

# An Unexpected Tragedy

Evidence for the connection between working hours and family breakdown in Australia

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## Appendix

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## Preface (I)

### Context

- The issue of working patterns is increasingly the subject of international debate, for example in the UK, Canada, the EU and Australia. There has been growing concern from social commentators and church leaders, as well as from trade unions and politicians about social impacts of long and unpredictable working hours. At the same time, there has been growing public concern about the breakdown of marriage and family life, and the consequences for the wellbeing of children. The time seems right to study the possible links between these two phenomena.

### Scope Of Study

- The objective of this report is to seek to establish whether there is a link between changes in Australian working patterns and aspects of wellbeing associated with relationships, particularly those in families, but also including friendships and participation in the broader community. It is intended that the output of this work will provide valuable input to broader community debate about working time and patterns, as well as provide an analytical foundation for family and community impact assessment and policy development.
- The report has not been written for a primarily academic audience, with a process of peer review, though the detailed Appendix is extensively referenced and the authors have consulted many Australian experts in the area of social policy in the course of compiling the report.
- The document is not intended to provide a set of definitive policy proposals, nor to investigate the causes for the changes in working patterns. The final section of the main report responds to the unease felt by many Australians (as evidenced by assembled data) and to set out a possible way forward. We suggest both a more comprehensive and better integrated set of indicators, including more consistent data collection and reporting, and a range of possible policy responses. The latter need to be tested and evaluated in the light of international experience and discussed in detail with policymakers, business leaders, trade unions and those with a professional or personal interest in the relevant fields.

### Sources And Uses Of Information

- This study has been directed at identifying *existing* data sets and research of relevant and reliable information that can be analysed to yield conclusions regarding working patterns in Australia and their impact on relationships and associated wellbeing.
- Considerable research and analysis have been conducted within Australia examining the topics of working time and relational health. This study aims to raise awareness of important conclusions from existing research and to synthesise them into a compelling argument to provoke public debate.

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## Preface (II)

### Sources And Uses Of Information (continued)

- To date, most research attempting to show a link between changing working patterns and family/child wellbeing has demonstrated correlation, without showing causality. Several major Australian surveys will, in future, provide data that can be used to analyse the link between long and atypical working patterns and family/child wellbeing, and potentially to identify the direction of causality of these associations (e.g. the Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia – HILDA, and the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children – LSAC).
- This report makes use of a number of international studies; research projects conducted in Canada and the UK have been particularly helpful. We have no reason to think that the conclusions from these studies used here are not applicable in the Australian context, but would encourage that similar research be conducted in Australia.
- Some of the studies cited contain data up to ten years old. This partly reflects the nature of the studies themselves, particularly those including longitudinal research, which relies on data collected over a period, and time use studies, which require a great deal of work to analyse their detailed data sets.

### Definitions For 'Long' and 'Atypical' Working Times

- There is no consistent definition of standard working times in Australian or international literature on working patterns, apart from classifying any work on the weekend as atypical. The main sources of information used in this study have generally defined weekday atypical working times as either 6pm to 8am or 7pm to 8am (in Australia, 96% of people in the workforce work at some time between 8am and 6pm on an average weekday, and 85% of all weekday working time takes place between these times<sup>(1)</sup>). Long working hours are generally defined as 45 or 50 hours per week or more.
- Information on the incidence of long and atypical working patterns can be based on either 'usual' or 'actual' work at these times. In general, the incidence of actual long and atypical working patterns is higher than usual working patterns because of the bias for people to work beyond what they define as their 'normal' schedule.
- Usual working times are reported from surveys that ask individuals about their usual or regular working patterns, and are therefore considered a reflection of their normal working patterns.
- Actual working times are reported in surveys where individuals are asked about their actual working patterns during a given period (for example, a week or month). Actual working patterns, therefore, give a snapshot during the specific time period, including any variations from usual working patterns (such as people away on holiday/sick leave) and daily fluctuations of working times, which generally reflect the unpredictability of work patterns.

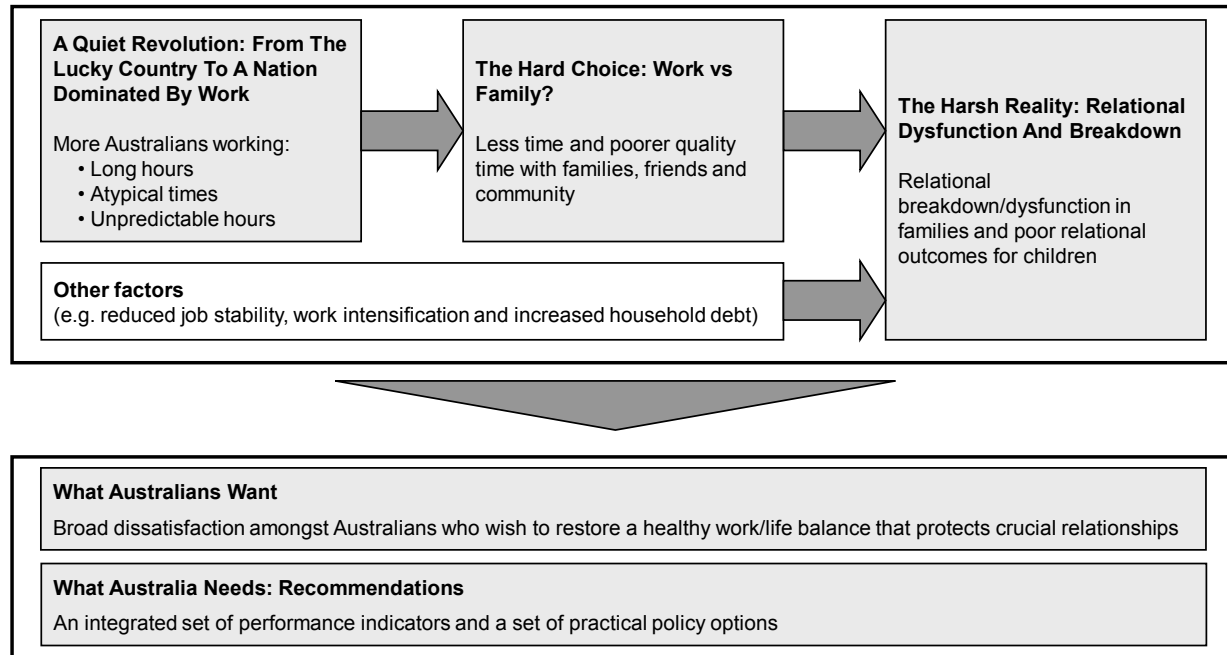
(1) Venn (2004), Working time arrangements in Australia in the 1990s: evidence from the Australian time use survey, submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of Degree of Philosophy, University of Melbourne.

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## Structure Of The Report



## Contents

### 1. Introduction

### 2. A Quiet Revolution: From The Lucky Country To A Nation Dominated By Work

### 3. The Hard Choice: Work vs Family?

### 4. The Harsh Reality: Relational Dysfunction And Breakdown

### 5. What Australians Want

### 6. What Australia Needs: Recommendations



## Introduction (I)

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- Thirty years ago, the average Australian worker spent less than forty hours a week at work – the vast majority of this time was in steady employment, working on weekdays between the hours of 8am and 6pm. This pattern of working life was shared across the broad community, providing opportunity for most Australians to enjoy consistent patterns of life *outside* work – to spend time on a predictable basis with family and friends, and in other community-related pursuits.
- Since the mid-1970s, a combination of factors has caused Australian working patterns to alter markedly:
  - Now participating in *the global economy*, local businesses are exposed to greater international competition. The resulting pressure for increased labour productivity and improved utilisation of fixed assets has led to changing requirements for total hours worked by employees, the times of day and night that labour is needed and the balance between permanent and temporary employment. Closer integration with markets in different time zones, combined with the availability of low cost telecommunications, provide further incentive for work to be conducted outside regular working hours
  - The emergence of *value based management*, where value creation is assessed only from the shareholders' perspective, as the guiding business philosophy has led to unabating pressure for shareholder returns, in turn, placing continuing pressure on labour productivity
  - The move to a *seven day trading* week has led to a growing requirement for labour outside traditional working hours, particularly for retail, food service workers and those in associated transport and distribution services. And, to some extent, this change has had a demonstration effect for workers in other sectors of the economy who, increasingly, see evening and weekend work as normal.
- Over the last three decades, working patterns have altered to such an extent that Australia is now the only high-income country in the world that combines:
  - Average working hours that are at the top end amongst high-income nations
  - A strong tendency for work on weeknights and weekends, and
  - A relatively large proportion of the working population employed on a casual basis.



## Introduction (II)

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- A significant body of evidence suggests that those people who work long and unsocial hours spend less quality time with their families and friends, which in turn is associated with relational breakdown and dysfunction within the family unit and poor relational outcomes for children. Parallel trends – including increased intensification of work responsibilities, reduced job stability and rising household debt – compound the pressures placed upon Australian households and family relations.
- This report gathers together, for the first time, the substantial body of relevant research and analysis documenting these trends, assesses their implications for Australian society – with a particular emphasis on parents and their children – and makes some recommendations on how policymakers might address remediation of these problems.



## Australia is the only high-income country with high proportions of employees working long and atypical hours, and in temporary employment

### Summary Of Working Patterns In Selected High-Income Countries (% Of Employees)

Country	Long Hours <sup>(1)</sup> (>50 per week)	Country	Regular Weekends <sup>(1)</sup>	Country	Temporary Employment <sup>(1)</sup>
Japan	28	Italy	33	Spain	31
Australia	22	Australia	30	Australia	27
New Zealand	21	USA	29	Portugal	22
USA	20	Spain	29	Finland	17
UK	15	UK	25	Sweden	16
Canada	14	Netherlands	25	Netherlands	14
Greece	6	Denmark	23	France	14
Ireland	6	Greece	22	Japan	13
Spain	6	Portugal	22	Canada	13
France	6	Finland	21	Germany	12
Portugal	5	Ireland	21	Greece	11
Germany	5	France	20	New Zealand	11
Denmark	5	Germany	19	Italy	10
Finland	5	Canada	19	Denmark	9
Italy	4	Sweden	18	Belgium	8
Belgium	4	Belgium	11	UK	6
Sweden	2	Japan	n/a	Ireland	5
Netherlands	1	New Zealand	n/a	USA	4

(1) 'Long Hours' data for year 2000, 'Regular Weekends' 1997 and 'Temporary Employment' 2002.

Note: Detailed sources are provided on slides 12, 15 and 25.

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## A Quiet Revolution: From The Lucky Country To A Nation Dominated By Work (I)

- Over the last thirty years, Australia has emerged as one of the most intensely work-focused high-income countries in the world, with around 20% of employees now working 50 hours or more each week and a high proportion working outside what were once considered regular working hours. Today, more than 30% of Australian workers regularly work on weekends.
- Over this period, the actual *number* of Australians working long hours and at atypical times has increased at an even faster rate due to a 60% increase in the size of the labour force, a result of both population growth and increased female labour force participation.

### Longer Hours

- Average working hours for full-time employees steadily increased during the 1980s and 1990s, stabilising at around 41 hours per week in the last decade. The typical Australian working day is now longer than in all comparable high-income European countries, where hours worked have generally declined over the last ten years. The United Kingdom is most similar to Australia – experiencing a moderate rise in the 1980s and early 1990s. But even in the UK there has been a decline in the last ten years, to a level similar to that of 20 years ago. Countries such as France and Denmark, where reductions in standard full-time hours have been debated publicly and then implemented, have experienced significant declines in average hours worked.
- Of high income countries, Australia stands out –along with Japan, New Zealand, USA and UK – as having a large minority (~20%) of long hours employees (50hrs or more) in comparison with other OECD countries.
- In Australia, the proportion of the workforce working more than 45 hours per week rose from 20% in 1978 to 26% in 2000 before stabilising at 25% in 2005. A greater proportion of men (34.6%) than women (13.0%) work long hours. However, the number of both men and women working long hours has increased.
- Most people who work long hours continue to do so for an extended period : 70% of people working long hours carry on into the next year, while 55% continue to work long hours for at least the next two years.



## A Quiet Revolution: From The Lucky Country To A Nation Dominated By Work (II)

### The Death Of Nine To Five

- The proportion of the workforce working atypical hours (generally defined as 6pm-8am weekdays or anytime on Saturday or Sunday) has increased over the last 15 years. Available information shows a strong increasing trend over the last three decades.
- Between 1992 and 1997, the incidence of work on weekdays between 6pm and 8am rose from 59% to 64% of the workforce.
- The proportion of employees who generally work on weekdays between 7pm and 7am or any time on weekends grew from 56% in 1986 to 64% in 2000<sup>(1)</sup>. It is possible that this figure has continued to rise over the last few years, and quite unlikely that it has fallen.
- The proportion of employees usually working on Sundays increased from less than 13% in 1974 to 23% in 1997, while 35% of employees were usually at work on Saturdays.
- By 1997, 75% of male and 47% of female workers were working atypical hours.

### Less Predictability

- While Australians have been moving to working long and atypical hours, working patterns have also become less predictable for many. This is largely due to rapid growth in the proportion of the workforce in casual or temporary employment, as well as the proportion working long hours (generally without fixed start and finish times).
- Today, 27% of Australian workers are employed on a temporary rather than permanent basis, one of the highest proportions amongst OECD countries.
- The incidence of overtime work, particularly unpaid overtime, is another key indicator of irregularity in working patterns. Between 1993 and 2003, the incidence of regular overtime rose from 33 to 37%. This is particularly skewed towards men – and especially to fathers of young children – half of whom work overtime on a regular basis. Two-thirds of all overtime worked attracts no additional remuneration.

(1) ABS (2000) Employment Arrangements 6361.0, ABS (2002) Australian Social Trends 4102.0.



## A Quiet Revolution: From The Lucky Country To A Nation Dominated By Work (III)

### A Distributed Burden

- Although some groups of workers show a greater bias towards long hours, atypical working patterns, or unpredictable work patterns, the burden of more onerous working arrangements has been spread widely across the working population.
- Long working hours are experienced in a variety of industries. Property and business services, manufacturing, construction and retailing together account for about half of those working more than 45 hours a week. 56% of those working long hours are in managerial, administrative and professional occupations.
- People who regularly work outside standard hours are typically to be found in different industries and occupations from those who work long hours. And different industries require work to be conducted at different times during the evening, night and early morning. A wide variety of people work in the evenings (6pm to midnight), including part-time, hospitality, professional services workers and students, as well as men in the mining industry and female managers. Night workers (12am to 5am) are most likely to be in manual occupations and the mining industry. Early morning work (5am to 8am) is generally undertaken by low-skilled workers in manual occupations and industries.
- Casual employment, closely linked to unpredictable working hours is most prevalent in the retail and hospitality industries (39% of casual employees) and other service industries (41%). Only 20% of casual workers are in non-service industries such as agriculture, mining, manufacturing and construction. Half of casual employees are clerical and service workers, one third are labourers, tradespeople and production workers, with only 16% working as professionals and managers. Casual workers are also more likely than permanent employees to deal with the complexity of holding more than one job.

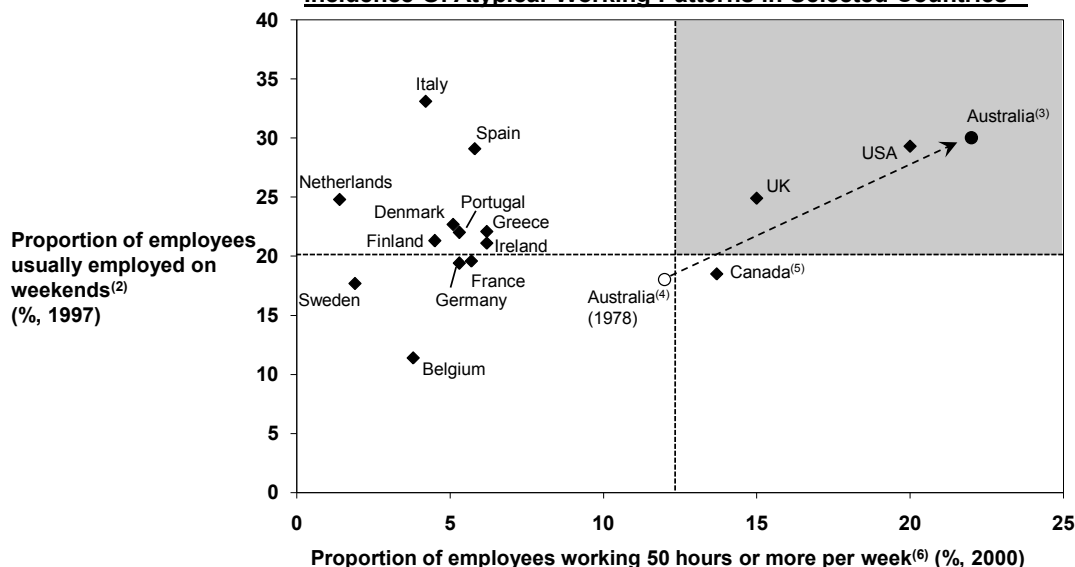


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## Australia is one of only a few high-income countries that are known to have a high proportion of employees working both long hours and at atypical times

**Incidence Of Atypical Working Patterns in Selected Countries<sup>(1)</sup>**



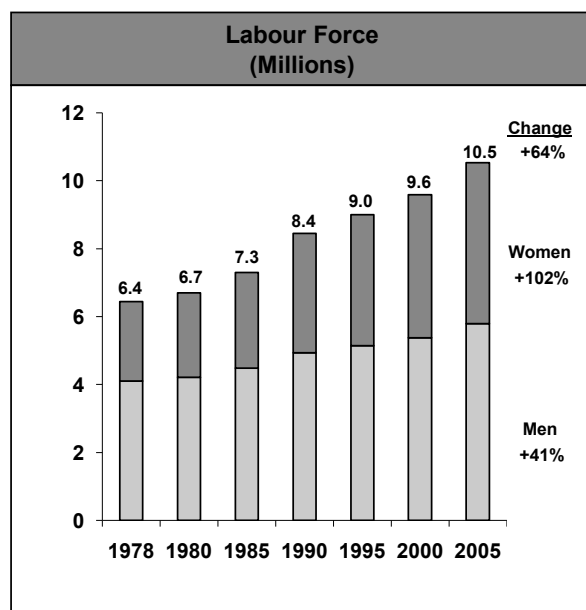
- (1) Selection of countries determined by availability of data.
- (2) For US and European countries, weekend employment means working on Saturday, Sunday or both and refers to principal job. Non-agricultural occupations only for European countries and US. Based on formal agreements concluded with the employer. Employees taking office work home and/or occasionally working at the workplace on Saturdays or Sundays are not included. To work on Saturdays (or Sundays) means having worked two or more Saturdays (or Sundays) during a four-week reference period before the interview.
- (3) Employees in main job not usually working 'Monday-Friday' or 'Weekdays Only'. Includes employees in all industries, however, this is not expected to significantly change the figures as employees in agricultural sector account for 5% of total employees, and regular weekend work is more common in service sectors than primary sectors (including agriculture) work in European countries, US and Canada (Zeytinoglu & Cooke 2006 and Presser 2003).
- (4) Weekend employment estimated for 1978 using growth rate for the incidence of Sunday working.
- (5) Weekend data for 1999 including agriculture workers, from Zeytinoglu & Cooke (2006). Who is working at weekends? Determinants of regular weekend work in Canada, in Boulin, Lallement, Messenger & Michon (Eds), Decent working time: new trends, new issues, International Labour Office.
- (6) Employees in non-agricultural sectors.
- Source: Campbell (2005). Long working hours in Australia: working-time regulation and employer pressures. Centre For Applied Social Research, RMIT University.  
 Lee (2004). Working hour gaps: trends and issues, in Messenger (2004). Working time and workers' preferences in industrialised countries: finding balance, Routledge.  
 Presser (2003). Working in a 24/7 economy: challenges for American families, Russell Sage Foundation, Eurostat. US Current Population Survey (1997).  
 ABS (2000) 6342.0 Working Arrangements, (2006) 6291.0 Labour Force, (1997) Time Use Survey 4153.0.  
 Bittman (2005). Sunday working and family time, University of New England, Armidale, NSW.  
 Cities commission time use survey (1975).  
 Statistics Canada, Table 282-0018 - Labour force survey estimates, by actual hours worked.



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**Since 1978, there has been a 64% increase in the number of people in employment – a result of both population growth and the increased participation rate of women**



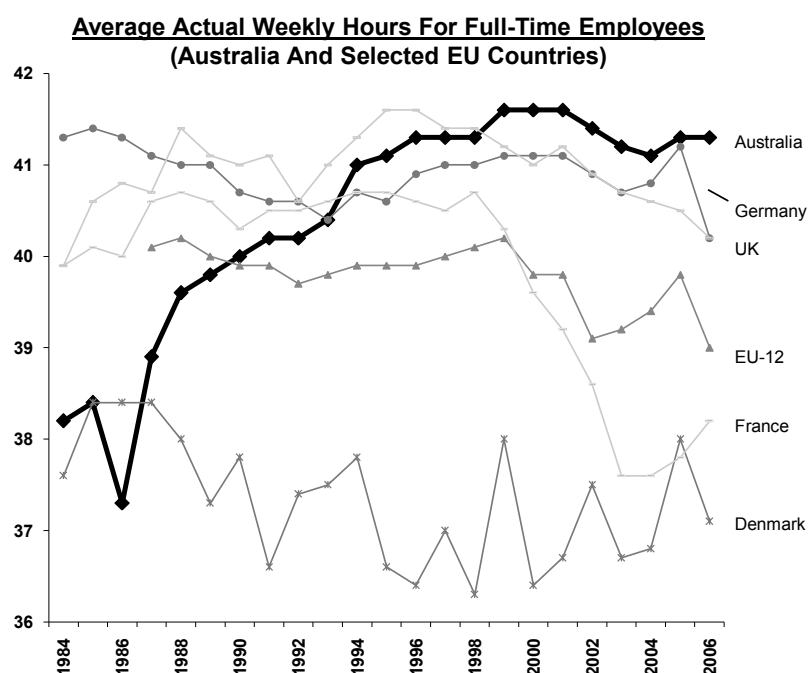
Note: Figures are year averages of monthly data.  
Includes employed and unemployed individuals within the labour force.  
Source: ABS (2006), Labour Force, 6291.0.

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**Australia has shifted from a country marked by relatively low working hours for the majority of its workers in the early 1980s to a country with relatively high working hours today**



Note: International comparisons of working patterns are difficult due to differences in definitions, however, Campbell (2005) uses information collected from Eurostat and the ABS to draw comparisons based on reasonably standardised average actual weekly hours of work in main job for full-time employees.  
Source: Campbell (2005), Long working hours in Australia: working-time regulation and employer pressures, Centre For Applied Social Research.  
Eurostat (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/>) table: ewhais.  
ABS (2006), Labour Force 6291.0.

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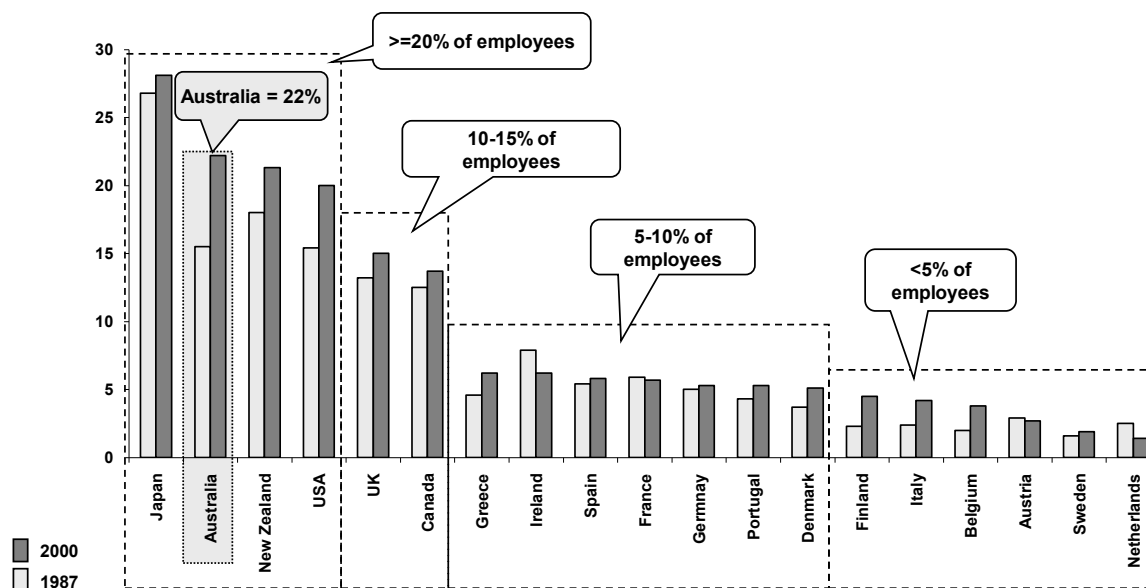


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## Australia is one of only a few OECD countries with at least 20% of employees working very long hours

**Proportion Of Employees Working 50 Hours Or More Per Week<sup>(1)</sup>**  
(%, OECD Countries)



(1) Employees in non-agricultural sectors.

Source: Campbell (2005), Long working hours in Australia: working-time regulation and employer pressures, Centre For Applied Social Research.

Lee (2004), Working hour gaps: trends and issues, in Messenger (2004), Working time and workers' preferences in industrialised countries: finding balance, Routledge.

Statistics Canada, Table 282-0018 - Labour force survey estimates, by actual hours worked

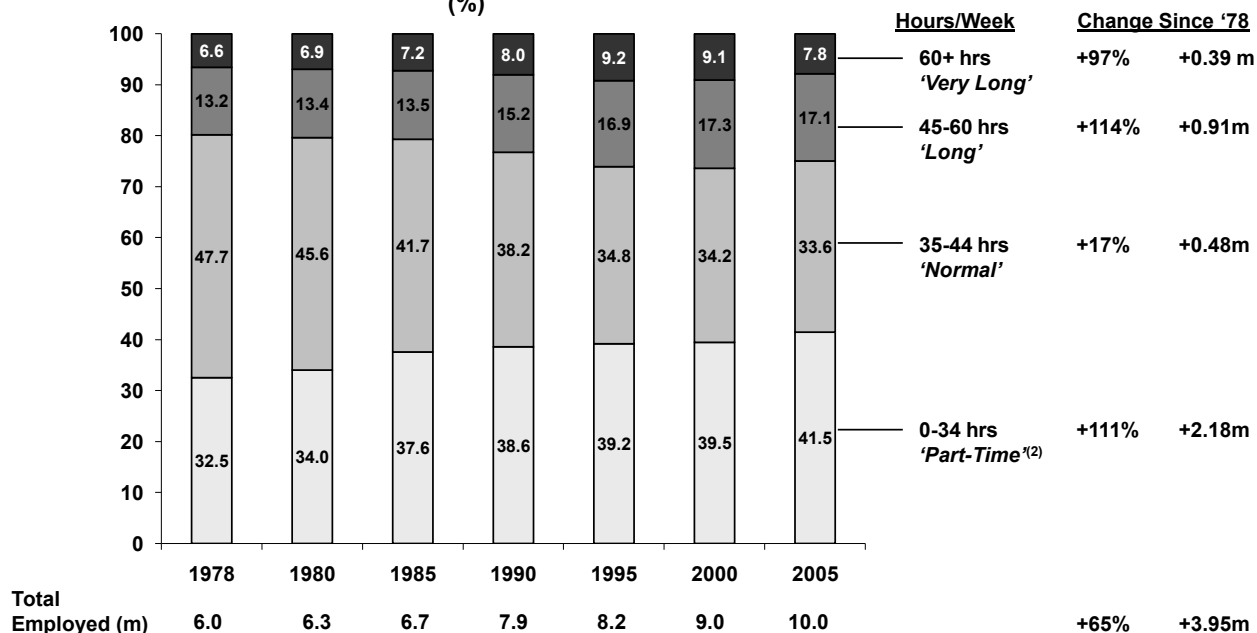
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## There has been a significant shift to long hours and part-time work

**Proportion Of Workforce By Average Actual<sup>(1)</sup> Hours Worked Per Week**  
(%)



(1) Actual hours worked during the reference week.

