AWALI) gives a measure of work-life balance, broken down by state and other demographic and workplace characteristics (Pocock, Skinner and Williams 2007; Skinner and Pocock 2008).

This provides a statistical measure of work-life outcomes at the state and national level. The HILDA survey is an alternative source of information (and is discussed below), but it only collects information about work-*family* balance, and only from parents with children under 17 years. This means it cannot be used as a general measure of work-life balance as a whole or for the whole population. Given that AWALI data suggest that work-life issues affect many people who are not parents, this is an important issue. The AWALI index is established by means of an annual stratified random survey of working Australians.

The work-life items in the AWALI survey can be used to assess work-life balance in two ways: by means of analysis of the five items which comprise the overall work-life index or by means of a single work-life index score, which comprises the average of the five items standardized to a 0 (best work-life interaction) to 100 (worst work-life interaction) scale. The five work-life index items are:

1. How often does your work interfere with your responsibilities or activities outside of work?
2. How often does your work keep you from spending the amount of time you would like with family or friends?
3. How often does your work interfere with your ability to develop or maintain connections and friendships in your community?
4. How often do you feel rushed or pressed for time?
5. Are you satisfied, not satisfied or neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, with the balance between your work and the rest of your life?

The ABS has also collected a measure of time pressure amongst employees in 2007. Table 22 shows that almost half of all employees in 2007 felt often or always rushed and pressed for time. A quarter of working women *always* feel rushed and pressed for time (18.2 per cent of men). There is little difference between casual and permanent women employees on this.

More women feel this pressure than men: 52.2 per cent compared to 39.7 per cent of men, and casual women more than permanents. However, casual versus permanent employment makes much less difference to women's feelings of time pressure than men's.

The main reason employed people feel rushed and pressed for time is work and family responsibilities (32.5 per cent give this reason; 37.6 per cent of women), followed by pressure of work/study (22.0 per cent) and too much to do/too many demands (17.3) (ABS 2008: 36). Clearly general time pressures are very widespread amongst Australia's

working women and many men are also affected. It is no wonder that public discussion about such pressures – the ‘barbecue stopper’ as John Howard termed it in 2001 – have had so much public discussion.

Table 22 Per cent of employees who feel rushed and pressed for time by sex and casual/permanent 2007

| | Often or always | Sometimes, often or always |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Permanent men | 42.7% | 76.5% |
| Casual men | 29.0% | 64.7% |
| All men | 39.7% | 74.0% |
| Permanent women | 54.9% | 87.3% |
| Casual women | 45.6% | 78.8% |
| All women | 52.2% | 84.8% |
| Permanent persons | 48.2% | 81.4% |
| Casual persons | 45.6% | 78.8% |
| All persons | 47.8% | 81.0% |

Source: ABS (2007) Employment arrangements, retirement and superannuation, cat no 6361.0

Work-life ‘spillover’ for men and women

Many Australians are affected by work-life spillover (Table 23). In 2008, more than half felt often or almost always rushed and pressed for time. Women were more affected than men, and mothers especially. A quarter felt that work interfered with time with family and friends often or almost always. This draws attention to the effects of work-life pressures, not only on individuals, but on our family and friendship networks. When one in four workers find this negative interference a regular strain on their friendships and family relations, we can see that the problem is widely felt. One in five experience general interference from work on the rest of their lives, and on their community connections.

Table 23 Work-life index items for SA and Australian employees, AWALI 2008 (per cent)

| | Never/ rarely | Sometimes | SA 2008 Often/almost always | SA 2007 Often/almost always | AUST 2008 Often/ almost always |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Work interferes with activities outside work | 54.6 | 27.1 | 18.3 | 18.0 | 21.8 |
| Work interferes with time with family/friends | 48.1 | 31.3 | 20.6 | 25.8 | 25.9 |
| Work interferes with community connections | 61.8 | 25.2 | 13.0 | 19.1 | 19.3 |
| Rushed or pressed for time | 20.2 | 28.2 | 51.5 | 49.4 | 54.9 |
| Satisfaction with work-life balance | | | | | |
| | Dissatisfied SA 2008 | Neutral SA 2008 | Satisfied SA 2008 | | Satisfied Australia 2008 |
| | 11.5 | 17.6 | 71.0 | | 68.3 |

Note. Table excludes self-employed persons. 2007 N = 148 (80 men & 68 women). 2008 N = 262 (138 men & 124 women).