(2) Includes both part-time workers and full-time workers that worked less than 35 hours during the survey period (mainly due to taking holiday, sick leave or flexible work arrangements).

Source: ABS (2006), Labour Force 6291.0.

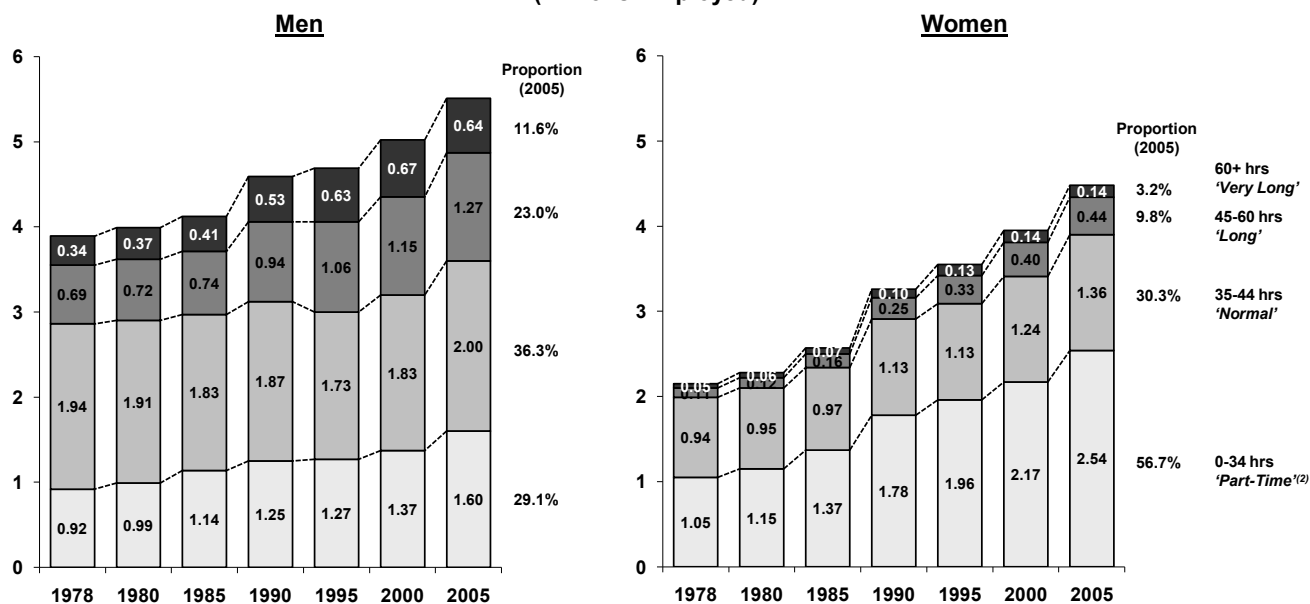
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## More men work long hours than women, although the proportions have been rising for both men and women

**Workforce By Average Actual Hours Worked Per Week**  
(Millions Employed)



- (1) Actual hours worked during the reference week.  
 (2) Includes both part-time workers and full-time workers that worked less than 35 hours during the survey period (mainly due to taking holiday, sick leave or flexible work arrangements).  
 Source: ABS (2006), Labour Force 6291.0.

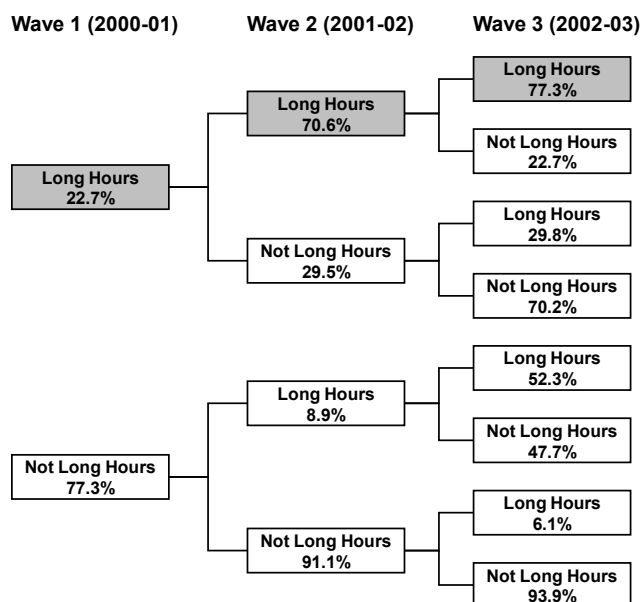
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## There is a high level of persistence in long hours<sup>(1)</sup> of work

**Continuation Of Long Hours (>50hrs/Week)**  
(% of sampled workforce)



Of those working long hours in 2000-01, 54.6%<sup>(2)</sup> continued to work long hours two years later

### Long Hours Persistence

- 12.4% worked long hours in all three years
- 9.2% worked long hours in two years
- 12.2% worked long hours in only one year
- 66.2% never worked long hours

- (1) Long hours defined as greater than 50 hours per week.  
 (2) Wave 2 long hours 70.6% multiplied by Wave 3 long hours 77.3%  
 Source: Drago, Black & Wooden (2005), The persistence of long work hours, Melbourne Institute Working Paper No.12/05.  
 HILDA Survey Data.

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**Over the last three decades there has been a trend away from the 'normal' working week towards longer hours, more part-time work and more work at 'atypical' times of the day/week**

Proportion of people actually working:

- Any atypical times<sup>(1)</sup> rose from 56% in 1986 to 64% in 2000
- Weekday atypical<sup>(2)</sup> rose from 59% in 1992 to 64% in 1997

Proportion of people usually working:

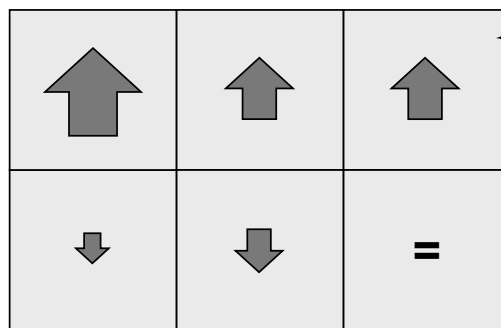
- On weekends rose from 27% in 1993 to 31% in 2003
- On Sundays rose from 14% in 1974 to 22% in 1997

**Summary Of Trends In Actual Working Patterns**  
(1978-2005, Estimated Change In Number Of People)

**Atypical**  
Mon-Fri 6pm-8am  
Sat & Sun

**Time of Day/  
Week Worked**

**Standard**  
Mon-Fri 8am-6pm



Almost all of the growth in long hours workers has come from people working >50hrs, which by definition means they are working at atypical times

Proportion of people working 45 or more hours per week increased from 19.8% to 24.9%

Proportion of people working 35-45hrs per week has decreased from 47.7% to 33.6%

Proportion of people working <35hrs per week has risen from 32.5% to 41.5%

**Hours per Week Worked**  
Part-Time <35hrs    Normal 35-45hrs    Long >45hrs

(1) Atypical defined as any times outside 7am-7pm on weekdays and any time on the weekends.

(2) Weekday atypical defined as outside 8am-6pm on weekdays only.

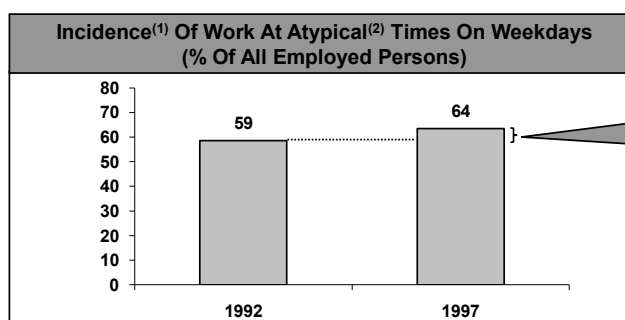
Source: ABS (2006) Labour Force 6291.0, (2000) Employment Arrangements 6361.0, (2002) Australian Social Trends 4102.0, (1997) Time Use Survey 4153.0, Cities Commission Time Use Survey (1975).

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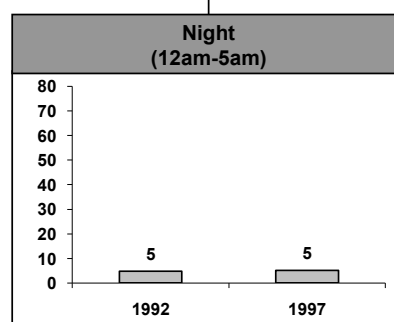
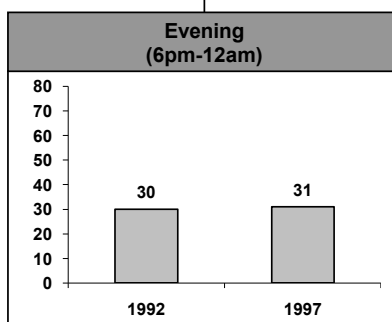
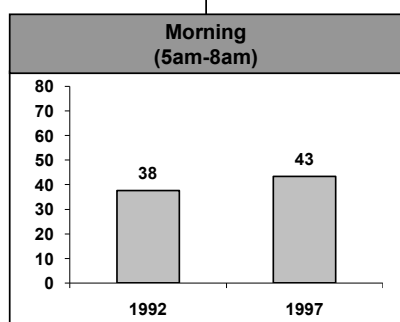


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**Over the five years between 1992 and 1997 the proportion of the workforce that worked at atypical<sup>(1)</sup> times during weekdays rose from 59% to 64%**



Increase of 0.89m workers between 1992 and 1997



(1) Employed persons actually working during survey period, not necessarily usually working at these times.

(2) Atypical times defined as 6pm-8am on weekdays.

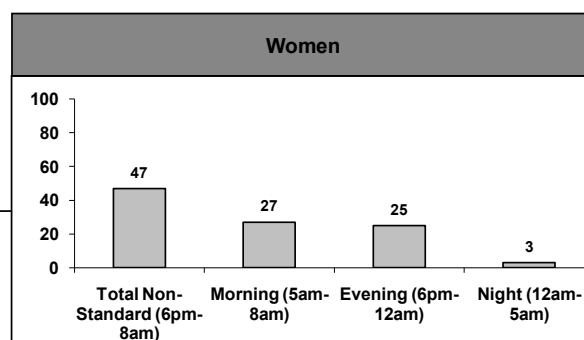
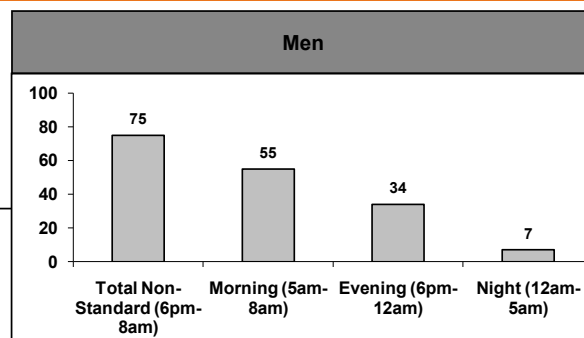
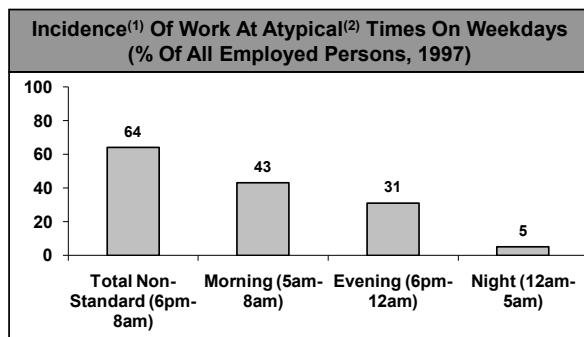
Source: Venn (2004), Working time arrangements in Australia in the 1990s: Evidence from the Australian Time Use Survey, University of Melbourne. ABS (1997) Australian Time Use Survey 4153.0.

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## By 1997, 75% of male and 47% of female workers were working during atypical<sup>(1)</sup> hours



(1) Employed persons actually working during survey period, not necessarily usually working at these times.

(2) Atypical times defined as 6pm-8am on weekdays.

Source: Venn (2004), Working time arrangements in Australia in the 1990s: evidence from the Australian Time Use Survey, University of Melbourne.  
Venn (2003), Non-standard working time: evidence from the Australian Time Use Survey, University of Melbourne.

ABS (1997) Australian Time Use Survey 4153.0

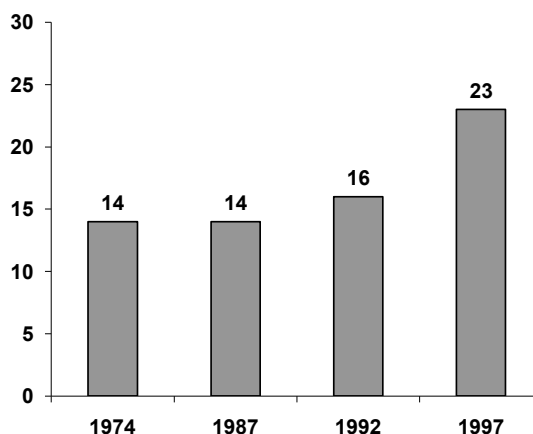
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## The proportion of employees usually working on Sundays increased from less than 14% in 1974 to 23% by 1997 ...

### Proportion Of Metropolitan Employees<sup>(1)</sup> Aged 20-59 Usually Working<sup>(2)</sup> On A Sunday (%)



The proportion would be higher if those under 20 are included as many young people and student work on weekends

(1) To allow for comparison over time, the sample is restricted to people living in metropolitan regions aged between 20-59.

(2) Defined as at work for at least 2 hours to approximate usual working patterns.

Source: Bittman (2005), Sunday working and family time, University of New England, Armidale, NSW.

ABS (1987, 1992, 1997) Time Use Survey 4153.0.

Cities commission time use survey (1975).

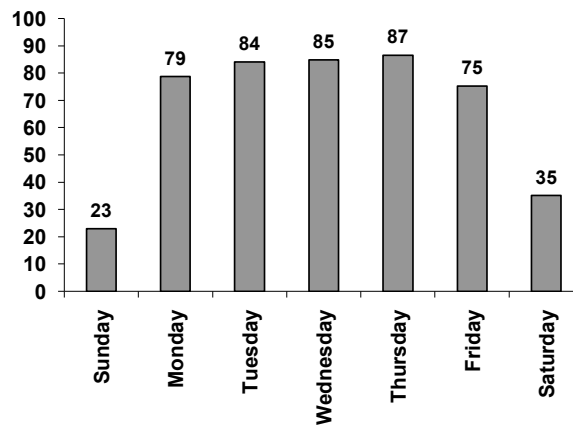
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... While 35% of employees were usually at work on Saturdays

**Proportion Of Employees<sup>(1)</sup> Usually At Work<sup>(2)</sup> By Day Of The Week  
(1997)**



(1) Employed persons 15-64 years old.

(2) Defined as at work for at least 2 hours to approximate usual working patterns.

Source: Bittman (2005), Sunday working and family time, University of New England, Armidale, NSW.

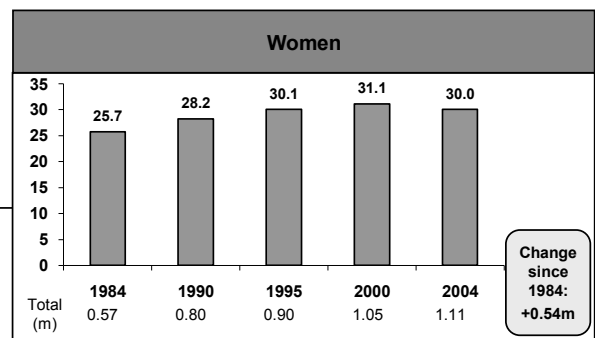
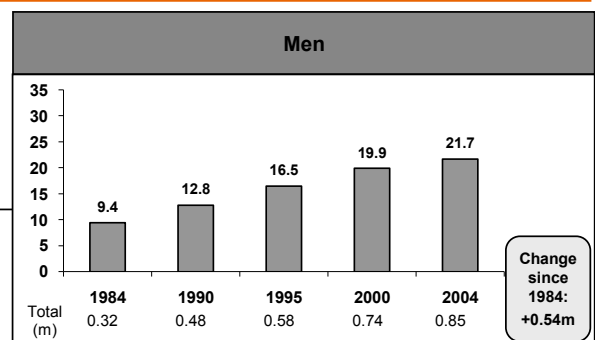
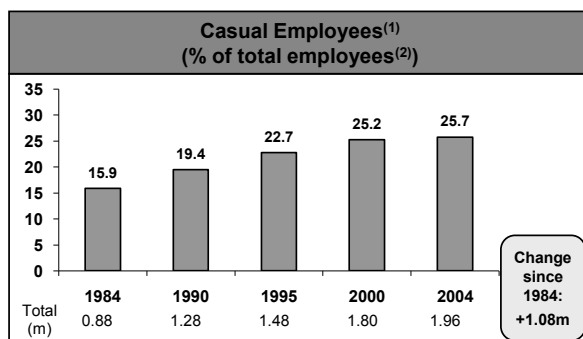
ABS (1997) Time Use Survey 4153.0, ABS (1997, 2000, 2003) Working Arrangements Survey 6342.0.

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The proportion of men and women in casual<sup>(1)</sup> employment has risen over the last two decades to reach 24%.



(1) Casual defined as persons without leave entitlements.

(2) Excludes owner managers.

Source: ABS (1997-2005) Employee Earnings, Benefit and Trade Union Membership, 6310.0. (2005) Labour Market Statistics, 6105.0. (2005) Australian Social Trends 4102.0.

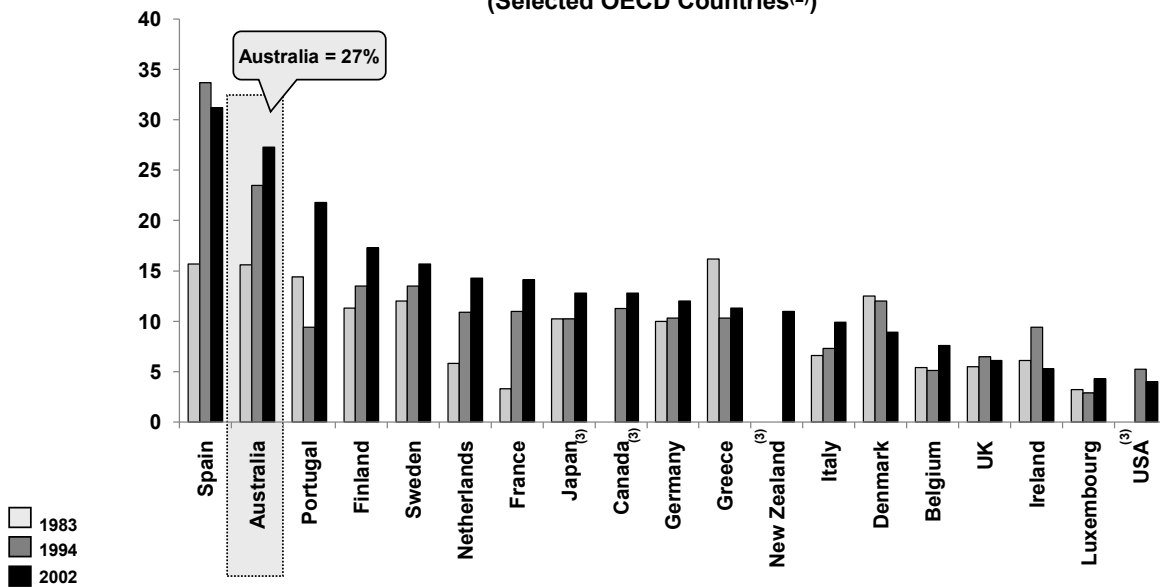
RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA



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## Australia has one of the highest proportions and growth rates of temporary employees amongst OECD countries<sup>(1)</sup>

**Proportion Of Temporary Employees<sup>(1)</sup>  
(Selected OECD Countries<sup>(2)</sup>)**



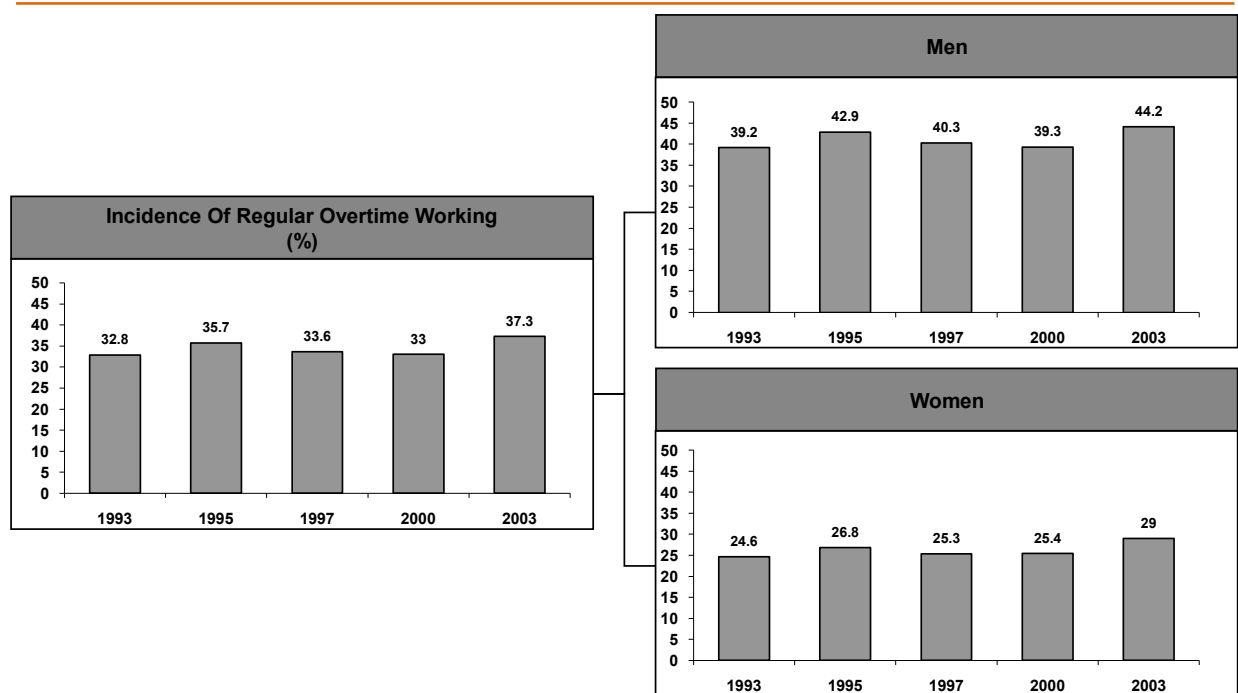
- (1) Exact definitions vary by country, but typically includes fixed-term contracts, employment with temporary work agencies, seasonal employment, casual employment and training schemes.  
 (2) Selection of countries determined by availability of data.  
 (3) Canadian and USA data for 1995 and 2001. New Zealand data for 1997. OECD (1996, 2002, 2003), Employment Outlook. Statistics Canada.  
 Source: Campbell (2004), Casual work and casualisation: how does Australia compare? Labour & Industry Vol. 15 No. 2. ABS 6310.0 Employee Earnings, Benefits and Trade Union Membership.

RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA



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## The incidence of regular overtime has risen from 33% in 1993 to 37% in 2003 due to increases for both men and women



Source: Wooden & Loundes (2001), How unreasonable are long working hours? Melbourne Institute. ABS (1993, 1997, 2000, 2003) Working Arrangements 6342.0.

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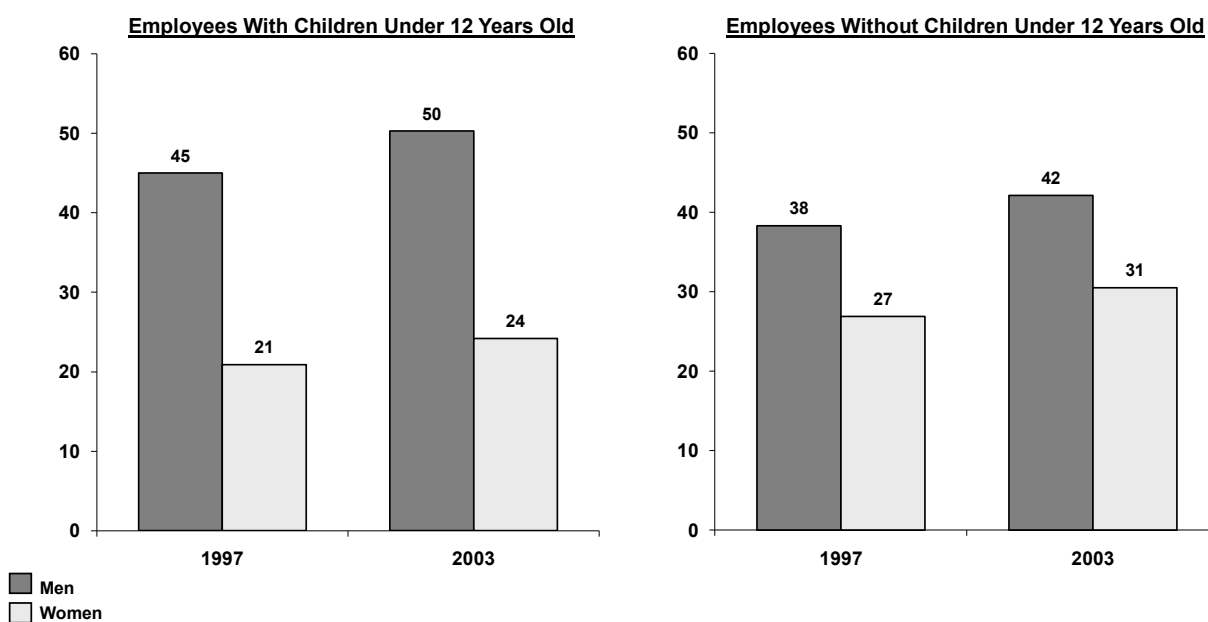


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## Overtime is most common amongst employed fathers with children under 12 years old

### The Incidence Of Regular Overtime Working

(%)



Source: ABS (1997, 2003) Working Arrangements 6342.0.

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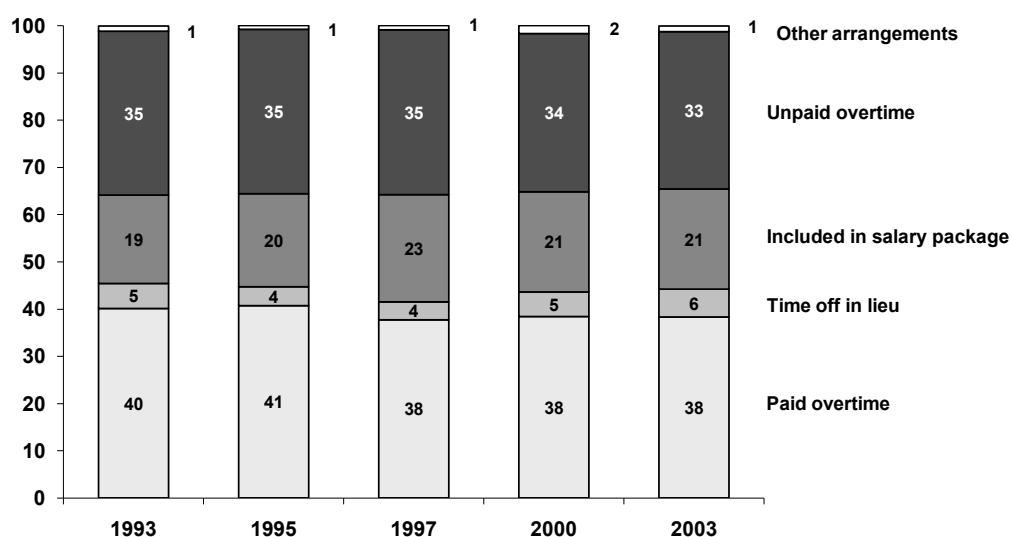


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## Two-thirds of all overtime attracts no additional remuneration

### Overtime Payment Method

(%)



Note: 'Included in salary package' not separately identified in 1993 – presumably included under 'unpaid overtime'.

Source: Wooden & Loundes (2001), How unreasonable are long working hours? Melbourne Institute.

ABS (1993, 1997, 2000, 2003) Working Arrangements 6342.0.

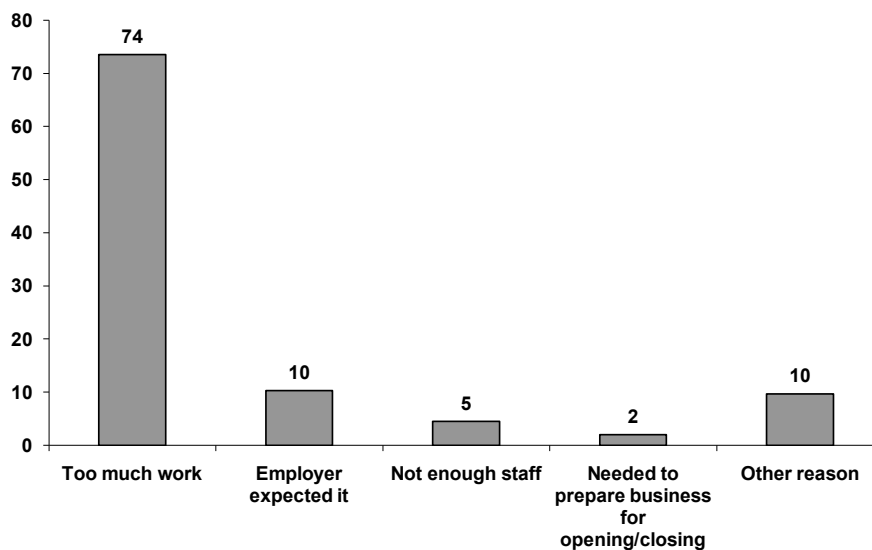
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## 74% of full-time employees are working unpaid overtime because they have too much work

**Main Reason For Working Unpaid Extra Hours**  
(%, 2000, Full-Time Employees)



Source: Campbell (2005), Long working hours in Australia: working-time regulation and employer pressures, Centre For Applied Social Research, RMIT University.

RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA



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## Long hours workers are widely spread across different industries

**Workforce Employed 45+ Hours Per Week<sup>(1)</sup>**  
(2005)

Industry	Number Employed	% Of Total Working 45+ Hours	% Of Total Employed In Industry
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	145,971	6%	41%
Mining	70,526	3%	57%
Manufacturing	314,748	12%	30%
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	21,044	1%	26%
Construction	308,125	12%	36%
Wholesale Trade	136,593	5%	31%
Retail Trade	297,878	11%	20%
Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants	102,470	4%	21%
Transport and Storage	167,729	6%	37%
Communication Services	48,526	2%	26%
Finance and Insurance	95,357	4%	26%
Property and Business Services	350,432	13%	30%
Government Administration and Defence	69,762	3%	15%
Education	180,428	7%	25%
Health and Community Services	158,039	6%	16%
Cultural and Recreational Services	55,594	2%	20%
Personal and Other Services	94,884	4%	24%
Total	2,618,105	100%	25%

(1) Actual hours worked during the reference week.  
Source: ABS (2006) Labour Force 6291.0.

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## 56% of long hours workers are managers, administrators, professionals and associate professionals

### Workforce Employed 45+ Hours Per Week<sup>(1)</sup> (2005)

Occupation	Number Employed	% Of Total Working 45+ Hours	% Of Total Employed In Occupation
Managers and administrators	444	17%	53%
Professionals	569	22%	30%
Associate Professionals	451	17%	36%
Tradespersons and related workers	410	16%	33%
Advanced clerical and service workers	44	2%	11%
Intermediate clerical, sales and service workers	214	8%	13%
Intermediate production and transport workers	268	10%	33%
Elementary clerical, sales and service workers	89	3%	9%
Labourers and related workers	130	5%	15%
Total	2,618	100%	25%

(1) Actual hours worked during the reference week.  
Source: ABS (2006) Labour Force 6291.0.

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## 82% of long hours workers are employees, with only 18% being employers and own account workers

### Workforce Employed 45+ Hours Per Week<sup>(1)</sup> (2005)

Status In Employment	Number Employed	% Of Total Working 45+ Hours	% Of Total Employed In Status Group
Employee	2,058	81%	24%
Employer	159	6%	53%
Own Account Worker	312	12%	33%
Contributing Family Worker	2	0%	5%
Total	2,531	100%	25%

(1) Actual hours worked during the reference week.  
Source: ABS (2006) Labour Force 6291.0.

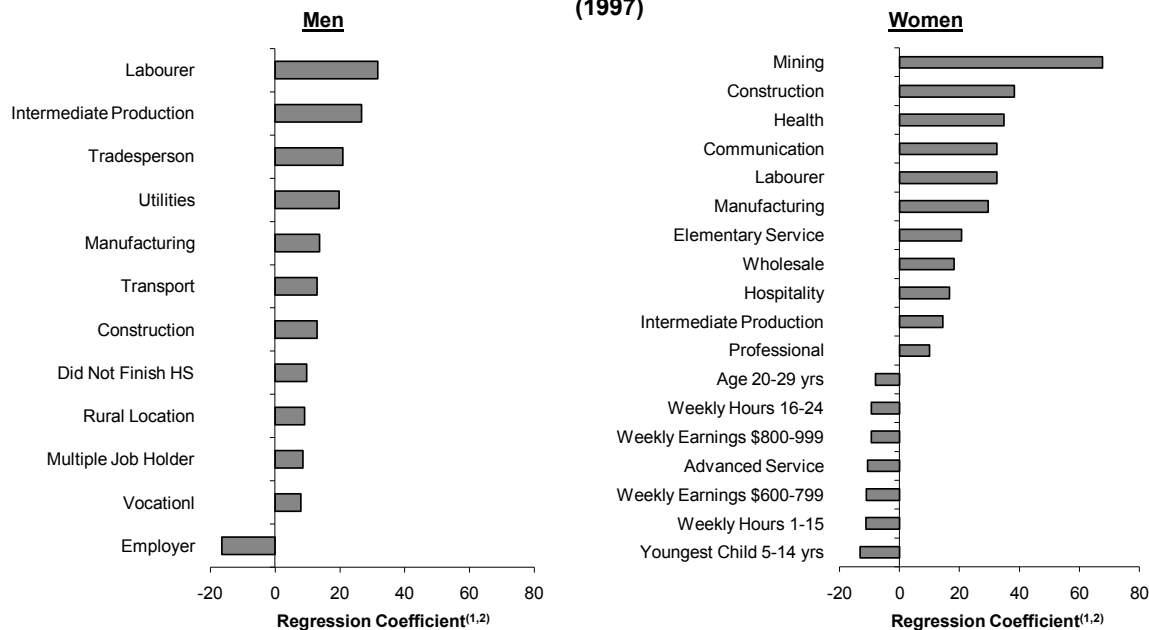
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## Early morning work is generally undertaken by low skilled workers in manual occupations and industries

### Predictors Morning Work (5am-8am) (1997)



- (1) All predictors are statistically significant at 90% confidence level or better.  
 (2) Regression coefficients indicate the strength of the effect of the predictor on the outcome of morning work when other predictors are held constant. A positive coefficient indicates that the outcome tends to rise in unison with an increase in morning work, while a negative coefficient indicates an opposite relationships (the higher the coefficient, the lower the level of morning work).
- Source: Venn (2004), Working time arrangements in Australia in the 1990s: evidence from the Australian Time Use Survey, University of Melbourne.  
 ABS (1997) Australian Time Use Survey 4153.0.

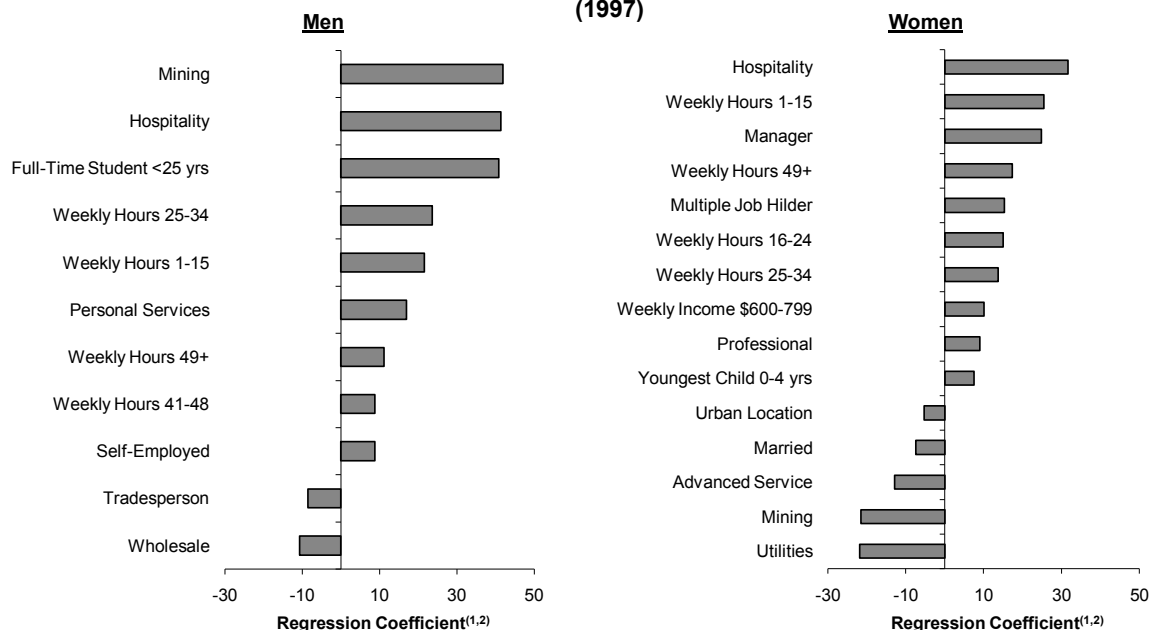
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## A wide variety of people work in the evenings, including part-time, hospitality, professional services workers and students, as well as men in the mining industry and women managers

### Predictors Of Evening Work (6pm-12am) (1997)



- (1) All predictors are statistically significant at 90% confidence level or better.  
 (2) Regression coefficients indicate the strength of the effect of the predictor on the outcome of evening work when other predictors are held constant. A positive coefficient indicates that the outcome tends to rise in unison with an increase in evening work, while a negative coefficient indicates an opposite relationships (the higher the coefficient, the lower the level of evening work).
- Source: Venn (2004), Working time arrangements in Australia in the 1990s: evidence from the Australian Time Use Survey, University of Melbourne.  
 ABS (1997) Australian Time Use Survey 4153.0.

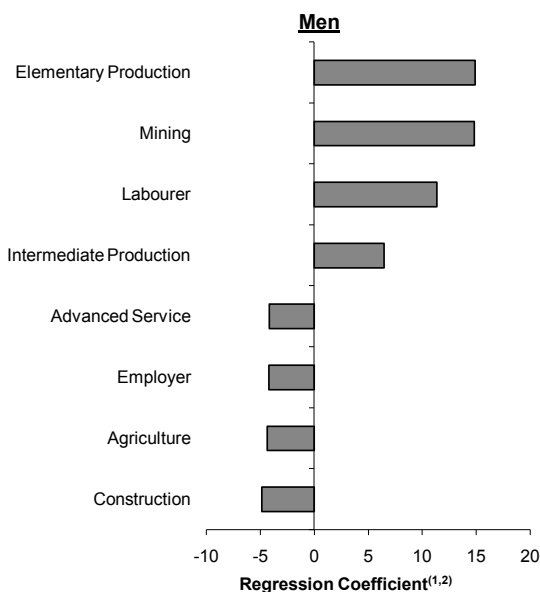
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## Night workers are most likely to be in manual occupations and the mining industry

### Predictors Of Night Work (12am-5am) (1997)



(1) All predictors are statistically significant at 90% confidence level or better.

(2) Regression coefficients indicate the strength of the effect of the predictor on the outcome of night work when other predictors are held constant. A positive coefficient indicates that the outcome tends to rise in unison with an increase in night work, while a negative coefficient indicates an opposite relationship (the higher the coefficient, the lower the level of night work).

(3) No results were available for women as the model was 'not a good fit'.

Source: Venn (2004), Working time arrangements in Australia in the 1990s: evidence from the Australian Time Use Survey, University of Melbourne.  
ABS (1997) Australian Time Use Survey 4153.0.

RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA



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## 38% of casual employees are in the retail, accommodation, café and restaurant industries

### Casual Employees<sup>(1)</sup> (2005)

Industry	Number Employed	% Of Total Working 45+ Hours	% Of Total Employed In Industry
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	90,400	4%	54%
Mining	16,100	1%	14%
Manufacturing	160,500	7%	16%
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	7,200	0%	9%
Construction	145,900	6%	27%
Wholesale Trade	80,600	4%	21%
Retail Trade	598,300	26%	45%
Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants	278,600	12%	62%
Transport and Storage	75,500	3%	20%
Communication Services	23,800	1%	16%
Finance and Insurance	37,300	2%	11%
Property and Business Services	256,600	11%	26%
Government Administration and Defence	33,200	1%	7%
Education	109,100	5%	16%
Health and Community Services	201,400	9%	22%
Cultural and Recreational Services	93,900	4%	42%
Personal and Other Services	73,600	3%	24%
Total	2,282,000	100%	27%

(1) Casual defined as persons without leave entitlements. Excludes owner managers, of which 356,200 out of a total 652,300 were classified as not having leave entitlements.

Source: ABS (2005) Employee Earnings, Benefits and Trade Union Membership 6310.0.

RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA



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## 76% of casuals are tradespersons, labourers, clerical, sales and service workers

### Casual Employees<sup>(1)</sup> (2005)

Occupation	Number Employed	% Of Total Working 45+ Hours	% Of Total Employed In Occupation
Managers and administrators	93,500	4%	15%
Professionals	255,000	11%	15%
Associate Professionals	197,100	9%	19%
Tradespersons and related workers	179,300	8%	19%
Advanced clerical and service workers	73,100	3%	23%
Intermediate clerical, sales and service workers	441,900	19%	29%
Intermediate production and transport workers	190,600	8%	27%
Elementary clerical, sales and service workers	517,400	23%	56%
Labourers and related workers	334,400	15%	46%
Total	2,282,300	100%	27%

(1) Casual defined as persons without leave entitlements. Excludes owner managers, of which 356,200 out of a total 652,300 were classified as not having leave entitlements.

Source: ABS (2005) Employee Earnings, Benefits and Trade Union Membership 6310.0.



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## Contents

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## The Hard Choice: Work vs Family? (I)

*'You've got organisations which are run by people who have essentially made that decision – and in some cases made it in a very obvious fashion – by people who have been given the choice of career advancement or retaining their family' (father of two, works full-time) <sup>(1)</sup>*

### More Time At Work = Less Time At Home

- There is a compelling case that the growing numbers of Australians who work long hours and at unsocial and unpredictable times, sacrifice time with their families and friends.
- Available local data, combined with recent research in the UK, provide a good guide to the likely impact on the amount and quality of time that individuals have with family, friends and community.
- Australians' non-employment related activities remain concentrated on the weekend. It is not surprising then that our 3 million<sup>(2)</sup> weekend workers are able to spend less quality time with their families, friends, communities and clubs/associations.
- On average, the 2 million<sup>(3)</sup> Australians who work on Sundays do so for almost a full working day, typically losing six hours of family time and social contact, which is not compensated for during the week. Working mothers sacrifice personal care, household chores and social time in order to minimise time lost with children. Many parents in dual-earner families also adopt a strategy of shift-parenting, requiring them to sacrifice time spent together as a couple and with their families. Both couples and singles lose leisure time with friends, colleagues and neighbours.
- Research in the UK, where working patterns are similar to those in Australia, further demonstrates the impact of long and atypical work on family time. In British two-income families, mothers working at atypical times lose an average of eight hours per week with their children, while fathers lose four hours. Single-income fathers who work at atypical times lose an average of ten hours per week with their children
- In Australia, the proportion of working couples (that is, where both are employed) with children has risen from 42% in 1981 to 60% in 2005, largely due to the significant increase in the number of women at work. Available information suggests strongly that these parents spend less time, in total, with their children than their counterparts where only one parent works.

(1) Hand & Lewis (2002), Fathers' views on family life and paid work, Family Matters 61, AIFS.

(2) Estimated using regular weekend working 31% in 2003 (ABS Working arrangements 6342.0) with 2005 workforce (ABS Labour force 6291.0).

(3) Estimated using regular Sunday working 23% in 1997 (ABS Time Use Survey) with 2005 workforce (ABS Labour force 6291.0).



## The Hard Choice: Work vs Family? (II)

*'Well I would say when I do work a lot, it does make me more tired, yes. And there would be sort of repercussions on children when you are not as easygoing and have a tendency to flare up a bit more' (father of two, works full-time) <sup>(1)</sup>*

### Temperature Rising

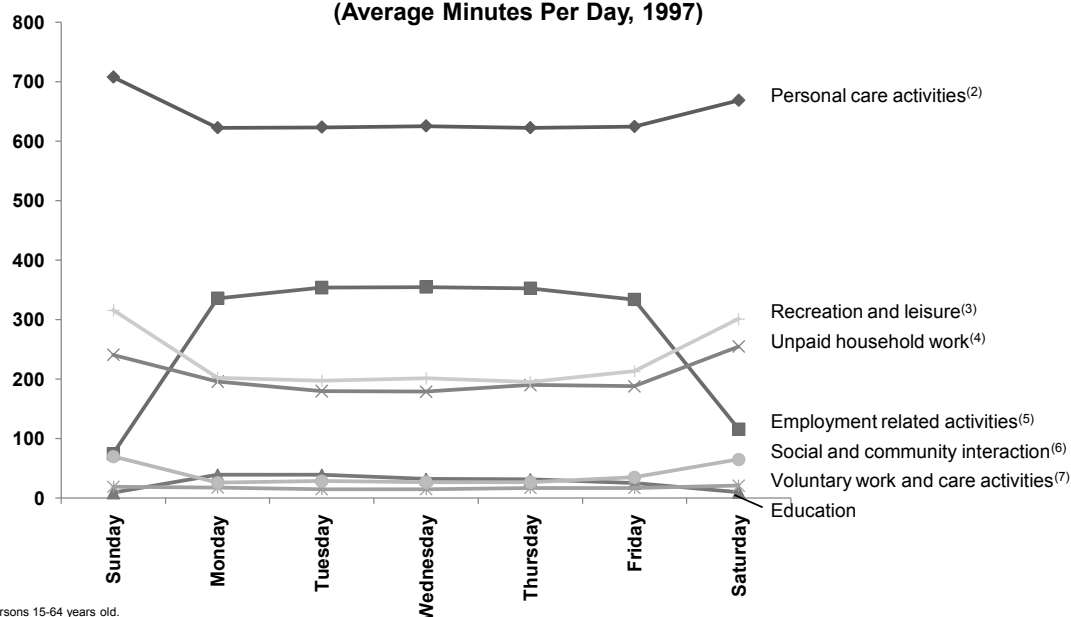
- Most Australian families are suffering time pressure resulting from their work. 63% of parents who work more than 45 hours a week miss out on some of the rewarding aspects of being a parent because of work commitments. Nearly half report that work leaves them with little energy to be the parent they would like to be.
- Couples with young children (0-4 years) perceive a higher degree of time pressure than those without children. And women, in particular, perceive greater pressure than men. 51% of fathers with young children report time pressure often or always, while 62% of mothers with young children report time pressure often or always.
- 66% of all fathers and 40% of mothers consider that work responsibilities cause them to miss out on family activities in which they would otherwise have taken part.
- Although, the use of flexible work arrangements can reduce the amount of family time/activities missed, the use of these types of arrangements is still low for fathers and, in any case, only offers a partial solution..

(1) Hand & Lewis (2002), Fathers' views on family life and paid work, Family Matters 61, AIFS.



## Non-employment related activities are concentrated on the weekends, and more so on Sundays than Saturdays

**Employees<sup>(1)</sup> Time Allocation To Various Activities By Day Of The Week**  
(Average Minutes Per Day, 1997)



- (1) Employed persons 15-64 years old.  
 (2) Includes sleep, eating, bathing and grooming.  
 (3) Includes active sports/outdoor activities, games, hobbies/crafts, reading, relaxing, watching TV, and listening to music/radio.  
 (4) Includes domestic work, childcare, shopping, gardening, cooking and cleaning.  
 (5) Includes commuting time.  
 (6) Includes meeting people, attending sporting events, movies, concerts, museums and religious ceremonies.  
 (7) Includes supporting frail/disabled adults, helping neighbours, friends and relatives.  
 Source: Bittman (2005), Sunday working and family time, University of New England, Armidale, NSW.  
 ABS (1997) Time Use Survey 4153.0.

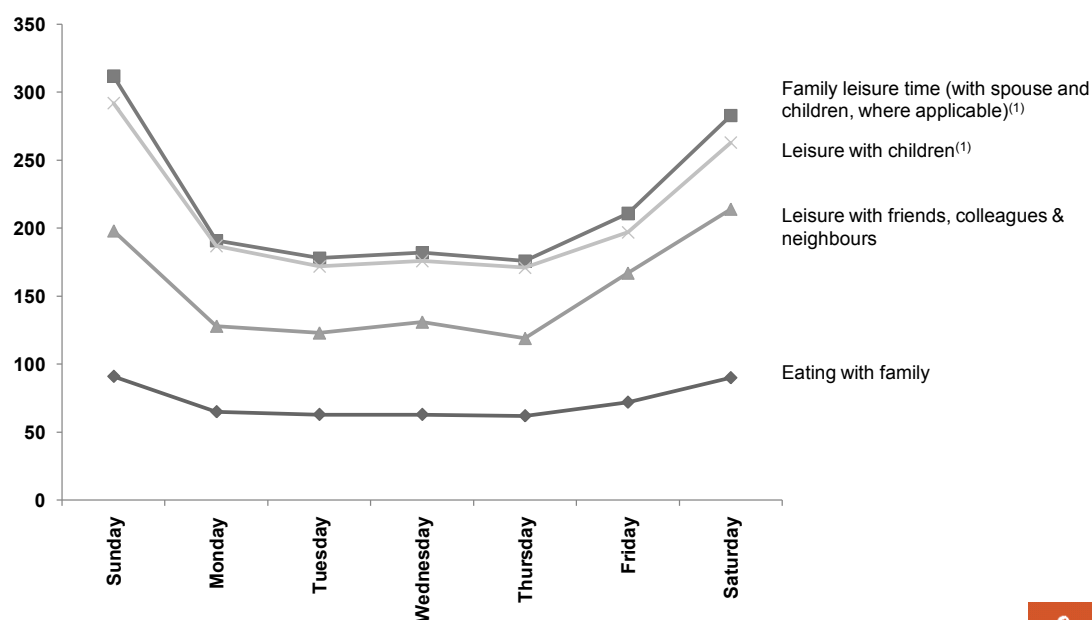


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## Saturday and Sunday are the most important days for time spent with family, friends and community

**Social Contact With Family, Friends, Colleagues And Neighbours By Day Of Week**  
(Average Minutes Per Day, 1997)



- (1) Time spent with children overlaps with time spent with family.  
 Source: Bittman (2005), Sunday working and family time, University of New England, Armidale, NSW.  
 ABS (1997) Time Use Survey 4153.0.

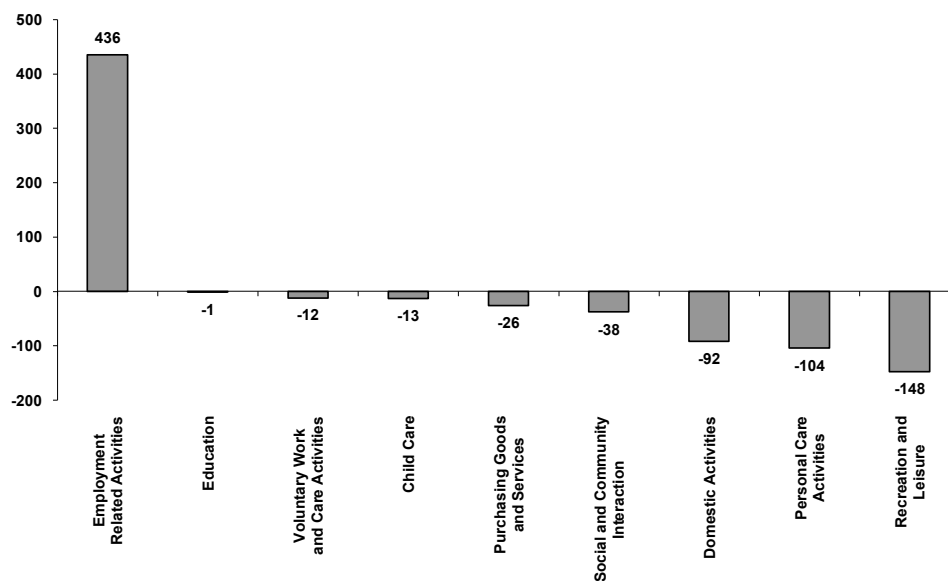


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## Most employees usually working on Sunday do so for a full day, significantly reducing their time available for all other activities

**Allocation Of Time For Those Usually<sup>(1)</sup> Working On Sunday Relative To Other Workers<sup>(2,3)</sup>**  
(Average Minutes Per Day, 1997)



- (1) Defined as at work for at least 2 hours to approximate usual working patterns.  
 (2) Employed persons 15-64 years old.  
 (3) The height of the bars illustrates how the time allocations of Sunday workers differ from those who usually work on other days.  
 Source: Bittman (2005), Sunday working and family time, University of New England, Armidale, NSW.  
 ABS (1997) Time Use Survey 4153.0.

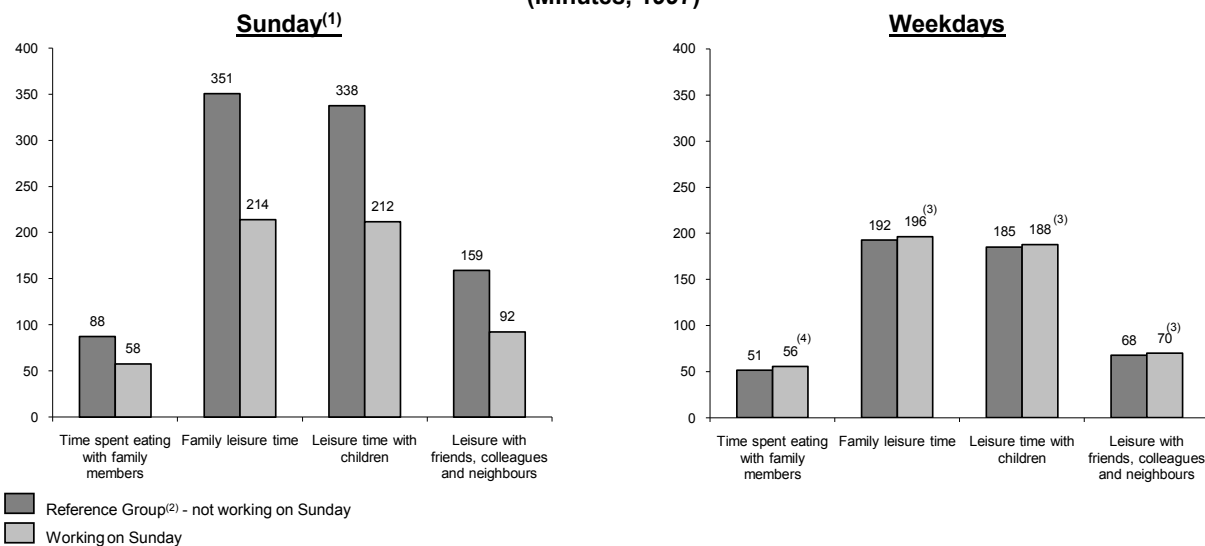
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## People working on Sundays lose 6 hours of family time and social contact, which is not compensated for during the week

**Time Spent With Family And Other Social Contact**  
(Minutes, 1997)



- (1) Statistically significant at 99.95% confidence level.  
 (2) Reference group is made up of currently employed, working-age, male, salespersons in the retail industry, who live with their families and do not work on Sundays. Comparison to reference is for a man who worked on Sunday, but otherwise had the same characteristics as those in the reference group. Similar results were found for women.  
 (3) Not statistically significant  
 (4) Statistically significant at 95% confidence level  
 Note: Females spend an additional 11mins less in 'time spent with family members', 38mins less in 'family and leisure time', 40mins less in 'leisure time with children' and 30mins less in 'leisure with friends, colleagues, neighbours'.  
 Source: Bittman (2005), Sunday working and family time, University of New England, Armidale, NSW. Data are from OLS regressions of ABS (1997) Time Use Survey 4153.0.