How does South Australia compare with national outcomes on work life balance? As Table 23 shows, workers in South Australia have slightly less negative spillover from work

to the rest of their lives than workers in Australia as a whole. Work interferes often or almost always with activities outside work for 18.3 per cent of South Australians in 2008 (and about the same in 2007), compared to 21.8 per cent nationally. It is never or only rarely a problem for just over half of South Australians. In 2008, a fifth of South Australians found that work interfered with time with family or friends often or almost always (down from 25.8 per cent in 2007) compared to a quarter of all Australians in 2008.

Only 13.0 per cent of South Australians felt that work interfered often or almost always with their community connections in 2008 (down from 19.1 per cent in 2007), compared to 19.3 per cent of all Australians.

When it comes to feeling rushed and pressed for time, more people – just over half - are affected negatively, both in South Australia and nationally. Fewer South Australians are negatively affected compared to Australia as a whole, with 51.5 per cent feeling that they often or almost always feel like this, compared to 54.9 per cent nationally.

Overall satisfaction with work-life balance is slightly higher in South Australia with 71.0 per cent satisfied with their work-life balance in 2008 compared to 68.3 per cent nationally.

In sum, South Australians are slightly less likely to report frequent negative spillover from work to life. Around 4 per cent to 6 per cent more employees experience frequent negative spillover nationally compared to SA residents and around 3 per cent more SA residents are satisfied with their work-life balance for 2008 compared to the Australian average. Nonetheless work and life pressures affect many South Australians.

Change over time

Given the range of factors that shape work-life balance, it is not expected that work-life index scores will vary a great deal from year to year: a longer time span is necessary to review trends of significance. There was little change from 2007 to 2008 on the AWALI work-life index for South Australia or nationally. Table 23 shows that small changes can be observed on the individual index items for South Australia respondents between 2007 and 2008.

Overall work-life interaction in South Australia and Australia: The AWALI index

When we consider all of the above measures in the single AWALI index measure, the slightly better outcomes on all the individual work-life interaction measures in South Australia are reflected in better overall index outcomes in South Australia in both 2007 and 2008 (Table 24). However, the difference between the South Australia and national average is small and not statistically significant in the context of a measure scored on a 0-100 scale.

Table 24 Work-life index score for SA and Australian employees, AWALI 2008

| | SA | Australia |
|------|------|-----------|
| 2007 | 42.3 | 42.5 |
| 2008 | 39.3 | 42.7 |

What factors are associated with better work-life outcomes?

The AWALI survey collects a range of demographic and other data which allows analysis of the factors that are associated with better or worse work-life interaction (like commuting, part-time or full-time work, conditions at work and the home) and can help guide policy responses. Multivariate analysis of AWALI 2007 reveals that long hours, a poor fit between actual and preferred hours and feelings of overwork are associated with

poorer work-life balance. Poor work-life balance is also associated with longer commutes.

2008 analysis shows that good workplace cultures (i.e. supportive supervisors, manageable workloads and employee-centred working time flexibility) are very important to work-life outcomes.

Controlling for differences in hours, those in lower income households (less than \$30,000 a year) as well as those on higher incomes (more than \$90,000) have worse work-life interaction than those on incomes in the mid-range. There is considerable discussion about work-life issues amongst professional, managerial and higher income workers. These findings suggest that there should be more attention to the work-life pressures facing those living on lower incomes and working in workplaces and occupations where wages are relatively low. Single parents (most of whom are women) in low income households have worse work-life outcomes, controlling for differences in hours.

There are no significant differences in work-life interaction for men and women whether they are employees or self-employed. A consistent pattern for casual workers affects both men and women: they have worse work-life outcomes than permanent workers controlling for differences in work hours.

Women and work-life interaction

Analysis of AWALI data by gender nationally reveals particular issues for men and women which are likely to affect South Australians similarly.

Men have worse overall work-life index scores than women in Australia. This in part reflects their longer hours of work: over 44.5 per cent of working women in Australia work part-time (August 2008, ABS Cat No 6202) compared to 14.7 per cent of men. It is therefore not surprising that their overall work-life index scores are lower (i.e. better) than men's.

The fact that that a higher proportion of women at work in South Australia are part-time (48.2 per cent) than nationally, may help explain the better overall work-life outcomes in the state.

Women are especially rushed and pressed for time: A majority of both full-time and part-time women feel often or almost always rushed and pressed for time – many more than experience specific spillover from work onto activities outside work. This reflects the fact that a general measure like time pressure picks up the overall effect of work, household and caring workloads on women: nationally six out of ten women feel often or almost always rushed and pressed for time. Seven out of ten mothers experience this. Given how little domestic and care workloads (discussed above) have adjusted to women's increasing participation in paid work, it is the combination of paid and unpaid work that appears to be affecting these women.