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## In order to minimise time lost with children, working parents (particularly mothers) sacrifice personal care, household and recreation time

- Children absorb an enormous amount of parental time, particularly from mothers:
  - Households with one child 0-2 years old on average lose 6 hours per day of employment, personal care and recreation time, with mothers accounting for 75% of this time lost
  - Each additional child increases the time lost from employment, personal care and recreation time by just over an hour per day (assuming the youngest child is 0-2 years old).
- Hours in employment do not reduce the time parents spend in activities with children on an hour for hour basis<sup>(1,2)</sup>. This has been helped by the declining fertility rate which means that although mothers' time is more limited, it is spread among fewer children:
  - Mothers' time spent in care or activities with children reduces by 25 minutes for every hour worked in a week. Fathers' time reduces by 14 minutes for every hour worked in a week.
- Parents prioritise developmental and high contact care with children, sacrificing low intensity care, domestic labour, personal care and child-free recreation time:
  - Non-employed mothers spend an average of 205 minutes per weekday in developmental and high contact activities with children compared with 160 minutes for a mother working 35 hours per week, and 147 minutes for a mother working 45 hours per week
  - Time spent in low intensity activities falls from 459 minutes per weekday for non-employed mothers to 121 minutes for mothers working 35 hours per week and to 83 minutes for mothers working 45 hours per week
  - Compared to non-employed mothers, working mothers spend 1.8 hours less time in domestic labour, 1.1 hours less in personal care and they lose all of their child-free recreation time (0.4 hours).

- (1) Bittman, Craig & Folbre (2004), Packaging care: what happens when parents utilise non-parental child care, in Bittman & Folbre (Eds), Family time: the social organisation of care, Routledge.
- (2) Craig (2005), How do they do it? A time diary analysis of how working mothers find time for the kids, Social Policy Research Centre Discussion Paper No. 136.

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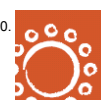
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## Although shift-parenting may minimise lost parental time with children, it means less time for parents together and makes it harder to maintain family rituals

- Many parents in dual-income families have adopted a strategy of shift-parenting, where they share the care of their children between them and work evenings, nights or weekends to fit their work times around their partner's schedule. While one parent is at work, the other is available to give care<sup>(1,2)</sup>
- Work outside the standard weekday can be described as potentially family friendly because it maximises parental time with their children<sup>(1,3,4,5,6)</sup>
  - A third of mothers in the US who work atypical hours choose these times to help with childcare arrangements because their husbands are then available to care for children
  - Childcare costs can be minimised or avoided
  - Greater involvement by fathers could lead to a more equal gender division of care
- It is not known, however, how many parents want or are able to adopt shift-parenting work schedules, nor is it known how these families adapt to the strains and stresses of these atypical schedules over time
  - In the UK, two thirds of parents work atypical times because it is a requirement of the job, not because they choose to, and many of these parents would rather not work these times<sup>(2)</sup>. Nearly half of the mothers who work shifts and two thirds of those working weekends want different work times, indicating that in many dual-earner families, atypical work times create problems
- Many dual earner couples with children (under the age of 15 years) co-ordinate their work schedules to reduce the amount of time when both parents are working, therefore reducing their dependence on non-parental childcare, without reducing the amount of time they spend together on weekdays. Mothers generally work fewer hours per days than women without children, and avoid working at times when childcare might be needed, such as directly before and after school, however, for mothers who work full-time this can only be achieved by spreading their work hours over more days of the week, including the weekends<sup>(7)</sup>.
- Although shift-parenting may minimise lost parental time with children, it also may also mean less time for parents to spend together, and less time when both parents spend time together with their children. In particular, working evenings, nights and weekends makes it harder to maintain family rituals, routines and other social activities that are important for relationships

- (1) Riley & Glass (2002), You can't always get what you want: infant care preference and use among employed mothers, Journal of Marriage and Family 64:2-15.
- (2) La Valle, Arthur, Millward, Scott & Clayden (2002), Happy families? Atypical work and its influence on family life, Policy Press.
- (3) Presser & Cox (1997), The work schedules of low-educated American women and welfare reform, Monthly Labour Review 120:25-34.
- (4) Averett, Gennetian & Peters (2000), Patterns and determinants of parental child care during the child's first three years of life, Marriage and Family Review 29:115-137.
- (5) Brayfield (1995), Juggling jobs and kids: the impact of employment on fathers' caring for children, Journal of Marriage and Family 57:321-332.
- (6) Glass (1998), Gender liberation, economic squeeze or fear of strangers: why fathers provide infant care in dual-earner families, Journal of Marriage and the Family 60:1749-1760.
- (7) Venn (2003), Coordinating work and family: evidence from the Australian Time Use Survey, paper presented at the AIFS Conference.
- Source: Strazdins, Clements, Korda, Broom & D'Souza (2006), Unsociable work? Nonstandard work schedules, family relationships and children's well-being, Journal of Marriage and Family 68:394-410.

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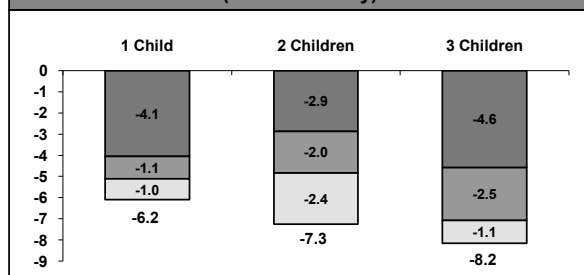


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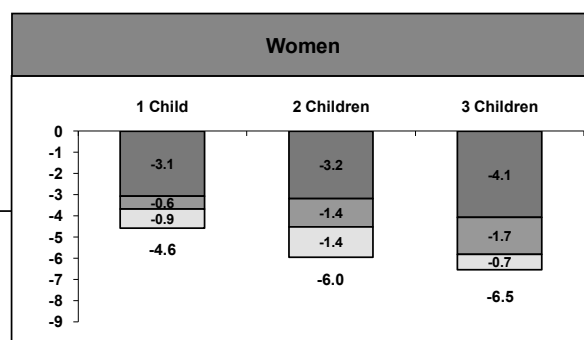
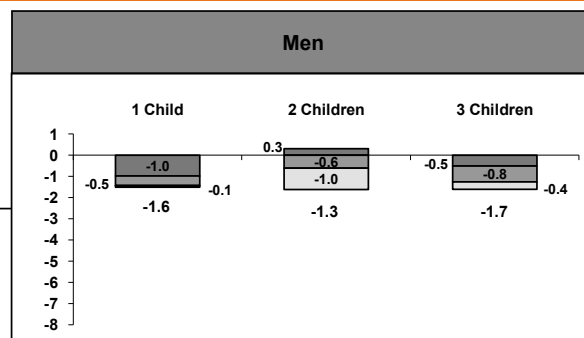


## Children absorb an enormous amount of parental time, particularly from mothers

**Impact Of Children<sup>(1)</sup> On Household Hours Per Day In Employment, Personal Care And Recreation (Hours Per Day)**



■ Employment  
■ Personal Care  
■ Recreation



(1) All data refer to households with the youngest child aged 0-2 years.

Source: Craig (2007), How employed mothers in Australia find time for both market work and childcare, Journal of Family and Economic Issues 28: 69-87.  
ABS (1997) Time Use Survey 4153.0.

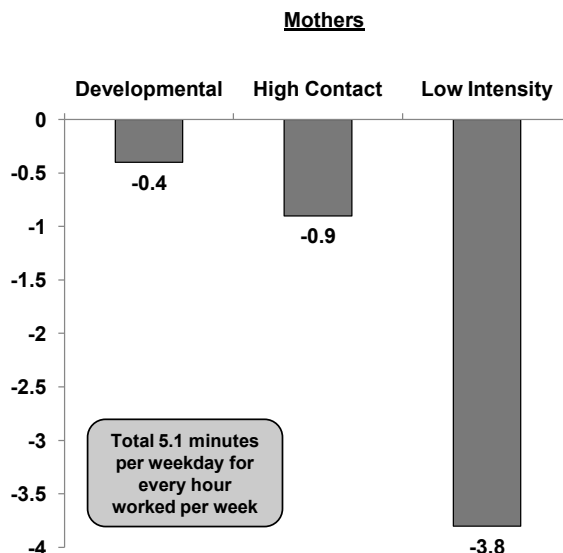
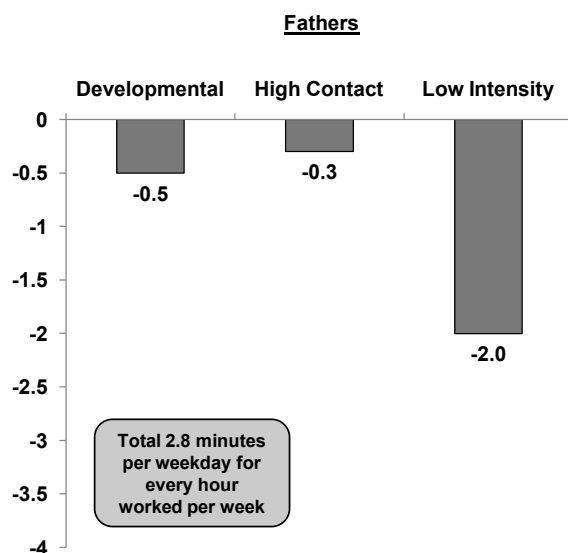
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## Working parents prioritise developmental and high contact care with children, sacrificing low intensity care (I)

**Impact Of Working Hours On Parents<sup>(1)</sup> Average Time In Activities With Children On Weekdays (Minutes Per Day For Every Hour Of Work Per Week)**



(1) Data are for time spent on activities on a weekday by a 35-44 year old married parent of one child under 3 years, who uses no non-parental child care, has no tertiary educational qualifications and does not live with a disabled household member.

Source: Bittman, Craig & Folbre (2004), Packaging care: what happens when parents utilise non-parental child care, in Bittman & Folbre (Eds), Family time: the social organisation of care, Routledge.  
ABS (1997) Time Use Survey 4153.0.

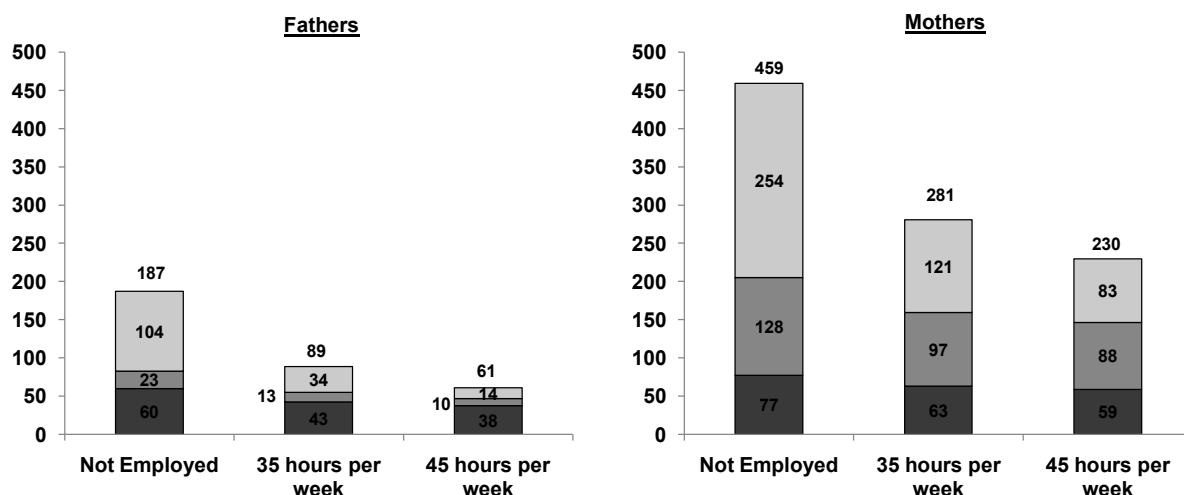
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## Working parents prioritise developmental and high contact care with children, sacrificing low intensity care (II)

**Parents<sup>(1)</sup> Average Time In Activities With Children On Weekdays**  
(Minutes Per Day)



- Low Intensity (including travel and communication) – activities with children in which parents play a background role, transport children to/from school, sports and discussions with family members and others when the conversation is about the child.  
 High Contact – face to face parent-child interaction that revolves around physical care of children (e.g. Feeding, bathing, dressing, cuddling, soothing etc.)  
 Developmental – face to face parent-child interaction that involves activities believed to be critical for the development of children's linguistic, cognitive and social capabilities (e.g. Teaching, reading, telling stories, playing games etc.)

(1) Data are for time spent on activities on a weekday by a 35-44 year old married parent of one child under 3 years, who uses no non-parental child care, has no tertiary educational qualifications and does not live with a disabled household member.

Source: Bittman, Craig & Folbre (2004), Packaging care: what happens when parents utilise non-parental child care, in Bittman & Folbre (Eds), Family time: the social organisation of care, Routledge.  
ABS (1997) Time Use Survey 4153.0.

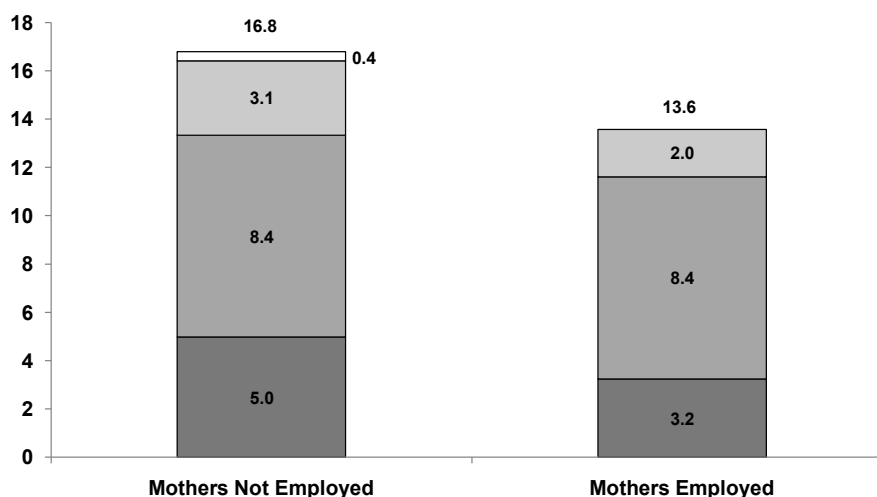
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## Working mothers spend 1.8 hours less time in domestic labour than non-employed mothers, 1.1 hours less in personal care and they lose all of their child-free recreation time (0.4 hours)

**Average Time In Non-Childcare Household Activities During Weekdays<sup>(1)</sup>**  
(Hours Per Day)



- Child-free Recreation  
 Personal Care  
 Domestic Labour  
 Sleep

(1) Data are for mother aged 35-44 years with one child under 2, no disabled family member

Source: Craig (2007), How employed mothers in Australia find time for both market work and childcare, Journal of Family and Economic Issues 28: 69-87.  
ABS (1997) Time Use Survey 4153.0.

RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA



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**Working parents maintain time spent together during weekdays by working less hours per day, but this is countered by an increase in the number of days worked (weekends)**

**Proportion Of Weekday When Neither Partners Work And Time Spent Together (%)**

Children Under 15yrs	Man Full-Time, Woman Full-Time		Man Full-Time, Woman Part-Time	
	No	Yes	No	Yes
Time Neither Working	55.9	56.0	57.6	56.6
Time Spent Together	53.3	52.7	54.0	52.0

**Individual Working Time Patterns**

Children Under 15yrs		Man Full-Time, Woman Full-Time		Man Full-Time, Woman Part-Time	
		No	Yes	No	Yes
Number Of Days Worked Last Week	Men	5.3	5.4	5.5	5.4
	Women	5.0	5.2	3.8	3.4
Daily Hours Worked On Weekdays	Men	8.7	8.6	8.9	8.9
	Women	7.8	7.5	5.4	5.1

Source: Venn (2003), Coordinating work and family: evidence from the Australian Time Use Survey, paper presented at the AIFS Conference.

RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA

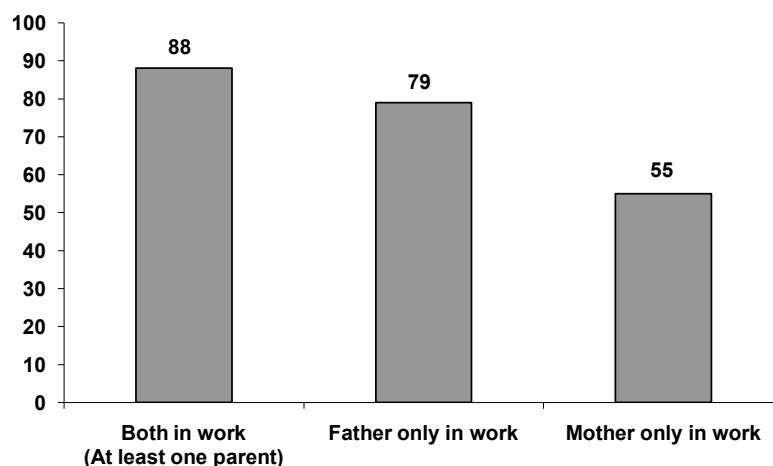


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United Kingdom

**In the UK, 88% of dual earner families have at least one parent working atypical times**

**Incidence Of Atypical<sup>(1)</sup> Work For Couples With Children At Home (%)**



(1) Atypical working defined as 7pm-8am on weekdays and any time on weekends.

Source: Barnes, Bryson & Smith (2006), Working atypical hours: what happens to family life?, National Centre For Social Research.

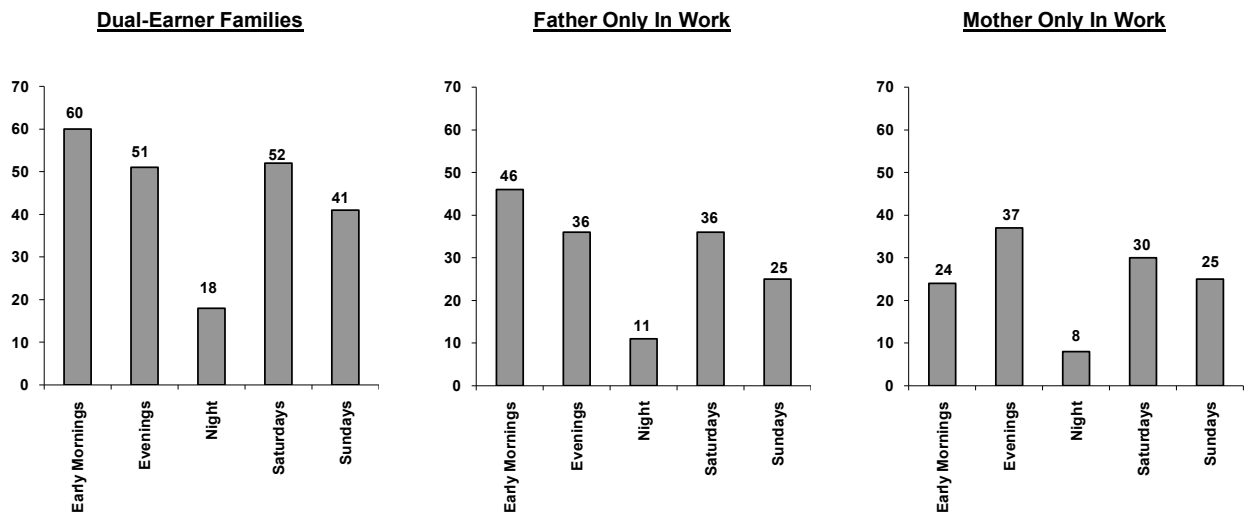
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**More than 50% of dual-earner families have at least one parent working early mornings, evenings or Saturdays ... 41% of these families have at least one parent absent on Sundays**

**Incidence Of Atypical<sup>(1)</sup> Work For Couples With Children At Home**  
(%)



(1) Atypical working defined as 7pm-8am on weekdays and any time on weekends.

Source: Barnes, Bryson & Smith (2006), Working atypical hours: what happens to family life?, National Centre For Social Research.

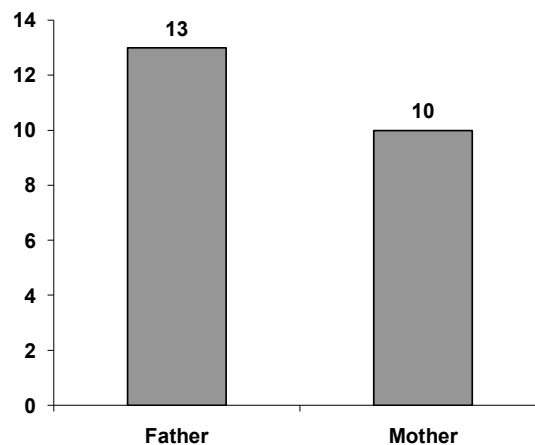


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RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA

**For those parents working at atypical times, fathers work on average 13 hours and mothers 10 hours during these atypical times**

**Average Time Spent Working At Atypical<sup>(1)</sup> Times**  
(Hours)



(1) Atypical working defined as 7pm-8am on weekdays and any time on weekends.

Source: Barnes, Bryson & Smith (2006), Working atypical hours: what happens to family life?, National Centre For Social Research.

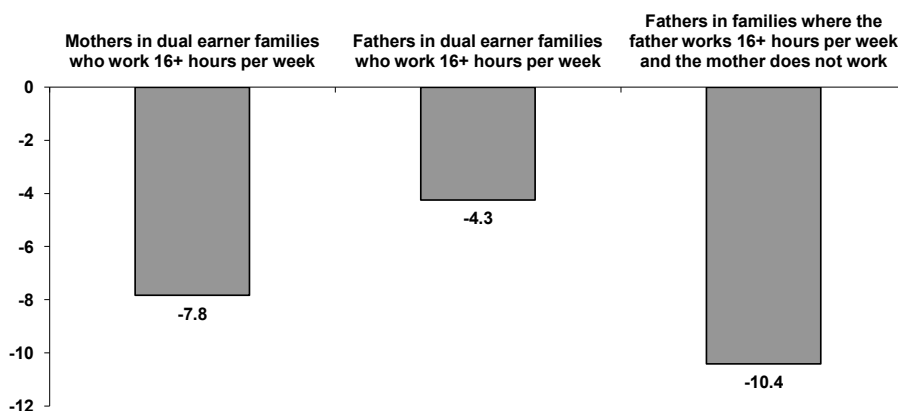


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## Atypical working hours cause a significant reduction in time spent with children – both for dual- and single-income families

### Impact Of Atypical<sup>(1)</sup> Hours On Workers' Time Spent With Children (Reduction In Average Hours Per Week Spent With Children<sup>(2)</sup>)



(1) Atypical working defined as 7pm-8am on weekdays and any time on weekends.

(2) Compared with those not working atypical hours.

Source: Barnes, Bryson & Smith (2006), Working atypical hours: what happens to family life?, National Centre For Social Research.

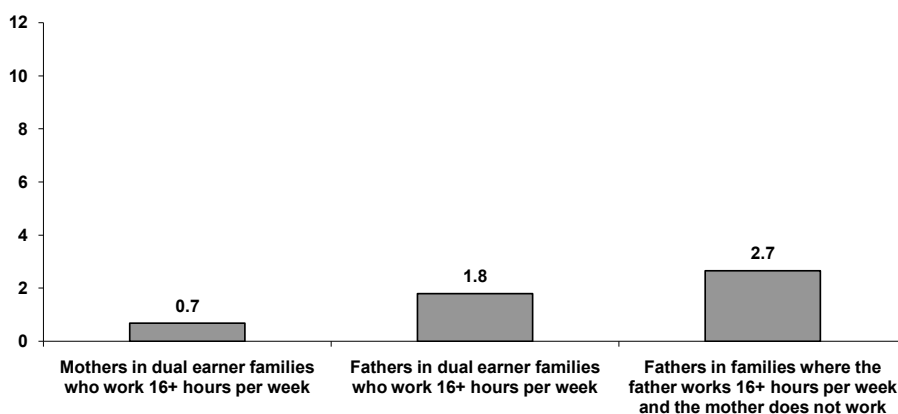


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## One parent's lost time with children is not generally compensated for by more of the other parent's time

### Impact Of Atypical<sup>(1)</sup> Hours On Workers' Partners' Time Spent With Children (Reduction In Average Hours Per Week Spent With Children<sup>(2)</sup>)



(1) Atypical working defined as 7pm-8am on weekdays and any time on weekends.

(2) Compared with those not working atypical hours.

Source: Barnes, Bryson & Smith (2006), Working atypical hours: what happens to family life?, National Centre For Social Research.

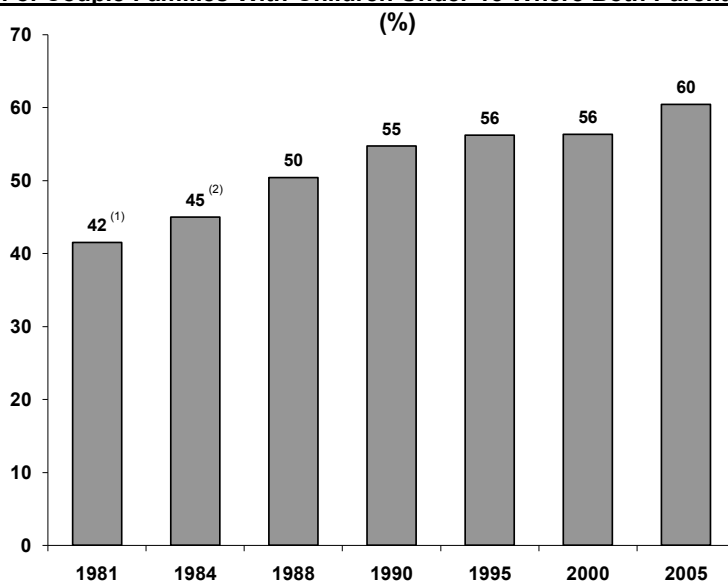


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**The proportion of couple families with children under 15 where both parents are employed has risen from 42% in 1981 to 60% in 2005**

**Proportion of Couple Families With Children Under 15 Where Both Parents Are Employed**



(1) Estimated using proportion of full-time dual earner families plus proportion of families with one parent working full-time and one part-time.

(2) 1984 figure is for both parents in the labour force.

Source: ABS (1998-2006) Australian Social Trends 4102.0, (1998-2000, 2003) Labour Force 6203.0.  
Pocock (2003), The Work/Life Collision, Federation Press.

RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA

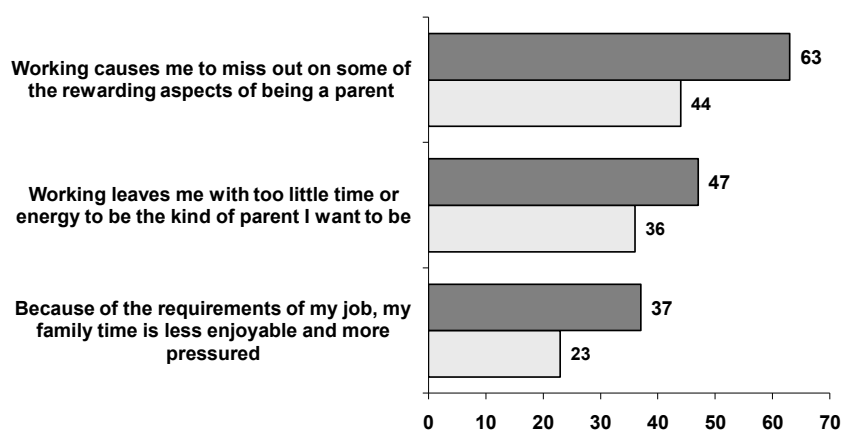


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**63% of working parents miss out on some of the rewarding aspects of being a parent because of work commitments**

**Perceived Conflict Between Work And Family Commitments**

(%, 2001)



■ Working 45+ hours per week  
□ Working <45 hours per week

Source: Unpublished data from HILDA (2001).  
Watson, Buchanan, Campbell & Briggs (2003), Fragmented Futures: New Challenges in Working Life, ACIRRT, Federation Press.

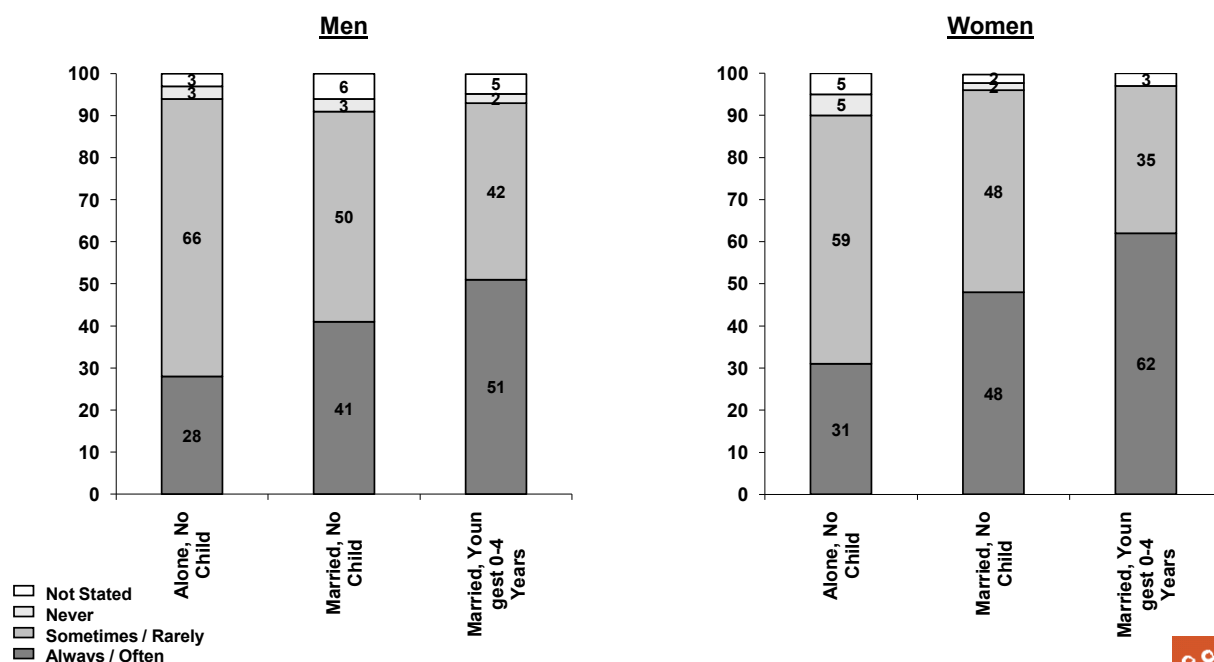
RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA



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## Time pressure is felt most keenly by working parents with children, particularly mothers

**Working Parents Perceived Time Pressure**  
(%, 1999)



Source: Campbell & Charlesworth (2004), Background Report: Key Work And Family Trends In Australia.  
 ABS (1999) Social Trends 4102.0

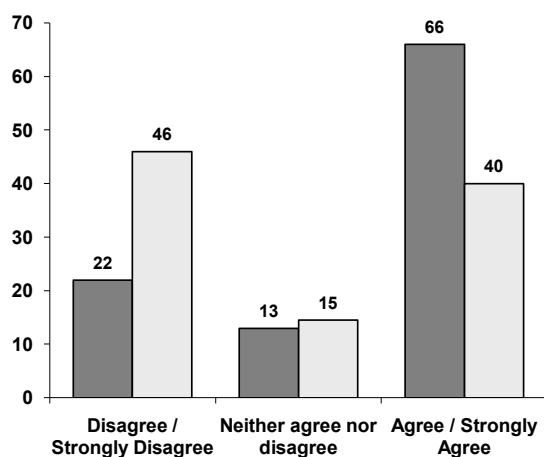
RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA



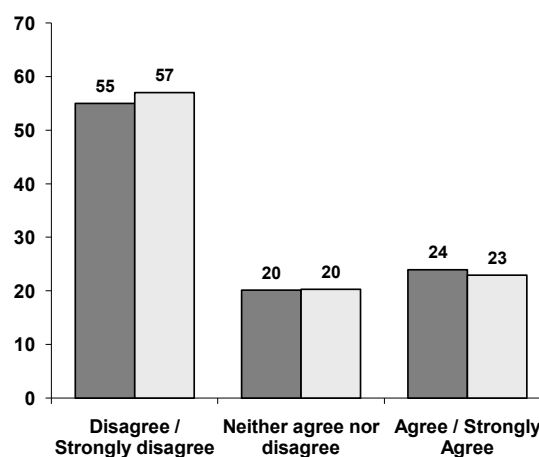
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## Work pressures negatively affect time spent and enjoyment of home and family activities

**"Because of my work responsibilities I have missed out on home or family activities that I would have taken part in"**  
(%)



**"Because of my work responsibilities my family time is less enjoyable and more pressured"**  
(%)



Legend:   
 Father (dark grey)  
 Mother (light grey)

Source: Alexander & Baxter (2005), Impacts of work on family life among partnered parents of young children, (based on the first wave 2000-2001 of the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children), Family Matters 72, AIFS.

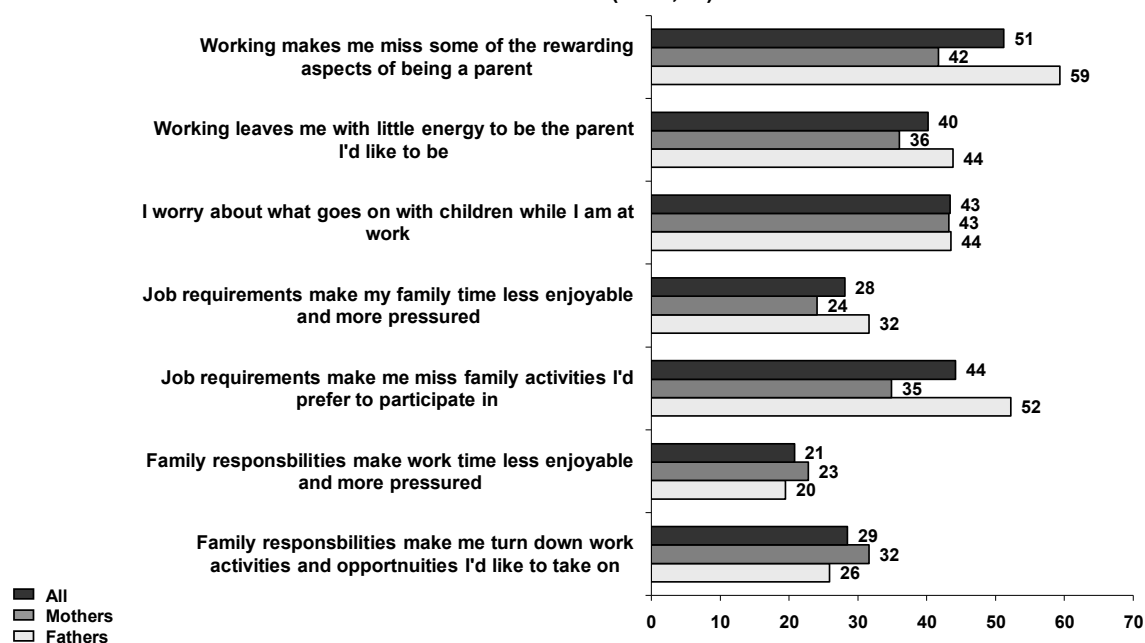
RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA



-60-

## Over 50% of workers report that work makes them miss some of the rewarding aspects of being a parent

### Perceived Conflict Between Work And Family Commitments (2001, %)



Source: HILDA (2001) in Edgar (2005), Family Impact Statement – On Work-choices – The Proposed New Industrial Relations Regime, Unions NSW.

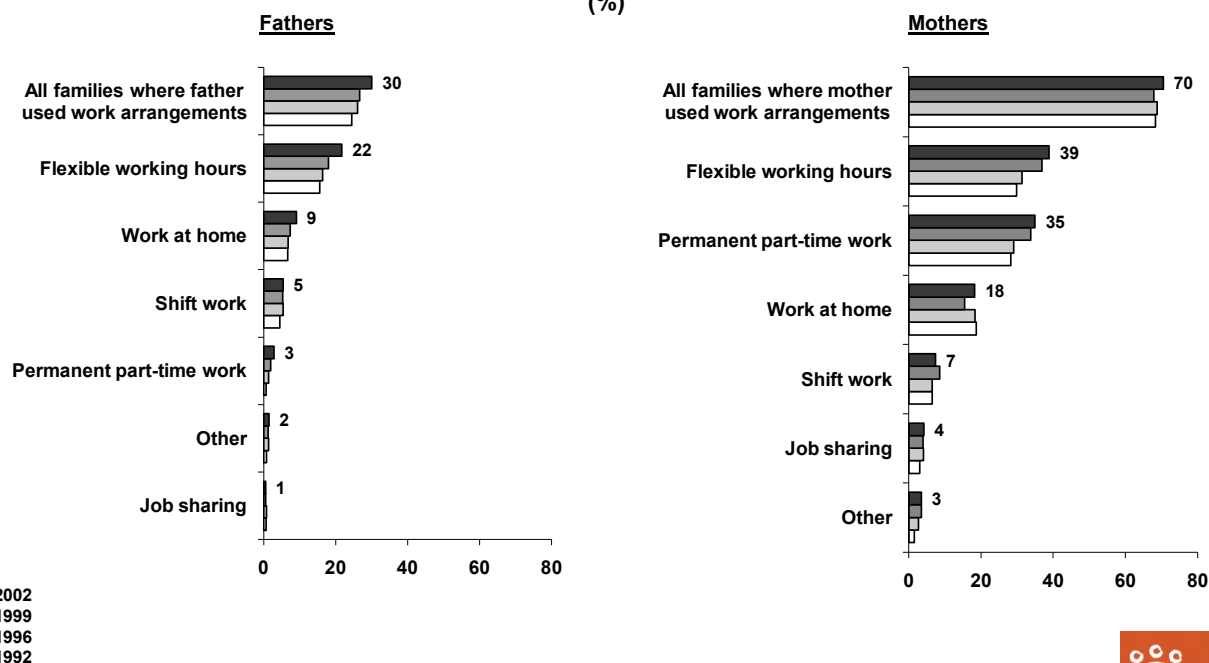
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## The use of flexible work arrangements is low for fathers

### Use Of Flexible Work Arrangements (%)



(1) Mothers and fathers may use more than one type of flexible work arrangement.

Source: ABS (2002), Child Care 4402.0.

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## Contents

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### 1. Introduction

### 2. A Quiet Revolution: From The Lucky Country To A Nation Dominated By Work

### 3. The Hard Choice: Work vs Family?

### 4. The Harsh Reality: Relational Dysfunction And Breakdown

### 5. What Australians Want

### 6. What Australia Needs: Recommendations



## The Harsh Reality: Relational Dysfunction And Breakdown (I)

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- An emerging body of international research is showing that long and atypical working patterns are associated with dysfunctional family environments<sup>(1)</sup>, including:
  - Negative health outcomes for those working these times, particularly if they are parents
  - Strained family relationships
  - Hostile and ineffective parenting.
- And, critically, both long/atypical hours and dysfunctional family environments are associated with:
  - Reduced child wellbeing.
- Notably, these associations are evident when either or both parents work atypical schedules, so the timing of fathers' not just mothers' work matters to children.

### The Endgame: Relational Breakdown

- Over the last 30 years in Australia, the decline in family relational health has led to an increased incidence of separation and divorce. Although proportionately fewer people are entering marriage or *de facto* relationships, and more people have never been married, the national divorce rate has risen consistently since the mid-1980s (the exceptionally high divorce rate in 1976 was due to the introduction of the Family Law Act that year).
- There are now more single parents than ever before. With only a single parent providing care for one or more children, increased time pressure and stress increase the probability of parenting and child difficulties.

### Worse To Come?

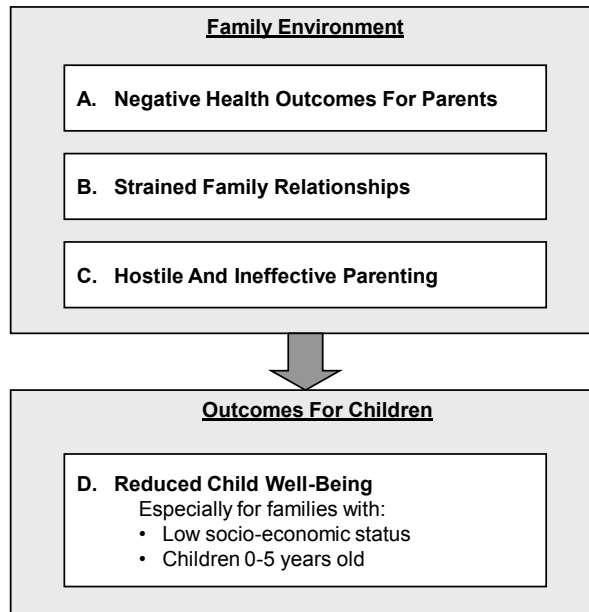
- Other trends in the Australian workplace, and society more broadly, exacerbate the relational health problems described here and leave the workforce increasingly vulnerable to an eventual downturn in the economy. These trends include a sustained reduction in job stability (linked to the trend towards casual employment), intensification of work responsibilities and increased household debt.

(1) These observations are based on a 2004 study of the relationship between work patterns and family wellbeing in Canada. It would be desirable for this research to be replicated in the Australian context. However, there seems to be no reason why the results, which relate to underlying human behaviours, would not be valid for Australian workers and their families.



## The Harsh Reality: Relational Dysfunction And Breakdown (II)

### Impact Of Long And Atypical Work Patterns On Family Relational Health And Well-Being



Sources: Strazdins, Clements, Korda, Broom & D'Souza (2006), Unsociable work? Non-standard work schedules, family relationships and children's well-being, Journal of Marriage and Family 68:394-410.

RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA



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### A. Negative Health Outcomes For Children

- Dual-income parents suffer more depressive symptoms<sup>(1)</sup> when mothers or both parents work at atypical times. These depressive symptoms correlate with a wide range of psychological problems, including anxiety, mild depression, major depression and non-specific psychiatric diagnoses<sup>(2,3)</sup>.
- Long and atypical work schedules are linked to parents' depressive symptoms via fatigue and disruption to biological systems (for night work), and because parents find it harder to find the time unwind and maintain the family relationships important for their own wellbeing<sup>(4,5)</sup>. Two different relational responses to an increase in job stress have been identified: increases in conflict/anger and social withdrawal<sup>(6)</sup>.
- Increased risk of depression and stress results when employees work atypical times<sup>(7,8,9,10)</sup>, or are time pressured<sup>(11)</sup>. This, in turn, is associated with marital problems and divorce<sup>(12)</sup>.
- Atypical work times also add to pressures on families with young children. Children's need for care, supervision and their dependence on families are greater when they are young, placing pressures on parents' time and energy. Time pressures for dual-earner parents are particularly high, and so dual-earner parents with young children, especially mothers, are at greater risk for depression<sup>(13,14)</sup>.
- A number of factors causing stress at work have been clearly identified. When these factors are in evidence at work, stress causes<sup>(15)</sup> a spill-over into the home environment<sup>(16)</sup>.

(1) Assessed using a reduced (12 item) version of the 20-item Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale, which measures depressive symptoms and psychological distress in the previous week (e.g. depressed mood, loss of appetite and sleep disturbance).

(2) Fechner-Bates, Coyne & Schwenk (1994), The relationship of self-reported distress to depressive disorders and other psychopathology, Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology 62:550-559.

(3) Zonderman, Herbst, Schmidt, Costa & McCrae (1993), Depressive symptoms as a non-specific, graded risk for psychiatric diagnoses, Journal of Abnormal Psychology 102:544-552.

(4) Taylor, Briner & Folkard (1997), Models of shift work and health: an examination of the influence of stress on shift work theory, Human Factors 39:67-82.

(5) Weston, Gray, Qu & Stanton (2004), Long work hours and the wellbeing of fathers and their families, AIFS Research Paper 35. Story & Repetti (2006), Daily occupational stressors and marital behaviour, Journal of Family Psychology.

(6) Akerstedt, Fredlund, Gillberg & Jansson (2002), Work load and work hours in relation to disturbed sleep and fatigue in a large representative sample, Journal of Psychosomatic Research 53:585-588.

(7) Bildt & Michelson (2002), Gender differences in the effects of working conditions on mental health: a 4 year follow-up, International Archives of Occupational and Environmental Health 75:252-258.

(8) Costa (1996), The impact of shift and night work on health, Applied Ergonomics 27:9-16.

(9) Poissonnet & Vernon (2000), Health effects of nonstandard work schedules among employed Americans in 1991, Journal of Clinical Nursing 9:13-23.

(10) Roxburgh (2004), There just aren't enough hours in the day: the mental health consequences of time pressure, Journal of Health and Social Behaviour 45:115-131.

(11) Strazdins, Korda, Lim, Broom & D'Souza (2004), Around-the-clock, parent work schedules and children's well-being in a 24-h economy, Social Science & Medicine 59:1517-1527.

(12) Craig (2002), The time cost of parenthood: an analysis of daily workload, SPRC Discussion Paper No. 117, UNSW.

(13) Roxburgh (2004), There just aren't enough hours in the day: the mental health consequences of time pressure, Journal of Health and Social Behaviour 45:115-131.

(14) Peeters, De Jonge, Janssen & Van Den Linden (2004), Work-home interface, job stressors, and employee health in a longitudinal perspective, International Journal of Stress Management 11:305-322.

(15) Williams & Alliger (1994), Role stressors, mood spillover and perceptions of work-family conflict in employed parents, Academy of Management Journal 37 No 4:837-888.

Sources: Strazdins, Clements, Korda, Broom & D'Souza (2006), Unsociable work? Non-standard work schedules, family relationships and children's well-being, Journal of Marriage and Family 68:394-410.

Barnes, Bryson & Smith (2006), Working atypical hours: what happens to family life?

Galinsky (2000), Ask the children, Quill.

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## B. Strained Family Relationships (I)

- Family functioning is worse when fathers or both parents work atypical times in dual-earner families. This includes the quality of relationships such as communication of feelings, family roles, emotional involvement and responsiveness, problem solving and behaviour control<sup>(1)</sup>.
- Relationships require time together to give and receive support, build intimacy and repair conflict when it arises. This is true for both partner and child-parent relationships<sup>(2,3,4)</sup>. Time is a family resource, and when parents work shapes when they are available to their children and to each other<sup>(5)</sup>.
  - A substantial and consistent body of research shows that working *atypical times* may make it harder for employees to maintain family relationships because they miss out on shared family events, routines and outings. Evening and night work schedules are particularly stressful for parents, affecting their sleep and increasing depression, as well as disrupting family routines, and may reduce parent involvement and responsiveness to children<sup>(5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12)</sup>.
  - Several studies support the view that *long hours* are also detrimental to personal and family wellbeing<sup>(13,14,15,16,17,18)</sup>, including the quality of marital relationships<sup>(19,20)</sup>.
  - Other studies have failed to find an inverse relationship between work hours and the aspects of wellbeing examined<sup>(20,21,22,23,24)</sup>. For example, in Australia one study suggests that long work hours did not adversely affect men's satisfaction with their marriage or with their children<sup>(25)</sup>. To some extent the impact of long work hours on wellbeing is likely to vary according to the reasons for working such hours (e.g. financial necessity, fear of job loss, and personal commitment to a corporate culture, or even the intrinsic enjoyment of their jobs) and people's satisfaction with these hours<sup>(26)</sup>.
  - Mixed findings are hardly surprising given differences in research methodologies, including the definition of long and atypical hours, outcomes measured, the nature of any moderating or mediating factors, and the different contexts in which the studies took place<sup>(26)</sup>.
- The likelihood of separation or divorce is greater when parents work in the evenings or at night<sup>(27,28)</sup>; the association between evening/night work and separation is not as clear for childless couples, suggesting that the stresses and complexities of atypical work are increased when there are also children to consider. Other cross-sectional and longitudinal studies show associations between shift work and marital discord and divorce<sup>(28,29)</sup>.

Note: Footnotes on next slide.

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## B. Strained Family Relationships (II)

- (1) Family functioning was measured using a 12-item subset of the 60-item McMaster Family Assessment Device, a widely used and validated measure of the quality of family relationships.
  - (2) Galinsky (1999), Ask the children, Morrow.
  - (3) Parker (2001), Making marriages last, Family Matters 60, AIFS.
  - (4) Wolcott (1999), Strong families and satisfying marriages: a literature review, Family Matters 53, AIFS.
  - (5) Fagan (2001), The temporal reorganization of employment and the household rhythm of work schedules, American Behavioural Scientist 44:1199-1212.
  - (6) Akerstedt, Fredlund, Gillberg & Jansson (2002), Work load and work hours in relation to disturbed sleep and fatigue in a large representative sample, Journal of Psychosomatic Research 53:585-588.
  - (7) Bildt & Michelson (2002), Gender differences in the effects of working conditions on mental health: a 4 year follow-up, International Archives of Occupational and Environmental Health 75:252-258.
  - (8) Costa (1996), The impact of shift and night work on health, Applied Ergonomics 27:9-16.
  - (9) Fenwick & Tausig (2001), Scheduling stress: family and health outcomes of shift work and schedule control, American Behavioural Scientist 44:1179-1198.
  - (10) Heymann & Earle (2001), The impact of parental working conditions on school-age children: the case of evening work, Community, Work and Family 4:305-325.
  - (11) Kinnunen & Mauno (1998), Antecedents and outcomes of work-family conflict among employed women and men in Finland, Human Relations 51:157-177.
  - (12) Poissonnet & Vernon (2000), Health effects of nonstandard work schedules among employed Americans in 1991, Journal of Clinical Nursing 9:13-23.
  - (13) Cooper (2000), The psychological implications of the Americanisation of work in the UK, Stress News 12:2.
  - (14) Charlesworth, Campbell, Probert, Allan & Morgan (2002), Balancing work and family responsibilities: policy implementation options, Report for the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet & Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development, Centre for Applied Social Research, RMIT University.
  - (15) Dawson, McCulloch & Baker (2001), Extended working hours in Australia: counting the costs, Report commissioned by the Queensland Department of Industrial Relations, Centre for Sleep Research, University of South Australia.
  - (16) Lehmkuhl (1999), Health effects of long work hours.
  - (17) Pocock (2003), The work/life collision: what work is doing to Australians and what to do about it, Federation Press.
  - (18) Glezer & Wolcott (1999), Work and family: reciprocal effects, Family Matters 53, AIFS.
  - (19) Kluwer, Heesink & Van De Vliet (1996), Marital conflict about the division of household labour and paid work, Journal of Marriage and the Family 58:958-969.
  - (20) Russell & Bowman (2000), Work and family: current thinking, research and practice, Report prepared for the Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra.
  - (21) Spurgeon, Harrington & Cooper (1997), Health and safety problems associated with long working hours: a review of the current position, Occupational and Environmental Medicine 54:6:367-375.
  - (22) Barnett (1998), Toward a review and reconceptualisation of the work/family literature, Genetic, Social and General Psychology 124:2:125-138.
  - (23) Ganster & Bates (2003), Do long hours decrease general wellbeing and increase work-family conflict? Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management, Seattle.
  - (24) Parker (2001), Making marriages last, Family Matters 60, AIFS.
  - (25) Kelley (2001), Consequences of working long hours, Australian Social Monitor 4:4:99-102.
  - (26) Weston, Gray, Qu & Stanton (2004), Long work hours and the wellbeing of fathers and their families, AIFS Research Paper 35.
  - (27) Presser (2000), Nonstandard work schedules and marital instability, Journal of Marriage and the Family 62:93-110.
  - (28) White & Keith (1990), The effect of shift work on the quality and stability of marital relations, Journal of Marriage and the Family 52:453-462.
  - (29) Cummings (1994), Marital conflict and children's functioning, Social Development 3:16-36.
- Sources: Strazdins, Clements, Korda, Broom & D'Souza (2006), Unsociable work? Non-standard work schedules, family relationships and children's well-being, Journal of Marriage and Family 68:394-410.  
Barnes, Bryson & Smith (2006), Working atypical hours: what happens to family life?  
Weston, Gray, Qu & Stanton (2004), Long work hours and the wellbeing of fathers and their families, AIFS Research Paper 35.  
Weston, Qu & Soriano (2002), Implications of men's extended work hours for their personal and marital happiness, Family Matters 61, AIFS.

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## C. Hostile And Ineffective Parenting

- Parent-child interactions are more likely to be characterised by hostile and ineffective discipline when fathers, mothers or both parents work atypical times in two-income families. These parents are more likely to be angry, inconsistent or ineffective in their parenting<sup>(1)</sup>
- The quality of parenting is also a key influence on children's wellbeing<sup>(2)</sup>, and several lines of research suggest a link between the timing of parents' work and their parenting. Parents' mental health is important for relationships with children, as well as their wellbeing. The stressfulness of atypical schedules may alter parents' mood and energy, leading to more irritable interaction with children<sup>(3,4)</sup>. Depressed parents are less spontaneous, more withdrawn, angry and sad. International research has found that children of depressed parents are more likely to have emotional or behavioural difficulties, poor physical health and impaired social and academic performance<sup>(5,6)</sup>.
- All types of atypical schedules (weekend, afternoon, evening and night) can disrupt family routines and reduce parent-child involvement. Compared with parents on standard hours, those working any type of atypical hours spent less time reading, playing and helping children with school work, are less likely to share a family meal, and are less satisfied with the time they spend with children<sup>(7,8,9)</sup>.
- Shift-parenting may mean that parents have less opportunity to negotiate a shared parenting style, leading to inconsistencies, conflict and confusion<sup>(10)</sup>.

(1) Ineffective parenting was assessed by 7 items from a larger 34-item parent practices scale which was developed to assess parenting associated with children's problem behaviour.

(2) Repetti, Taylor & Seeman (2002), Risky families: family social environments and the mental and physical health of offspring, *Psychological Bulletin* 128:330-366.

(3) Menaghan (1991), Work experiences and family interaction processes: the long arm of the job, *Annual Review of Sociology* 17:419-444.

(4) Repetti (1994), Short-term and long-term processes linking job stressors to father-child interaction, *Social Development* 3:1-15.