It is interesting to note that part-time work does not prevent a high proportion of women from often feeling rushed and pressed for time: 56.2 per cent of part-time women feel often or almost always rushed and pressed for time (32.1 per cent of part-time men), compared to 63.4 per cent of full-time women (53.3 per cent of men).

Across the national survey, a relatively high proportion of both male and female workers are satisfied with their overall work-life balance (69.0 per cent of men and 67.5 per cent of women).

Work-life interaction varies by age more for men than women: women's work-life index scores are fairly consistent between 18 and 54 years when they become lower (ie better).

Men's scores are higher in the 25-54 years. However, women with higher education qualifications have worse work-life index scores than similar men, and worse than women with vocational education qualifications or less. Parenting is associated with worse outcomes for mothers than fathers adjusting for differences in the working hours of fathers (which are usually longer) compared to mothers.

Women's work-life outcomes vary by household type with single mothers having the worst work-life outcomes, closely followed by mothers living in couple households. In contrast, household type makes little difference for men.

Similar proportions of men and women share feelings of being overloaded at work: in 2008, 55.1 per cent of men and 53.7 per cent of women agreed strongly or somewhat that they were overloaded at work and this was strongly associated with worse work-life outcomes. Most men and women have positive views about their supervisor's and overall organization's accommodation of their personal and family needs. However, just over a third (38.2 per cent men and 34.5 per cent women) felt they were expected to put their jobs before their personal and family life. When we put these measures of organizational culture together, those working in an unsupportive culture had much worse work-life outcomes and this emerges from multi-variate analysis as a strong predictor of work-life outcomes, along with work overload, followed by regular evening/night work and employee-centred flexibility (Skinner and Pocock 2008).

Work and family outcomes in SA and Australia: HILDA data

There is a second source of data on work and family experiences that allows us a closer look at South Australia. HILDA collects data on four relevant scales. Table 24 reports on the work-life results in wave 6 (collected in 2006), analysing employees only. In this analysis we utilize a median split to define high and low levels on each scale and apply a chi-square test used to evaluate significant differences between Australian averages (including South Australia) and South Australia alone.

Table 25 shows that more than six in ten mothers and fathers feel that work helps them personally and in their families, making them feel more rounded and competent, giving life more variety and creating challenges 'to be the best I can be'.

On the negative side, work also creates family strains, with more than half of both mothers and fathers feeling that combining work and family life means they have to turn down work opportunities, time is more pressured and they miss out on family activities.

Table 25 Perceived work-family gains and strains, SA and Australia 2006

| | SOUTH AUSTRALIA | | | AUSTRALIA | | |
|---|-----------------|---------|-------------|-----------|---------|-------------|
| | Fathers | Mothers | All parents | Fathers | Mothers | All parents |
| Perceive high work-family gain | 62.4 | 63.3 | 63 | 58.3 | 63.9 | 61.1 |
| Perceive high work-family strain | 55.4 | 50.5 | 52.7 | 56.4 | 48.6 | 52.5 |
| Perceive work has high positive impact on parenting | 51.2 | 55.4 | 53.5 | 53.8 | 54.5 | 54.2 |
| Perceive work has high negative impact on parenting | 59.5 | 60.8 | 60.2 | 64.8 | 50.3 | 57.5 |

Source; HILDA wave 6, employees only. Includes only parents with children 17 years or younger. 'high' defined as all respondents with answers above median point on relevant scale.

There are positive effects on parenting from work for slightly more than half of all parents. More mothers (55.4 per cent) than fathers (51.2 per cent) perceive positive gains, which flow from how work makes you feel 'good about yourself' and 'a better parent', appreciate

time spent with children and how work positively affects children. Against this, six in ten parents also saw negative effects flowing from work for their parenting, contributing to worry about children while at work, draining energy, missing out on rewarding aspects of parenting and interfering with work performance.

Only one scale showed a difference between South Australia and Australia as a whole: women in South Australia were more likely to report that work had a negative effect on their parenting; 60 per cent of South Australia women were above the median on this scale, compared to 50 per cent of women nationally.

Overall, 60.8 per cent of South Australian women felt work had a negative impact on their parenting (59.5 per cent men). These are significantly different to the Australian average: 50.3 per cent of all Australian women (64.8 per cent of all Australian men) felt work had a negative impact on their parenting.

Overall then, South Australian women (and Australian women as a whole) perceive more gains than they do strains arising from their work, although half perceive some strains. South Australian men are similar.