(5) Downey & Coyne (1990), Children of depressed parents: an integrative review, *Psychological Bulletin* 108:50-76.

(6) Lovejoy, Graczyk, O'Hare & Neuman (2000), Maternal depression and parenting behaviour: a meta-analytical review, *Clinical Psychology Review* 20:561-592.

(7) La Valle, Arthur, Millward, Scott & Clayden (2002), *Happy families? Atypical work and its influence on family life*, Policy Press.

(8) Fagan (2001), the temporal reorganization of employment and the household rhythm of work schedules, *American Behavioural Scientist* 44:1199-1212.

(9) Heymann & Earle (2001), The impact of parental working conditions on school-age children; the case of evening work, *Community, Work and Family* 4:305-325.

(10) Daly (2004), Exploring process and control in families working nonstandard schedules, in Crouter & Booth (Eds), *Work-family challenges for low income families and their children*, pp. 117-125, Erlbaum.

Sources: Strazdins, Clements, Korda, Broom & D'Souza (2006), Unsociable work? Non-standard work schedules, family relationships and children's well-being, *Journal of Marriage and Family* 68:394-410.

Barnes, Bryson & Smith (2006), Working atypical hours: what happens to family life?



## D. Reduced Child Well-Being

- Independent pieces of research show that both long/atypical working patterns and dysfunctional family environments are associated with reduced wellbeing for children.
- Atypical work schedules are related to a range of child difficulties including hyperactivity-inattention, physical aggression, emotional disorder-anxiety and separation anxiety, property offences and indirect aggression. These difficulties are more likely to occur when mothers, father or both work atypical hours in dual-earner families. For example, in a study of Canadian dual-income families, it was found that toddlers were twice as likely to show signs of physical aggression if both parents worked atypical hours (compared to children of parents where neither worked atypical hours). Children's wellbeing depends on the quality of family relationships<sup>(1,2)</sup>. Non-standard work schedules may make it harder for parents to build family closeness and establish effective patterns of discipline.
- Parents' interest in their children's education has been shown to have a positive association with attainment as measured by ability in reading, mathematics and an overall exam performance across all subjects<sup>(3,4,5)</sup>. This factor influenced attainment above and beyond any direct effects of parental education and class. When both mothers and fathers read with their children or helped with homework, fewer behavioural problems and better academic performance result. Mothers' time has been shown to have a stronger relationship, which may be evidence of a better interaction style or a reflection of the relative length of time that mothers spend doing these activities<sup>(6)</sup>.
- Children's difficulties are more likely among atypical hours working families with young children (pre-school age), and there is also a trend for more child difficulties in lower socio-economic status families.
- Some families may be more vulnerable than others to the strains arising from atypical schedules. Low income and financial hardship are risk factors for a range of problems including parent depression and less effective parenting<sup>(7)</sup>. Low-income families are less able to pay for services such as daytime child care or after-school care. These services are expensive and harder to find outside regular daytime hours. Low status employees are also less likely to control when they can start and finish, increasing the potential for work to conflict with family needs and events<sup>(8)</sup>.

(1) Cummings (1994), Marital conflict and children's functioning, *Social Development* 3:16-36.

(2) Repetti, Taylor & Seeman (2002), Risky families: family social environments and the mental and physical health of offspring, *Psychological Bulletin* 128:330-366.

(3) Feinstein & Symons (1999), Attainment in secondary school, *Oxford Economic Papers* 51:300-321.

(4) Fisher, McCulloch & Gershuny (1999), British fathers and children: a report for Channel 4 "Dispatches". Technical report - Institute for Social and Economic Research, Colchester, UK.

(5) Lefebvre & Merrigan (1998), Work schedules, job characteristics, parenting practices and children's outcomes, Centre For Research On Economic Fluctuations And Employment, Quebec University, Working Paper No. 77.

(6) Zick, Bryant & Osterbacka (2001), Mother's employment, parental involvement and the implications for intermediate child outcomes, *Social Sciences Research* 30:25-49.

(7) Mistry, Vandewater, Huston & McLoyd (2002), Economic well-being and children's social adjustment: the role of family process in an ethnically diverse low-income sample, *Child Development* 73:935-951.

(8) Fenwick & Tausig (2001), Scheduling stress: family and health outcomes of shift work and schedule control, *American Behavioural Scientist* 44:1179-1198.

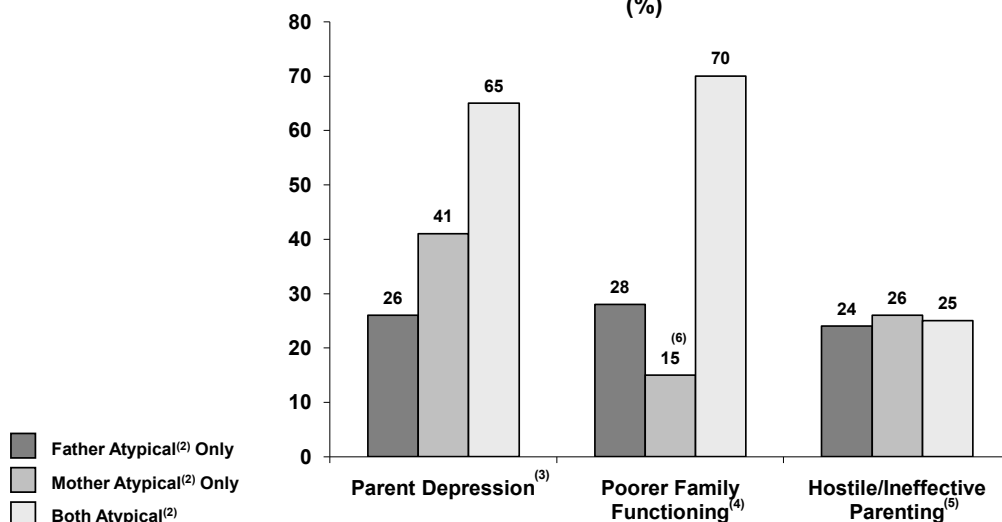
Sources: Strazdins, Clements, Korda, Broom & D'Souza (2006), Unsociable work? Non-standard work schedules, family relationships and children's well-being, *Journal of Marriage and Family* 68:394-410.

Barnes, Bryson & Smith (2006), Working atypical hours: what happens to family life?



## Atypical work patterns are associated with higher probabilities for parent depression, worse family functioning and hostile/ineffective parenting

**Increased Probability Of Worse Family Environment In Canadian Dual Earner Families<sup>(1)</sup>**  
(%)



- (1) Analysis based on cross-sectional data, so the associations do not indicate the direction of causality.  
 (2) Atypical work patterns defined as usually working evenings, night shifts, on-call, split or rotating shifts and/or weekends over the past year.  
 (3) Assessed by a 12 item version of the 20 item Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (e.g. depressed mood, loss of appetite and sleep disturbance)  
 (4) Measured using a 12 item subset of the 60 item McMaster Family Assessment Device (e.g. communication of feelings, family roles, emotional involvement and responsiveness, problem solving and behaviour control).  
 (5) Assessed by 7 items derived from a 34 item parent practices scale (Strayhorn & Weidman, 1988) (e.g. extent parents were angry, inconsistent or ineffective).  
 (6) All items are statistically significant at 90% confidence level, except mother atypical and family functioning which is not statistically significant.  
 Source: Strazdins, Korda, Lim, Broom & D'Souza (2004), Around-the-clock: parent work schedules and children's well-being in a 24-hr economy, Social Science & Medicine 59:1517-1527.  
 Strazdins, (2004), Unsociable work? Parent work schedules, family life, and children's well-being in the 24/7 economy, Work-Life Balance Conference, Centre for Research on Families and Relationships, Edinburgh, UK.  
 Strazdins, Clements, Korda, Broom & D'Souza (2006), Unsociable work? Nonstandard work schedules, family relationships, and children's well-being, Journal of Marriage and Family 68:394-410.

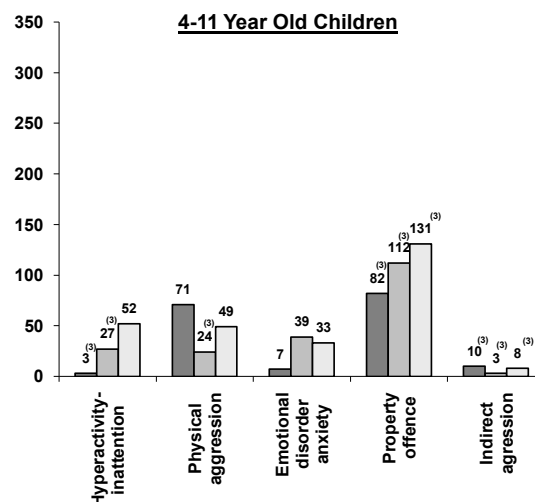
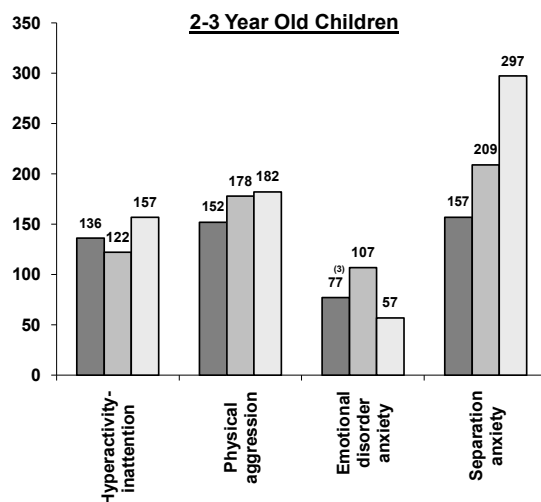
RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA



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## Child difficulties are also more likely, especially for families with young children

**Increased Probability of Child Difficulties In Canadian Dual Earner Families<sup>(1)</sup>**  
(%)



- (1) Analysis based on cross-sectional data, so the associations do not indicate the direction of causality.  
 (2) Atypical work patterns defined as usually working evenings, night shifts, on-call, split or rotating shifts and/or weekends over the past year.  
 (3) Not statistically significant, all other items are statistically significant at 90% confidence level.  
 Source: Strazdins, Korda, Lim, Broom & D'Souza (2004), Around-the-clock: parent work schedules and children's well-being in a 24-hr economy, Social Science & Medicine 59:1517-1527.  
 Strazdins, (2004), Unsociable work? Parent work schedules, family life, and children's well-being in the 24/7 economy, Work-Life Balance Conference, Centre for Research on Families and Relationships, Edinburgh, UK.  
 Strazdins, Clements, Korda, Broom & D'Souza (2006), Unsociable work? Nonstandard work schedules, family relationships, and children's well-being, Journal of Marriage and Family 68:394-410.

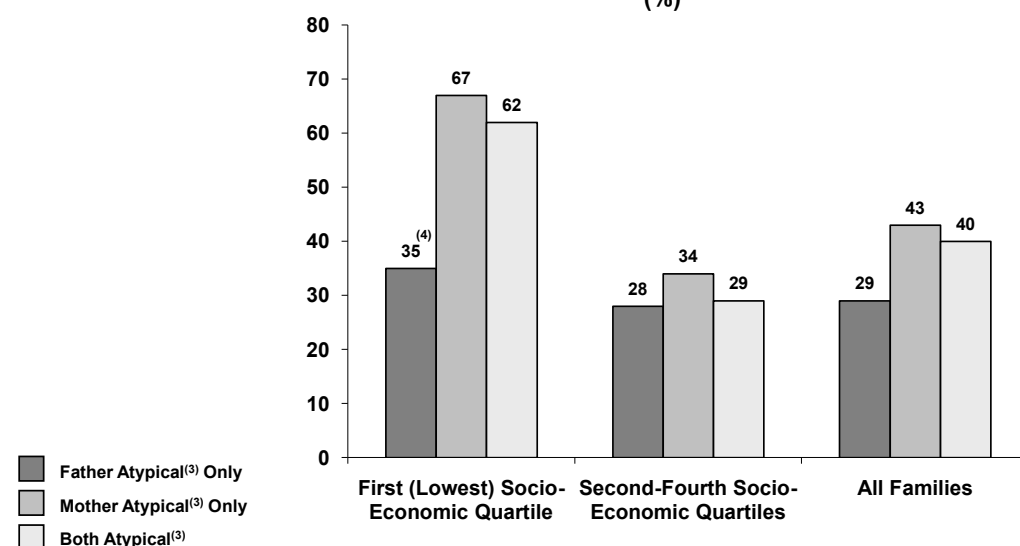
RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA



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## There is also a trend for more child difficulties in lower socio-economic status families working atypical times

**Increased Probability of Any Child Difficulties<sup>(1)</sup> In Canadian Dual Earner Families<sup>(2)</sup>**  
(%)



(1) Child difficulties include: hyperactivity-inattention, physical aggression, emotional disorder-anxiety, separation anxiety and property offence.

(2) Analysis based on cross-sectional data, so the associations do not indicate the direction of causality.

(3) Atypical work patterns defined as usually working evenings, night shifts, on-call, split or rotating shifts and/or weekends over the past year.

(4) All items are statistically significant at 95% confidence level, except father atypical and lowest socio-economic quartile which is not statistically significant.

Source: Strazdins, Korda, Lim, Broom & D'Souza (2004), Around-the-clock: parent work schedules and children's well-being in a 24-hr economy, Social Science & Medicine 59:1517-1527.

Strazdins, (2004), Unsociable work? Parent work schedules, family life, and children's well-being in the 24/7 economy, Work-Life Balance Conference, Centre for Research on Families and Relationships, Edinburgh, UK.

Strazdins, Clements, Korda, Broom & D'Souza (2006), Unsociable work? Nonstandard work schedules, family relationships, and children's well-being, Journal of Marriage and Family 68:394-410.

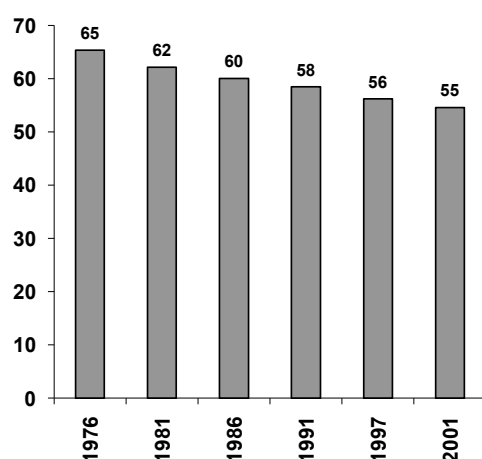
RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA



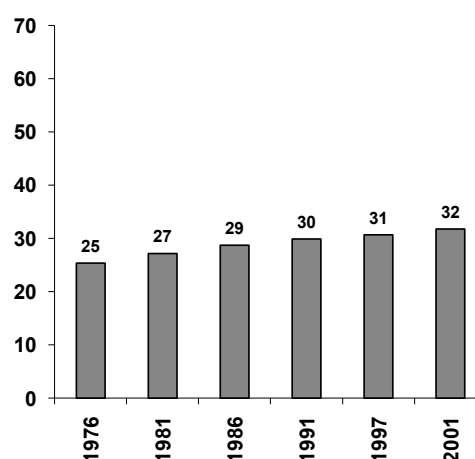
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## Although proportionally fewer people are in married or de facto relationships, and more people have never been married ...

**Married And De Facto<sup>(1)</sup> Relationships**  
(% of Adult Population)



**Never Married**  
(% of Adult Population)



De Facto Couples  
(% of all couples)

6	8	10 <sup>(1)</sup>	12
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(1) Figure for 1996.

Source: ABS (1993-2006) Demographic Statistics 3101.0, (1994-2002) Marriages and Divorces 3310.0, (1993) Marriages 3306.0,

(1998-2006) Australian Social Trends 4102.0.

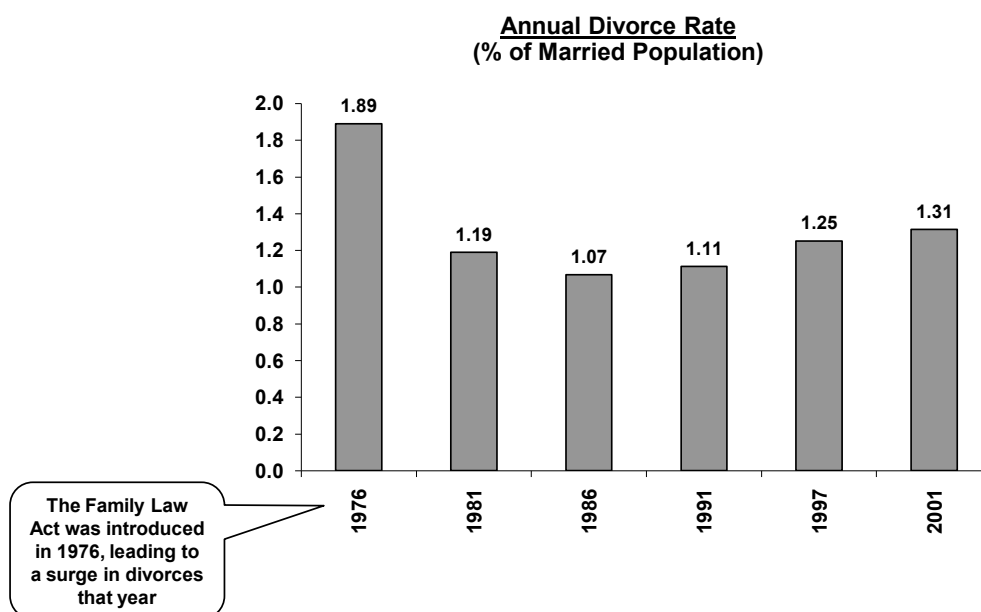
AIFS (2006) Family Relationships Quarterly.

RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA



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... the divorce rate has risen consistently since the mid-1980s



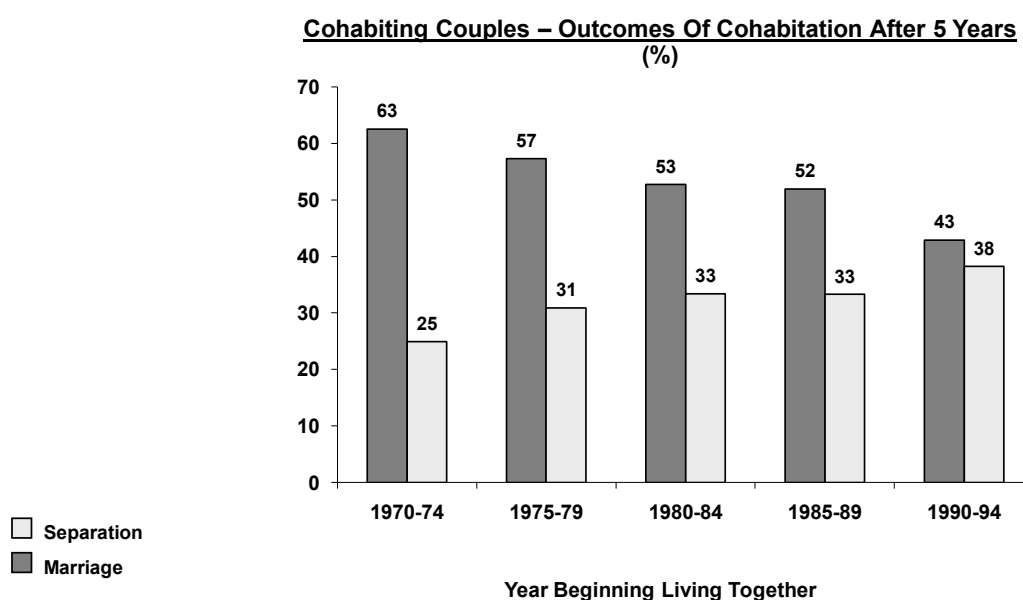
Source: ABS (1993-2006) Demographic Statistics 3101.0, (1994-2002) Marriages and Divorces 3310.0, (1993) Marriages 3306.0.

RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA



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Since the 1970s, cohabiting relationships have become more likely to end in separation than marriage



Source: HILDA Wave 1. AIFS (2006) Family Relationships Quarterly.

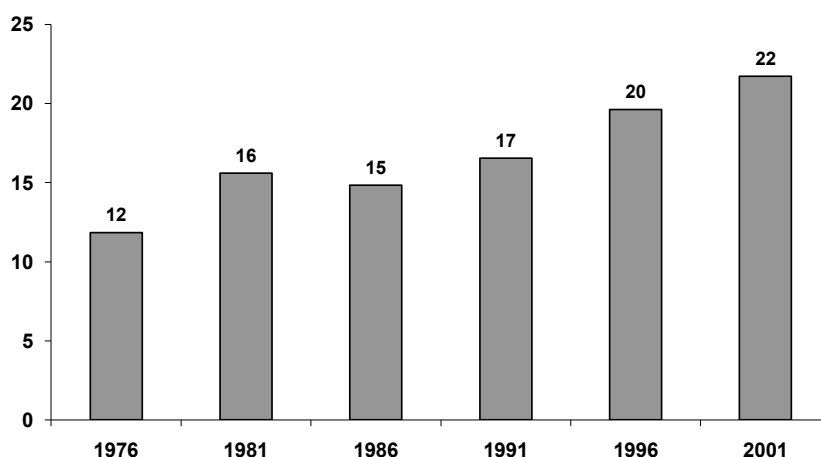
RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA



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**Among families with dependent children, the proportion of one parent families has nearly doubled from 12% in 1976 to 22% in 2001**

**One Parent Families With Dependent Children  
(% Of All Families With Dependent Children)**



Source: ABS (2001) Yearbook 2001, 1301.0.  
ABS (2002) Census of population and housing, 2015.0.  
AIFS (2006) Family Relationships Quarterly.

RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA

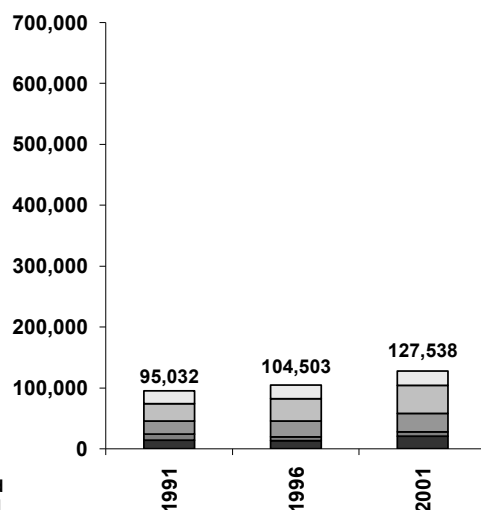


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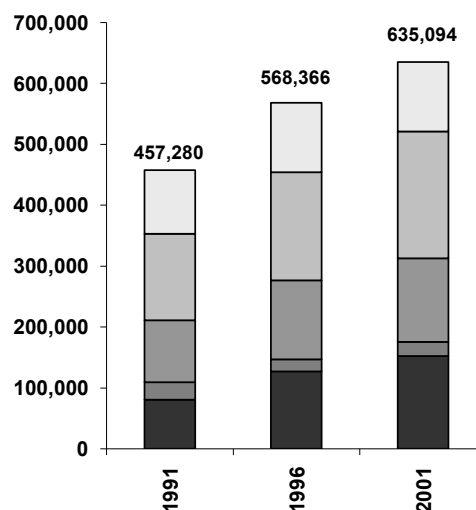
**The number of single parents increased by 210,000 between 1991 and 2001**

**Lone Parents<sup>(1)</sup>**

**Men**



**Women**



Widowed  
Divorced  
Separated  
Married  
Never Married

(1) A person who has no spouse or partner usually present in the household, but who forms a parent-child relationship with at least one child usually resident in the household..

Source: ABS (1994-2002) Marriages and Divorces 3310.0

RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA

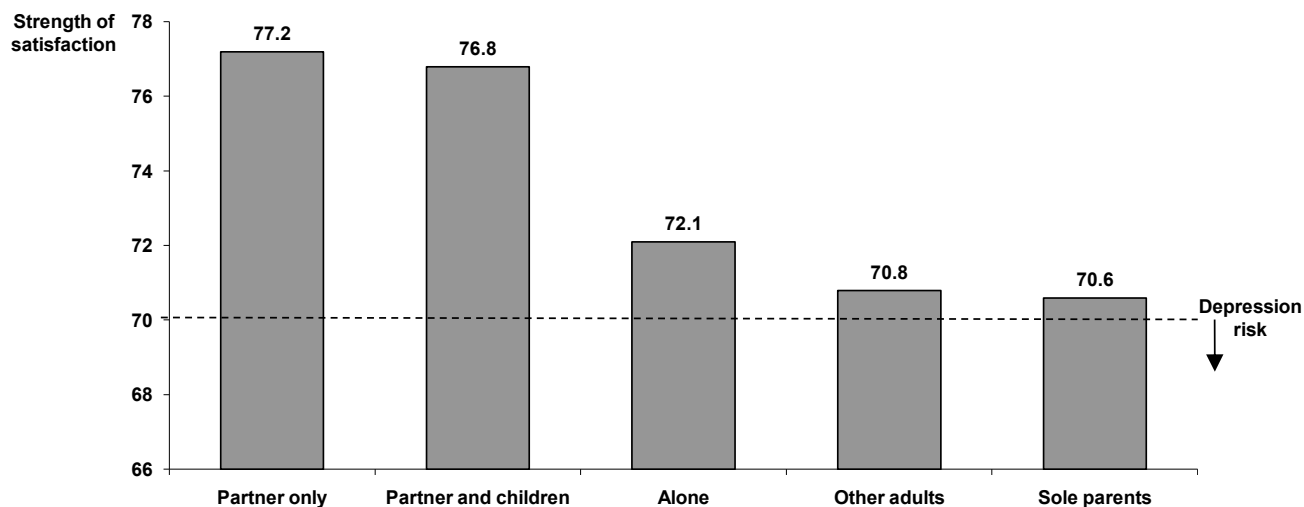


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**The highest levels of personal wellbeing are achieved by people living with their partner, children and someone to assist with child care**

**Personal Wellbeing Index By Household Structure  
(2006)**



Source: Australian Unity Wellbeing Index, Survey 15, Report 15, May 2006.

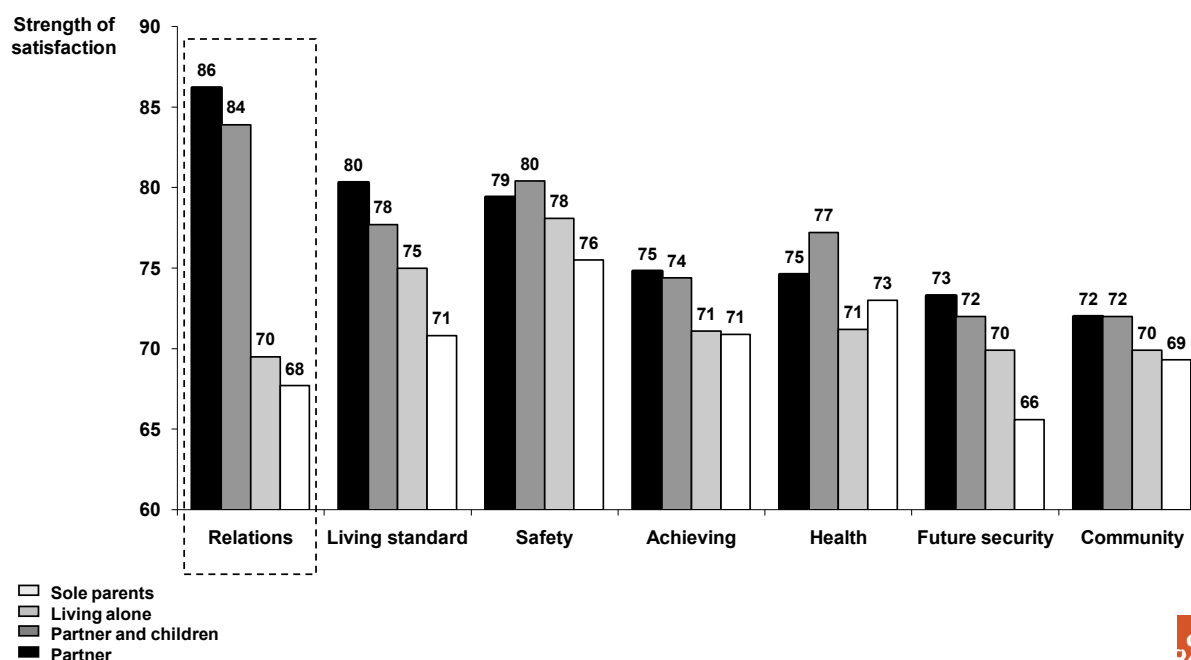
RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA



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**People who live with a partner have much higher relationship wellbeing than people who live alone or are sole parents**

**Components Of Personal Wellbeing Index By Household Structure  
(2006)**



Source: Australian Unity Wellbeing Index, Survey 15, Report 15, May 2006.

RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA



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## Worse To Come? (I)

- Other trends in the Australian workplace, and society more broadly, exacerbate the relational health problems described here and leave the workforce increasingly vulnerable to an eventual downturn in the economy. These trends include a sustained reduction in job stability (linked to the trend towards casual employment), intensification of work responsibilities and increased household debt:
  - Work-to-family strain is exacerbated by unpredictable or irregular schedules, job stress, casual employment and the household financial situation. Adverse work conditions – including job strain, insecurity and a perceived inability to get another job – increase the probability of negative health outcomes
  - Work overload and organisational expectations for long hours tend to have a negative effect on family life<sup>(1)</sup>. Wives whose husbands experience high work overload feel less loving towards their husbands, are less able to take their spouse's perspective, see their spouse as less able to take their perspective, and experience more conflict<sup>(2)</sup>
  - Employees with less perceived job security have worse mental health than those with higher job security, so the casualisation of jobs can be expected to lead to a deterioration in overall mental health of those affected (and increased stress-related problems)
  - During the 1990s, the number of mental health claims in NSW more than doubled for men, and quadrupled for women, even though reported job insecurity (and unemployment) have declined during the period due to sustained economic growth
  - The steep rise in the level of household debt has reduced the power of many employees to negotiate with their employers. These workers feel impelled to work long hours so as to service high levels of debt. The stress due to their debt burden compounds inherent strain from long hours, and atypical and unpredictable working patterns.
- It is likely that the strong economy has masked an underlying deterioration in job stability that has occurred, leaving a large proportion of the population more vulnerable when the next economic downturn occurs.

(1) Major, Klein & Ehrhart (2002), Work time, work interference with family and psychological distress, Journal of Applied Psychology 87:427-436.

(2) Crouter, Bumpus, Head & McHale (2001), Implications of overwork and overload for the quality of men's family relationships, Journal of Marriage and Family 63:404-416.



## Worse To Come? (II)

*"When you think about it, you realise the longstanding trend to part-time and casual employment is about shifting risk to workers. When the boss employs a worker full-time she bears the risk that there will be a time of the week or the year when she's paying for labour she doesn't really need. But replace a full-time worker with a few part-timers brought in at peak periods and that risk is transformed into the loss of income for some would-be full-timer. And here, I suspect, is the killer: the next time the economy turns down we'll see that the greater freedom [now afforded] employers will permit them to shift the risk of recession – to some extent, at least – from business profits to workers' wages. So profits will fall less while wages fall more. It's hard to see how this will cushion rather than accentuate the recession's effect."<sup>(1)</sup>*

- Low-income earners – and in particular those with young children – are likely to be the hardest hit. Reduced child wellbeing associated with long and atypical hours is even more likely in families with pre-school aged children (0-5 years old) and there is a tendency for greater difficulties for families from low socio-economic groups. Atypical work times are more often a condition in low-paid jobs, especially in the expanding service sector, so dual-earner parents with fewer skills or less education face the double jeopardy of low income and work at atypical hours. These parents also have the greatest difficulty accessing affordable child care when they need it, or obtaining services that might help them cope, further widening status-based inequalities in parent and child wellbeing<sup>(2)</sup>. Any softening in the labour market is likely to be felt most keenly by these weaker members of our community.

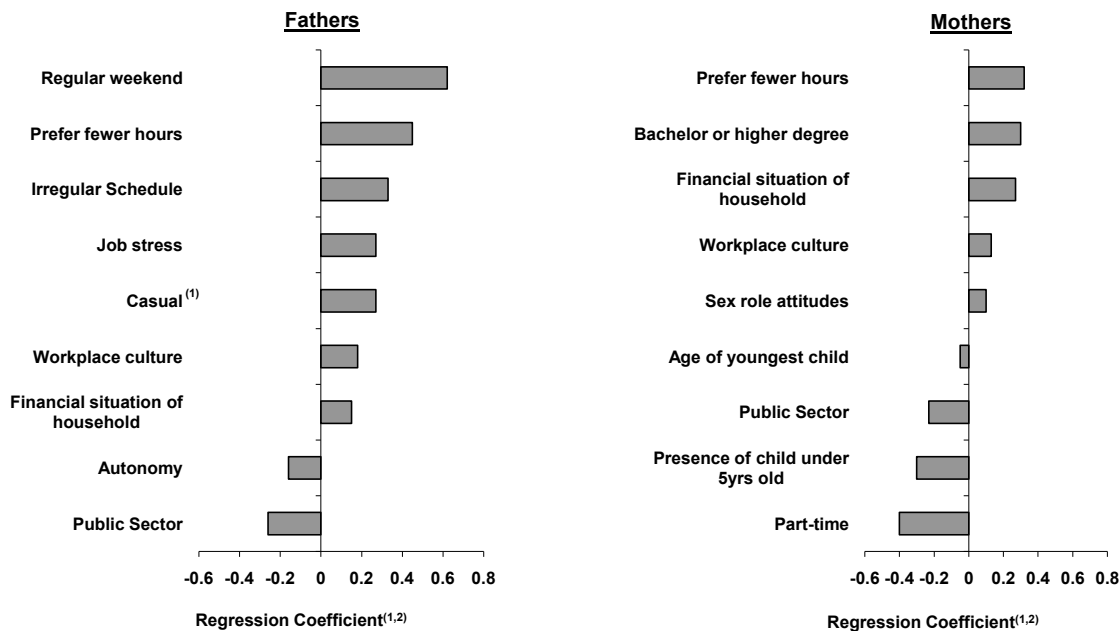
(1) Gittins (2007), Risky business, but not for the boss, Sydney Morning Herald.

(2) Presser & Cox (1997), The work schedules of low-educated American women and welfare reform, Monthly Labour Review 120:25-34.



## Work-to-family strain is exacerbated by weekend work, a preference of fewer hours, irregular schedules, job stress, casual employment and the household financial situation

### Predictors Of Work-To-Family Strain Among Working Parents<sup>(1)</sup>



(1) All predictors are statistically significant at 95% confidence level, except for 'Fathers - Casual' which is statistically significant at  $p < 0.10$ .

(2) Regression coefficients indicate the strength of the effect of the predictor on the outcome of work-to-family strain when other predictors are held constant. A positive coefficient indicates that the outcome tends to rise in unison with an increase in work-to-family strain, while a negative coefficient indicates an opposite relationship (the higher the coefficient, the lower the level of work-to-family strain).

Source: Hosking & Western (2005), The effects of non-standard employment on work-family balance, presented at 9<sup>th</sup> Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference.

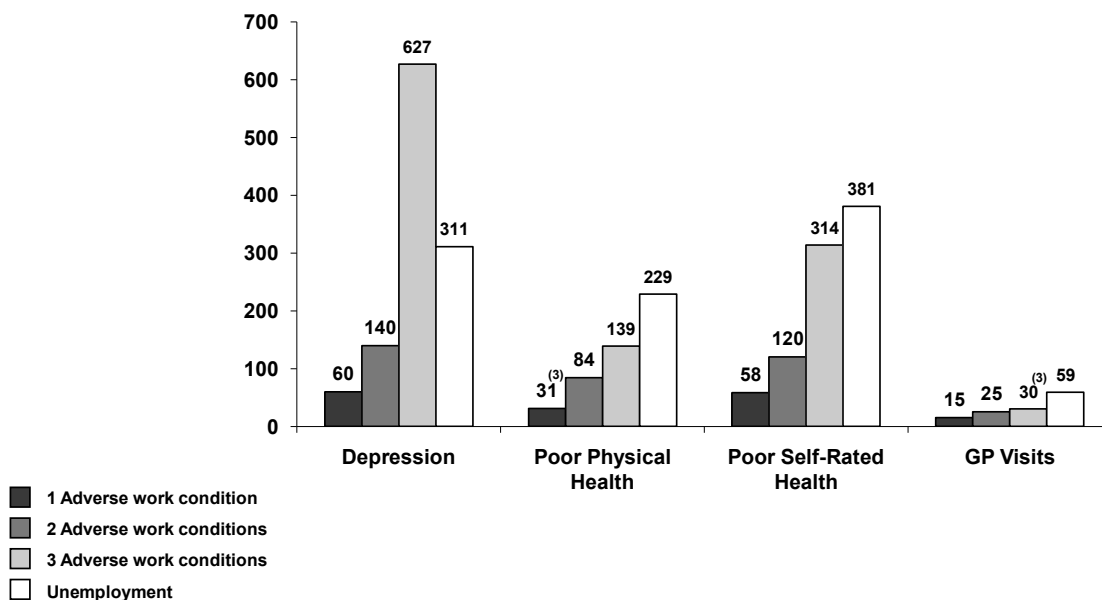
RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA



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## Adverse work conditions, including job strain, insecurity and a perceived inability to get another job, increase the probability of negative health outcomes

### Increased Probability Of Negative Health Outcomes By Adverse Employment Characteristics<sup>(1,2)</sup>



(1) Adverse working conditions include: job strain (demands and control), job insecurity and marketability (perceived ability to get another job).

(2) Analysis based on a sample of 2,497 mid-aged Australians using the Personality and Total Health (PATH) Through Life Project. The analysis is cross-sectional and therefore does not show the direction of causality.

(3) Not statistically significant. All other items are statistically significant at 95% confidence level.

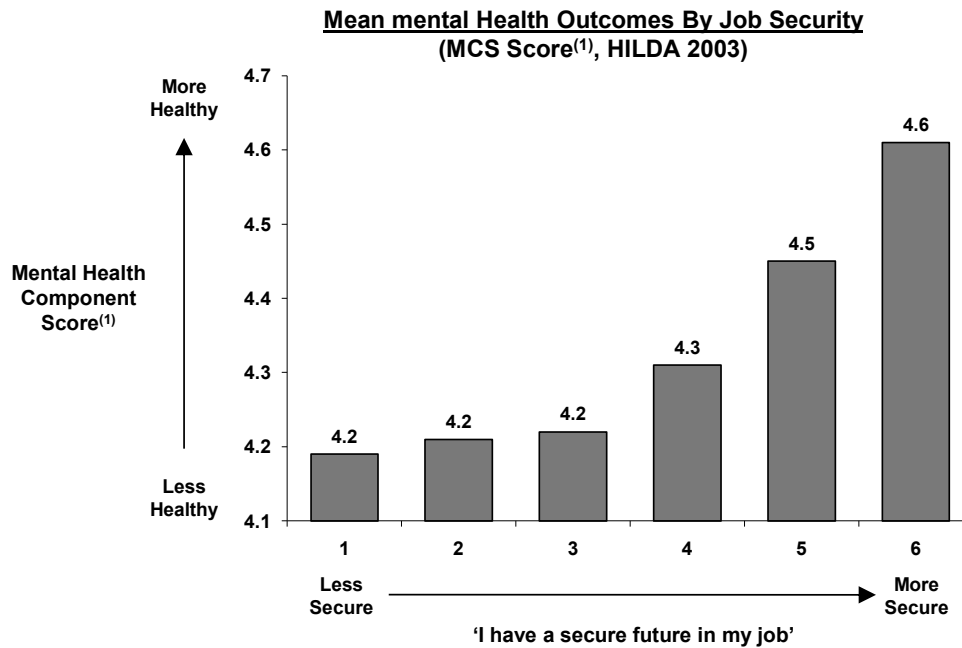
Source: Broom, D'Souza, Strazdins, Butterworth, Parslow & Rodgers (2006), The lesser evil: bad jobs or unemployment? A survey of mid-aged Australians, Social Science and Medicine 63:575-586.

RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA



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## Employees with less perceived job security have lower mental health



(1) The Mental Component Summary scale, a widely used measure of mental health, is a psychometrically-based combination of 8 summary scales (mental health, general health perceptions, physical functioning, role limitations due to physical health, bodily pain, vitality, social functioning and role limitations due to emotional problems) of the SF-36 (a widely used self-completion measure of general health status and has proven test-retest reliability and sound psychometric qualities).

Source: Adam & Flatau (2005), Job insecurity and mental health outcomes: an analysis using waves 1 and 2 of HILDA, presented at the Australian Social Policy Conference 2005, Social Policy Research Centre, University of NSW.

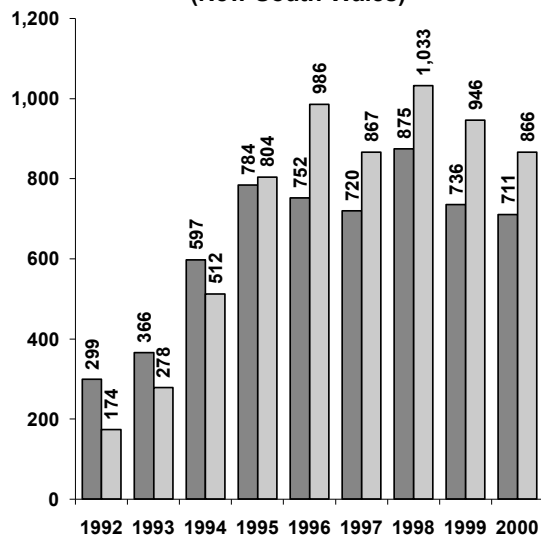
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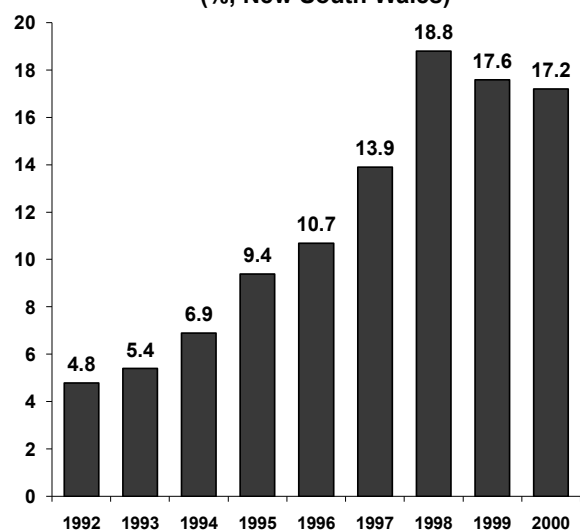
## During the 1990s, the number of mental health claims in NSW more than doubled for men, and quadrupled for women ...

**Number Of Mental Disorder (Stress) Claims**  
(New South Wales)



□ Women  
■ Men

**Stress Claims As A Proportion Of All Claims**  
(%, New South Wales)



Source: Workcover NSW (1999/00), Statistical Bulletin.  
Watson, Buchanan, Campbell & Briggs (2003), Fragmented Futures: New Challenges in Working Life, ACIRRT, Federation Press.

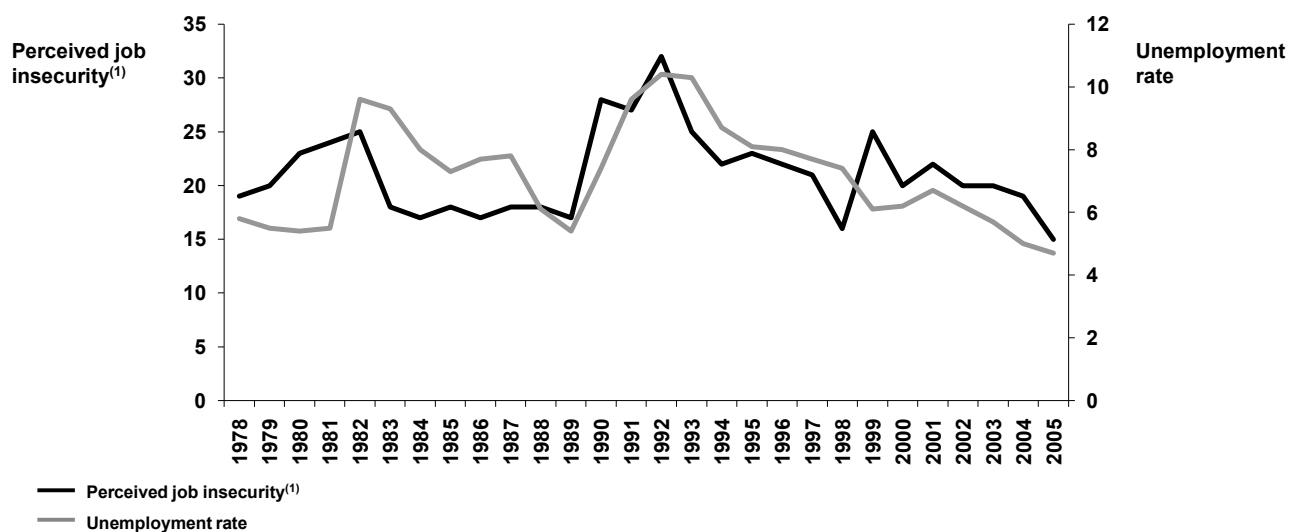
RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA



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... even though job insecurity (and unemployment) have declined during the period of sustained economic growth

**Unemployment Rates And Workers Perception Of Job Insecurity<sup>(1)</sup>**  
(%)



(1) Job insecurity measured as the percentage of persons who report that they do not think their current job is safe.

(2) All data collected in the month of November, except for 1982 (Dec), 1983 (July), 200-2004 (Dec).

(3) Job insecurity data for 1981 and 1996 have been interpolated.

Source: ABS Labour Force (6203).

Roy Morgan Research Centre.

Wooden (1999), Job insecurity and job instability: getting the facts straight, Flinders University of South Australia.



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## Contents

### 1. Introduction

### 2. A Quiet Revolution: From The Lucky Country To A Nation Dominated By Work

### 3. The Hard Choice: Work vs Family?

### 4. The Harsh Reality: Relational Dysfunction And Breakdown

### 5. What Australians Want

### 6. What Australia Needs: Recommendations



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## What Australians Want

- Although many of us may be unaware of the extent to which our country has become dominated by work, more than two-thirds of Australians believe that too many of us are working long hours.
- Interestingly, half of employees believe that working long hours is a choice made by the individual rather than something over which they have little or no control. This is even more strongly felt by those who work long hours, 57% of whom expect employees to have more control over their working patterns. However, these same workers are the ones most likely to report that their hours of work interfere with family life, and that their employers expect them to work long hours. And in 2004, almost three-quarters of surveyed Australians believed that, in general, big business had too much power – up from around 50% in 1987.

*“Australia’s working time regime is an institutional environment that sanctions unlimited hours, [and] encourages ... the belief that working long hours is determined by [an] individual’s commitment to work. By contrast, legislative limits on hours remind the public of the social hazards of long hours<sup>(1)</sup>”*

- This combined evidence suggests that many Australians now share a sense of resignation to a ‘system’ that demands some combination of long hours and irregular and unpredictable working patterns.
- With limited room for movement inside the system, an increasing number of Australians have made the individual choice to ‘downshift’, making a voluntary, long term change in their lifestyle that involves accepting significantly less income and consuming less. Between 1992 and 2002, 23% of surveyed Australians aged between 20 and 59 downshifted. While 29% of these workers were able to reduce the number of hours in their existing job, the majority have changed to a lower-paying job, changed career or stopped working altogether. The most common reason cited is ‘more time with family’ (35% of those polled).
- While many have taken action to slow the pace of their working lives, over the same period there has been a significant increase in the proportion of full-time employees who would prefer to work fewer hours. Between 1995 and 2001, of the growing number of people working more than 45 hours a week, the proportion who would prefer to work fewer hours grew from around a third to over a half. Their overall preference was to reduce their average 54 hour week to 40 hours. By 2003, more than 60% would rather be working less hours.
- Almost two-thirds of those working long hours consider that their hours of work interfere with their family and personal life, compared with only a third of those who work between 35 and 44 hours a week.

1. Van Wanrooy & Wilson (2006), Convincing the toilers? Dilemmas of long working hours in Australia, Work, Employment & Society 20:349-368.

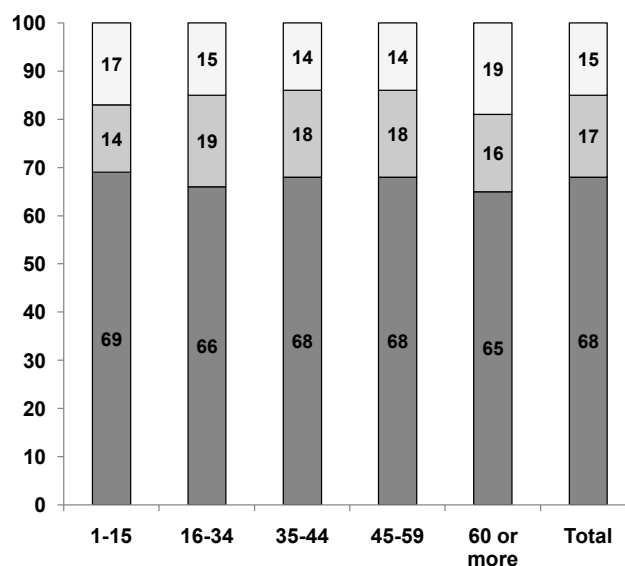


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RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA

## 68% of employees believe that too many people are working long hours in Australia today

**“Too Many People Are Working Long Hours In Australia Today”  
(%, 2003)**



☐ Disagree / Strongly Disagree  
☐ Neither  
☐ Agree / Strongly Agree

Hours Per Week Usually Worked

Source: Van Wanrooy & Wilson (2006), Convincing the toilers? Dilemmas of long working hours in Australia, Work, Employment & Society 20:349-368.  
Australian Survey of Social Attitudes (2003).

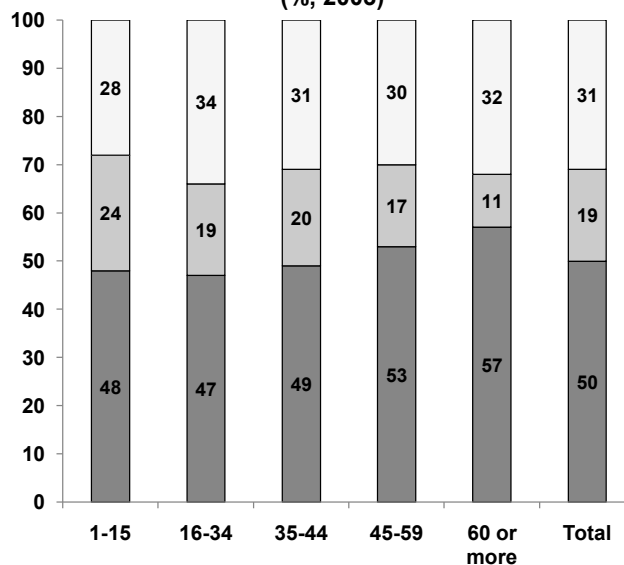


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RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA

## 50% or employees believe that long working hours is an individual's choice

**"Long Working Hours Are A Choice"**  
(%, 2003)



☐ Disagree  
☐ Neither  
☐ Agree

Hours Per Week Usually Worked

Source: Van Wanrooy & Wilson (2006), Convincing the toilers? Dilemmas of long working hours in Australia, Work, Employment & Society 20:349-368.  
Australian Survey of Social Attitudes (2003).

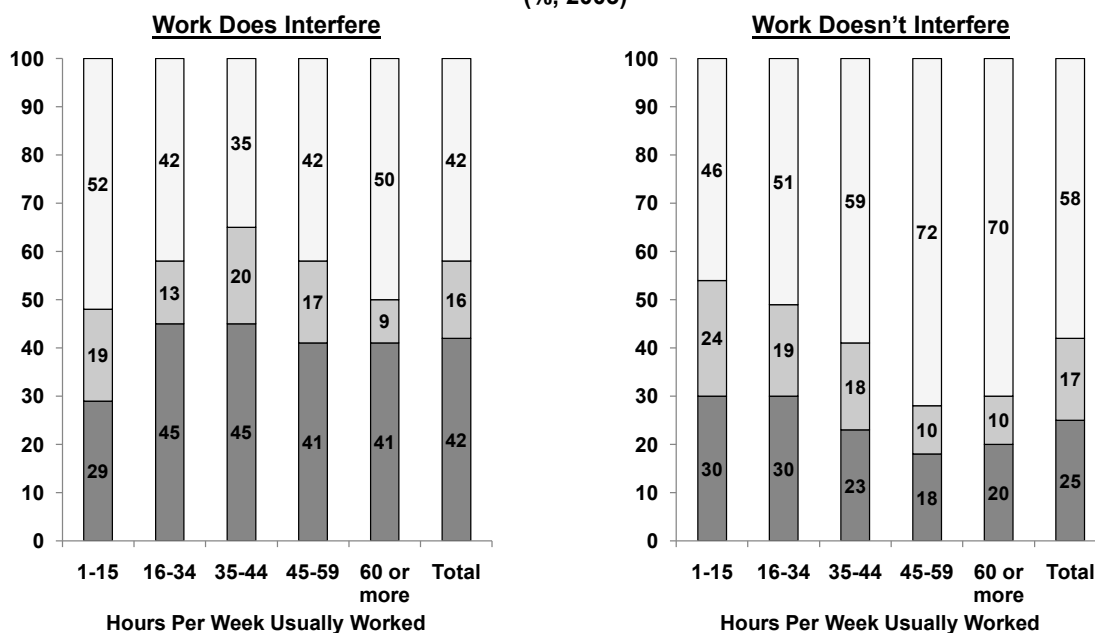
RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA



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## 42% of employees who report that their hours of work interfere with family/personal life do not have a choice about working long hours

**"Hours Of Work Interfere With Family/Personal Life"**  
(%, 2003)



☐ Hours are a choice  
☐ Neither  
☐ Hours are not a choice

Hours Per Week Usually Worked

Hours Per Week Usually Worked

Source: Van Wanrooy & Wilson (2006), Convincing the toilers? Dilemmas of long working hours in Australia, Work, Employment & Society 20:349-368.  
Australian Survey of Social Attitudes (2003).