When it comes to parenting, the proportion of South Australian mothers (and fathers) who perceive a high negative impact of work on their parenting is greater than those who perceive a positive impact from their work on their parenting. This holds for both sexes. For mothers this outcome is contrary to the national result.

8. Conclusion

What are the most pressing issues that might respond to policy and action in South Australia?

Some problems are long-lived, long-recognised and persistent, like the gender pay gap and job segregation. Others are growing in significance and recognition, including a gender earnings gap in retirement, the cost of the double day and men's unchanging contributions to unpaid work.

On the positive side, South Australia is better than the national average on work-life outcomes for its working citizens. While there are particular groups who struggle with work and time pressures (especially those with intensive caring responsibilities and in particular mothers), this is a positive foundation on which to build.

Particular challenges exist around participation in paid work and its conditions.

The analysis shows that South Australia lags behind other states and other countries in terms of women's participation in paid work. Some women want to work who do not at present. Others would like to work more if they could.

Prior to the global financial crisis, labour market projections foreshadowed shortages of workers in South Australia in the coming decade (Keating 2007: 7). Concern about long term skills gaps is reflected in the Council of Australian Government's (COAG) reform agenda and the attention it draws to an aging population: 'To avoid putting too great a burden on those already in work, more Australians need to realize their potential by entering or rejoining the workforce' (COAG 2006: 1).

Recent reports look to women's under-participation as part of the solution to possible future labour shortages. If this goal is to be reconciled with the state's strategic goals of increasing work-life balance and the well-being of citizens (including women, children and other dependents) then – as international agencies like the OECD increasingly recognize – the terms of work, and the terms under which work is combined with care over the life-

cycle, need to change.

Analysis of well-being for workers shows that supportive workplace cultures, employee-centred flexibility, a good fit between preferred and actual working hours and the avoidance of long hours and work overload are vital to good labour market and household outcomes. Exhorting or requiring more women to work, or to work more, relies on changes in the terms of work and supports for working carers as their situations change over the life-cycle, if women are not to simply increase their workloads, acting as the shock absorbers of the labour market and households. This means change in workplaces, surrounding policies and supports and the behaviour of women as well as men.

The recent OECD review of flexible working conditions in the OECD area (including Australia), draws attention to the need for more flexible and supportive national and workplace arrangements. They find that the business impetus to adopt family friendly provisions is often weak. 'Hard' evidence about the productivity enhancing nature of family friendly provisions is 'not overwhelming' (2007: 191), creating a case for government leadership given the externalities that flow from good work/family provisions for men, women and children as well as civil society.

This analysis suggests that there is a good case for the South Australian government to facilitate businesses to adopt work and family measures that can reduce turnover and employment costs and to make such adoption as easy as possible, with the best outcomes. The high proportion of women workers who lack basic flexibilities and paid leave at work makes steps to encourage their wider provision significant.

However, more is needed.

South Australia is now nationally recognised for its innovations around early childhood education and care with multi-purpose integrated services. Building upon these to reduce work-time pressures and increase amenities available to children will facilitate women's employment and well-being, as well as that of children.

Particular action around pay equity, especially in sectors where it is very wide will also assist many women and allow young women who are investing heavily in their skills and education to reap fairer rewards. Attention to mining and to the finance sectors may be useful areas for focus.

Sex-segmentation also remains a challenging problem. Young women need encouragement to make non-traditional choices, and support when they make them. Once again, initiatives in areas of employment growth where job prospects are strong are important initiatives.

Quality part-time work is of particular importance to South Australian women, given their high concentration in part-time work. Job and career security, access to training and promotion and better conditions of leave will assist women.

Particular steps to assist CALD women (and men) into work are important, along with specific attention to the issues affecting both the education and labour market participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (and men).

How is the configuration of unpaid domestic work and care to be made fairer, and help reduce the pressures experienced by many working women? This issue might respond to more educative work in schools in particular. Without such intervention, it seems that future generations of working women are likely to face the same feelings of overload that affect the majority of working women today.

Overall, this analysis suggests a challenging canvass against which improvements in women's employment situation can be crafted. A multi-dimensional approach is essential,

along with state-commonwealth cooperation on issues that clearly cross state boundaries.

There is potential for South Australia to build upon its record as a place where work-life can be more easily reconciled than in many other Australian places. There is also plenty of scope to increase women's participation in paid work, meeting both women's own aspirations as well as economic needs in a happy coincidence. Investment in a strategic suite of labour market interventions, support services and assistance to businesses will make a difference.

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