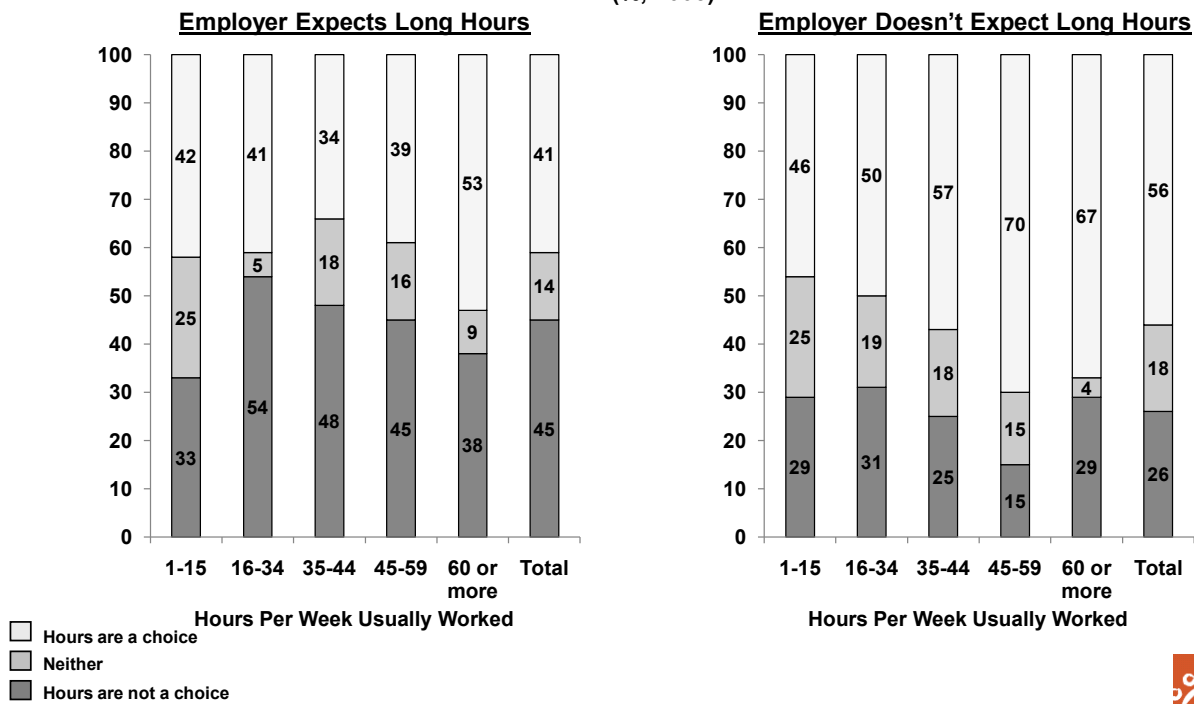
RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA



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## 45% of employees whose employer expects long hours do not have a choice about working those long hours

**"My Employer Expects Me To Work Long Hours"**  
(%, 2003)



Source: Van Wanrooy & Wilson (2006), Convincing the toilers? Dilemmas of long working hours in Australia, Work, Employment & Society 20:349-368.  
 Australian Survey of Social Attitudes (2003).

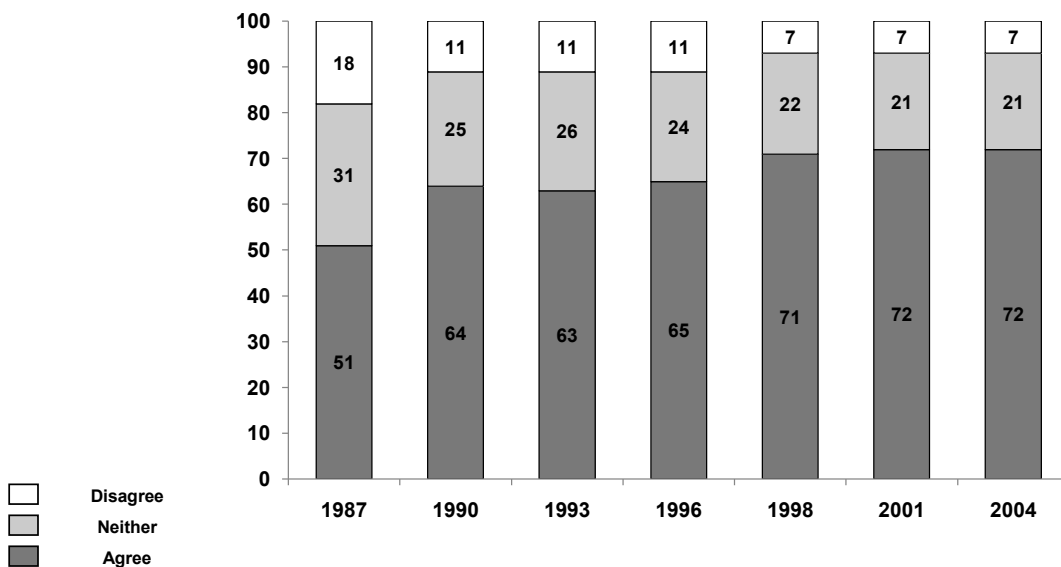
RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA



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## Almost three quarters of Australians now believe that big business has too much power

**"Big Business In This Country Has Too Much Power"**  
(%)



Source: Van Wanrooy & Wilson (2006), Convincing the toilers? Dilemmas of long working hours in Australia, Work, Employment & Society 20:349-368.  
 Australian Survey of Social Attitudes (2003).

RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA

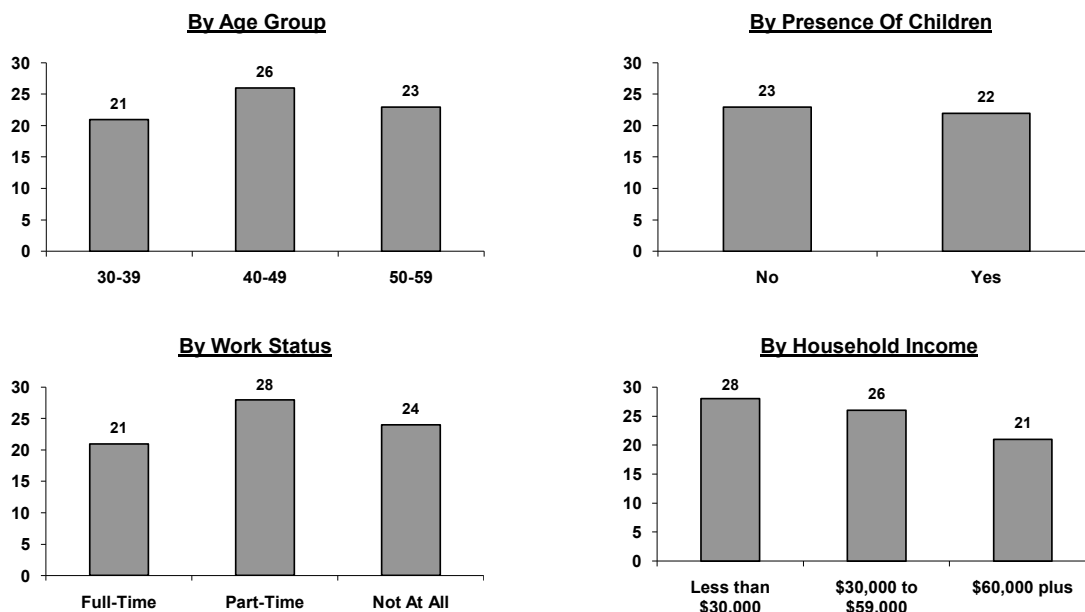


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## 23% of Australians downshifted between 1992 and 2002, with similar proportions downshifting from different demographic and socio-economic groups

**Downshifters<sup>(1)</sup> In The Last Ten Years As A Proportion Of Australian Population<sup>(2)</sup>**  
(%, 2002)



- (1) Downshifting defined as those people who in the last ten years made a voluntary, long-term change in their lifestyle that involves accepting significantly less income and consuming less. Excludes those starting own business, going back to study, refusing a promotion, taking time off for a baby and who gave 'more financial independence' as their reason.
- (2) Results reflect respondents situation after downshifting.
- Source: Hamilton & Mail (2003), Downshifting in Australia: a sea-change in the pursuit of happiness, The Australia Institute, Discussion Paper 50.  
Newspoll stratified random sample survey of 981 respondents aged 30-59.

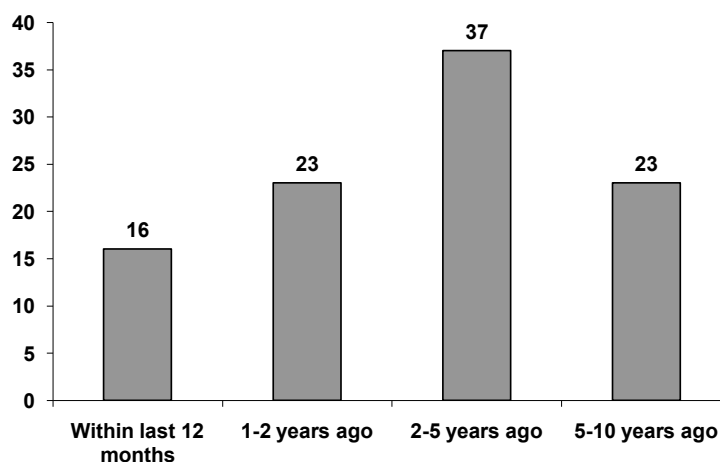


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RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA

## The rate of downshifting has increased, with 76% making the move in the second half of the period and 39% in the last 2 years of the period

**When Did Downshifting Occur? <sup>(1)</sup>**  
(%, 2002)



- (1) Downshifting defined as those people who in the last ten years made a voluntary, long-term change in their lifestyle that involves accepting significantly less income and consuming less. Excludes those starting own business, going back to study, refusing a promotion, taking time off for a baby and who gave 'more financial independence' as their reason.
- Source: Hamilton & Mail (2003), Downshifting in Australia: a sea-change in the pursuit of happiness, The Australia Institute, Discussion Paper 50.  
Newspoll stratified random sample survey of 981 respondents aged 30-59.

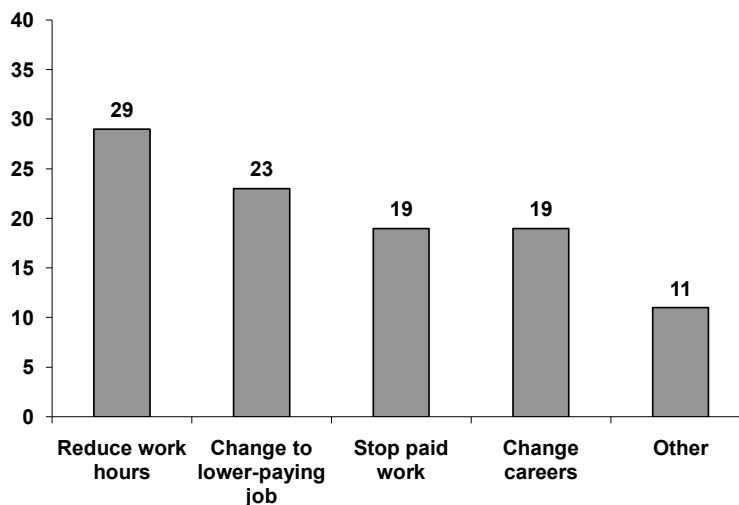


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## The main method of downshifting is by reducing work hours (29% of downshifters)

**How Did Downshifting Occur? <sup>(1,2)</sup>**  
(%, 2002)



- (1) Downshifting defined as those people who in the last ten years made a voluntary, long-term change in their lifestyle that involves accepting significantly less income and consuming less. Excludes those starting own business, going back to study, refusing a promotion, taking time off for a baby and who gave 'more financial independence' as their reason.
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- Source: Hamilton & Mail (2003), Downshifting in Australia: a sea-change in the pursuit of happiness, The Australia Institute, Discussion Paper 50.  
Newspoll stratified random sample survey of 981 respondents aged 30-59.

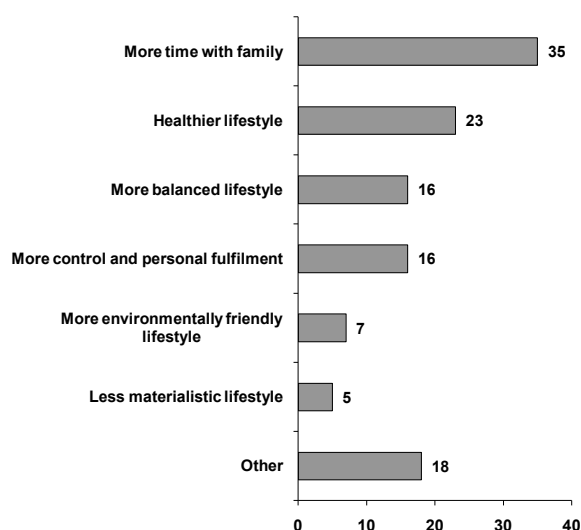


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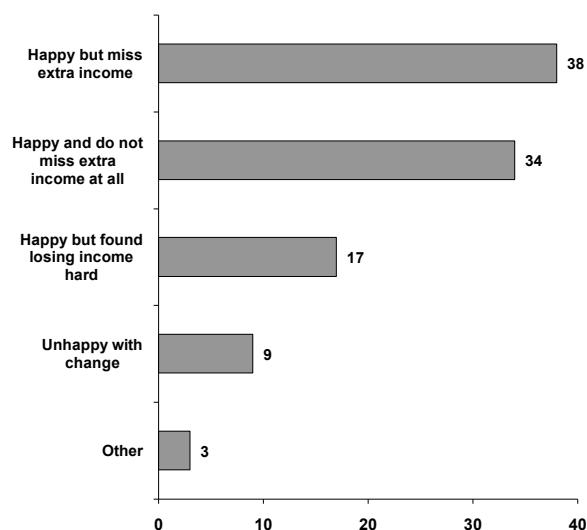
RELATIONSHIPS FORUM AUSTRALIA

## 35% of downshifters made the change to spend more time with family, and 89% are happy that they have downshifted

**Why Did Downshifting Occur? <sup>(1,2,3)</sup>**  
(%, 2002)



**Assessment Of Downshifting <sup>(1,2)</sup>**  
(%, 2002)



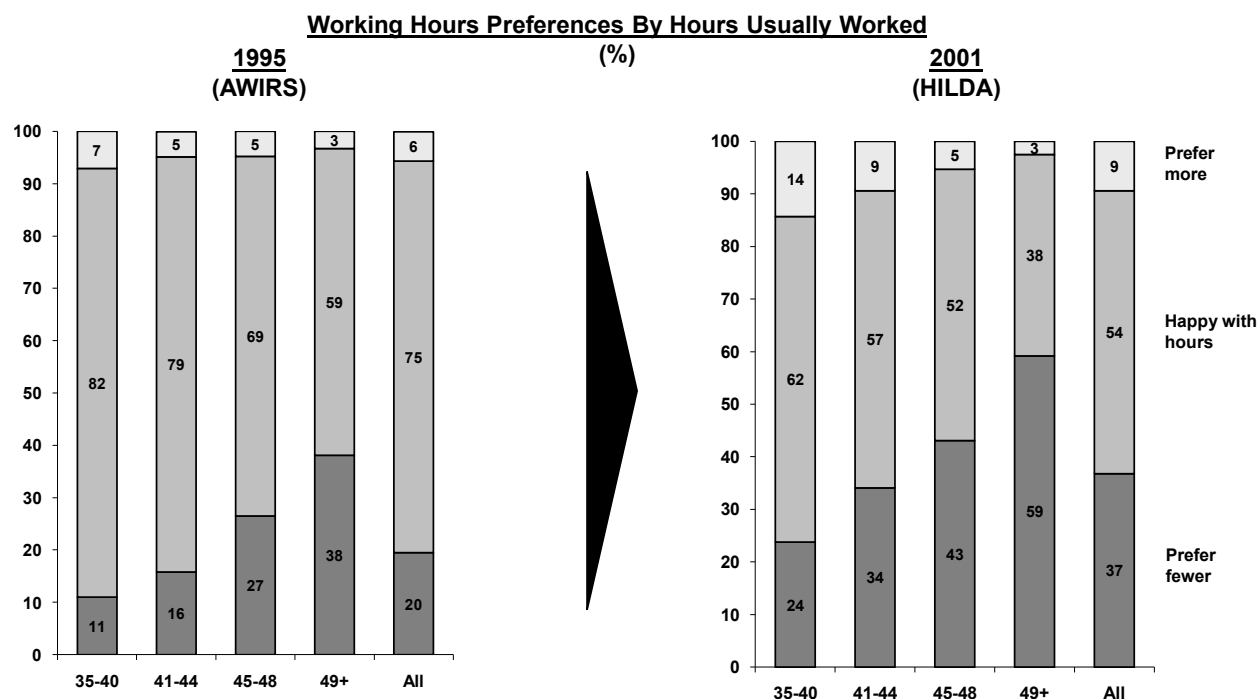
- (1) Downshifting defined as those people who in the last ten years made a voluntary, long-term change in their lifestyle that involves accepting significantly less income and consuming less. Excludes those starting own business, going back to study, refusing a promotion, taking time off for a baby and who gave 'more financial independence' as their reason.
- (2) Results reflect respondents situation after downshifting.
- (3) Although the question was worded to discourage multiple responses, they were permitted, so the totals add to more than 100%.
- Source: Hamilton & Mail (2003), Downshifting in Australia: a sea-change in the pursuit of happiness, The Australia Institute, Discussion Paper 50.  
Newspoll stratified random sample survey of 981 respondents aged 30-59.



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**Between 1995 and 2001, the proportion of full-time employees preferring fewer hours increased from 20% to 37%, and for those working 49+ hours per week from 38% to 59%**



Source: Australian workplace industrial relations survey 1995

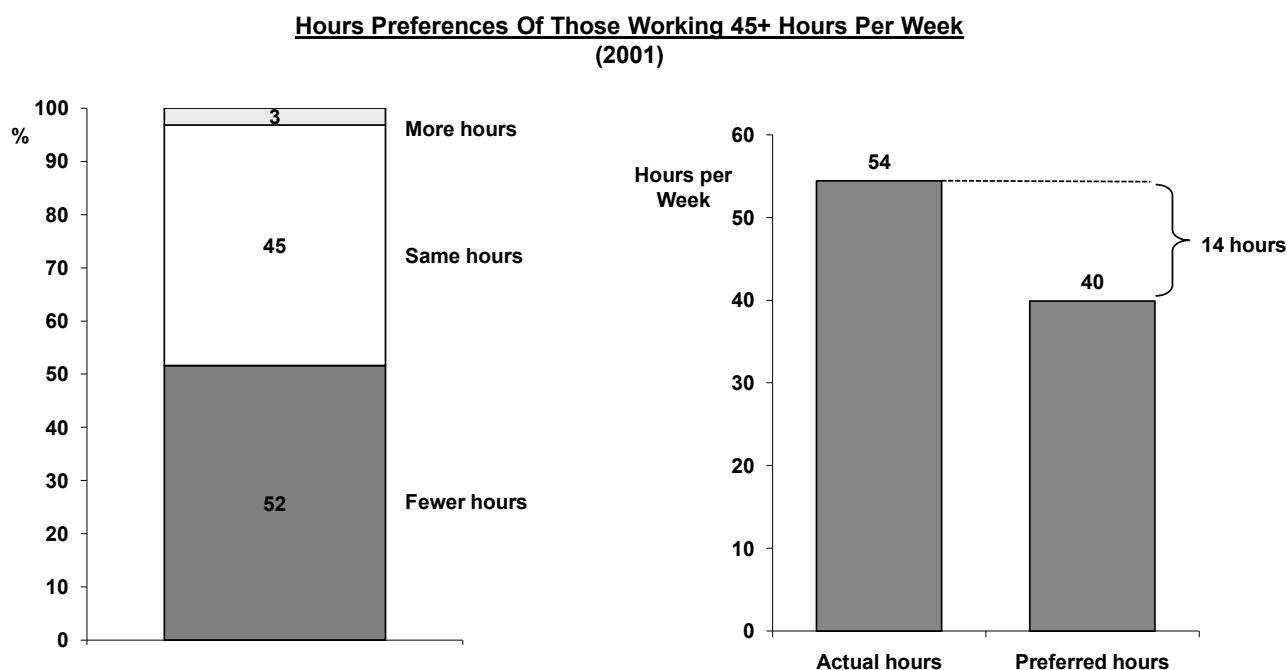
Wooden (2003), Balancing work and family at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century: evidence from wave 1 of the HILDA survey, Melbourne Institute.

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**52% of employees working 45 or more hours per week would prefer to work fewer hours. These employees would prefer to work 14 hours less per week**



Source: Unpublished data from HILDA (2001).

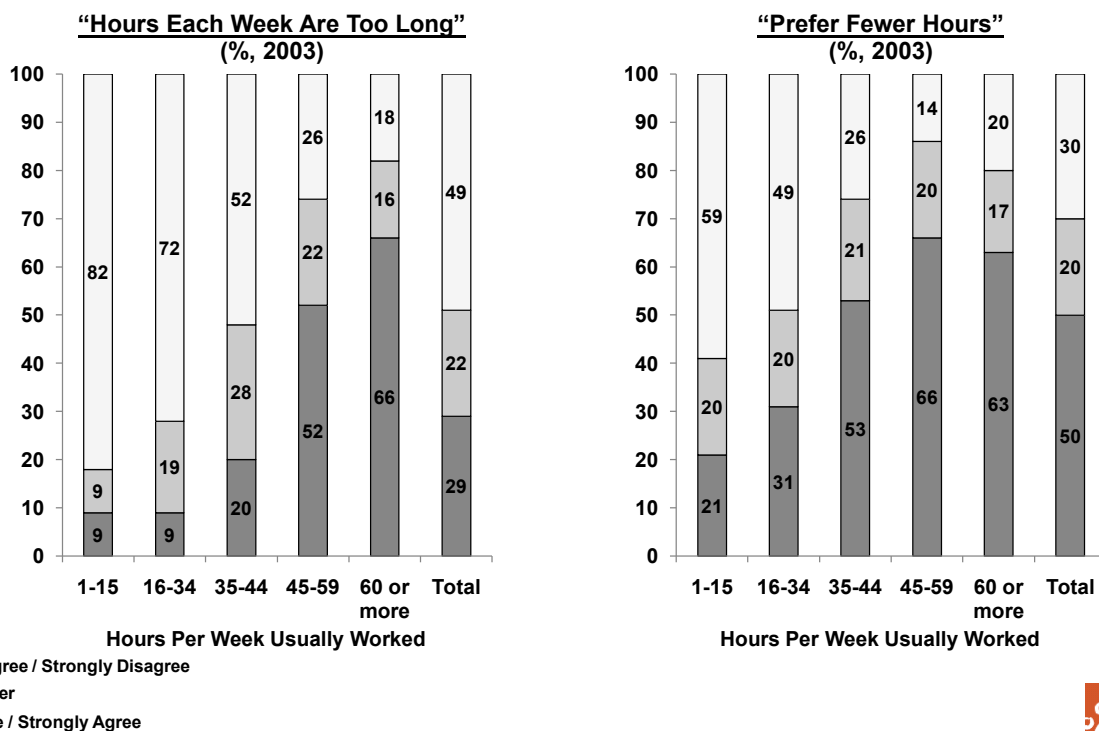
Watson, Buchanan, Campbell & Briggs (2003), Fragmented Futures: New Challenges in Working Life, ACIRRT, Federation Press.

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**In a more recent (though smaller) survey, 52-66% of long hours workers (45+ hours per week) thought their hours are too long, and 63-66% would prefer fewer hours**



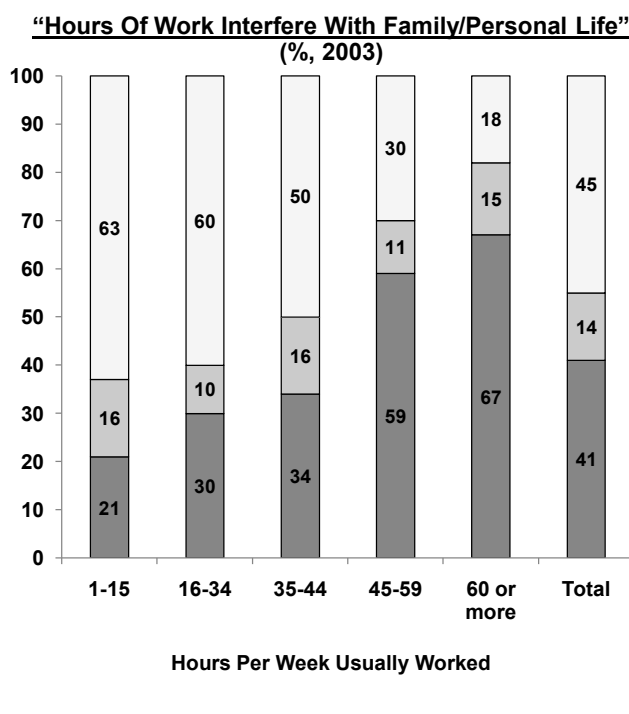
Source: Van Wanrooy & Wilson (2006), Convincing the toilers? Dilemmas of long working hours in Australia, Work, Employment & Society 20:349-368.  
 Australian Survey of Social Attitudes (2003).

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**59-67% of long hours workers (45+ hours per week) report that their hours of work interfere with their family/personal life**



Source: Van Wanrooy & Wilson (2006), Convincing the toilers? Dilemmas of long working hours in Australia, Work, Employment & Society 20:349-368.  
 Australian Survey of Social Attitudes (2003).

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## Contents

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### 1. Introduction

### 2. A Quiet Revolution: From The Lucky Country To A Nation Dominated By Work

### 3. The Hard Choice: Work vs Family?

### 4. The Harsh Reality: Relational Dysfunction And Breakdown

### 5. What Australians Want

### 6. What Australia Needs: Recommendations



## What Australia Needs: Recommendations

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- In 2006, 77% of surveyed Australians agreed with the statement: “A government’s prime objective should be achieving the greatest happiness of the people, not the greatest wealth”. And when asked “What is the most important thing for your happiness?”, 59% of surveyed Australians cited partner/spouse and family. A further 8% specified community and friends. It would appear, then, that a large proportion of the Australian population believes that a primary responsibility of government is to support their happiness, founded in relationships with their family, friends and the broader community. At the same time, only one quarter of those surveyed think that life is getting better.
- To date, Australian governments have shown little awareness of the general association between working patterns and the quality of relationships, particularly those in our immediate families. However, a variety of signals point to a growing, broad-based dissatisfaction with the way that working patterns have evolved over the last three decades, particularly as they affect workers’ ability to foster relationships with family and friends.
- Sustained discontent with this core aspect of our shared social structure indicates an underlying imbalance of power between employers and employees. Two conditions will be required for policy makers to redress this imbalance:
  - A broadly-held public preference for governments to take action needs to be communicated clearly to those responsible for implementing public policy
  - Policy makers must have access to tools, in terms of data and policy options, that will to enable them to take appropriate action to support strong relationships in families and in the general community.

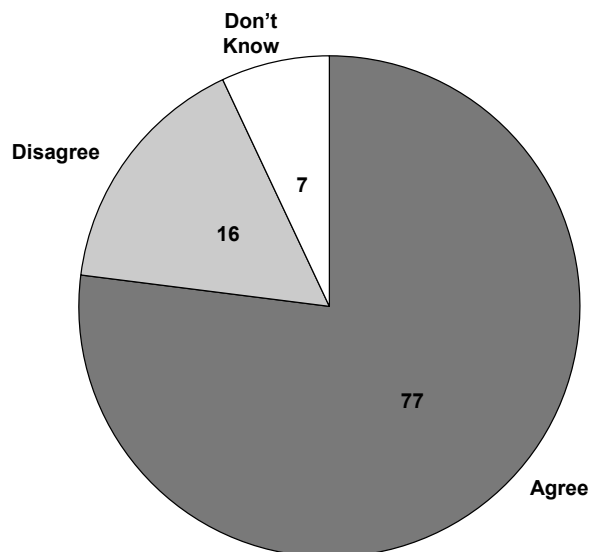
### Conclusion

- This study has sought to demonstrate the link between changing working patterns and a general decline in wellbeing associated with relationships – particularly those in families, but also including friendships and participation in the broader community. If such a link is accepted, it is incumbent on political leaders to take urgent action to address working time issues to avert the emerging social and economic repercussions they will bring, and to ensure a stable and sustainable future for our society.



## A government's prime objective is achieving happiness, not wealth (I)

**"A Government's Prime Objective Should Be Achieving  
The Greatest Happiness Of The People, Not The Greatest Wealth"**  
(%, 2006)



Note: Based on a national telephone survey of 1,000 people conducted by Ipsos Mackay during August 2006. A stratified sampling method was used to ensure the sample was representative of all Australians by location and the results were weighted to reflect ABS population figures.  
Source: Hamilton & Rush (2006), The attitudes of Australians to happiness and social well-being, The Australia Institute.

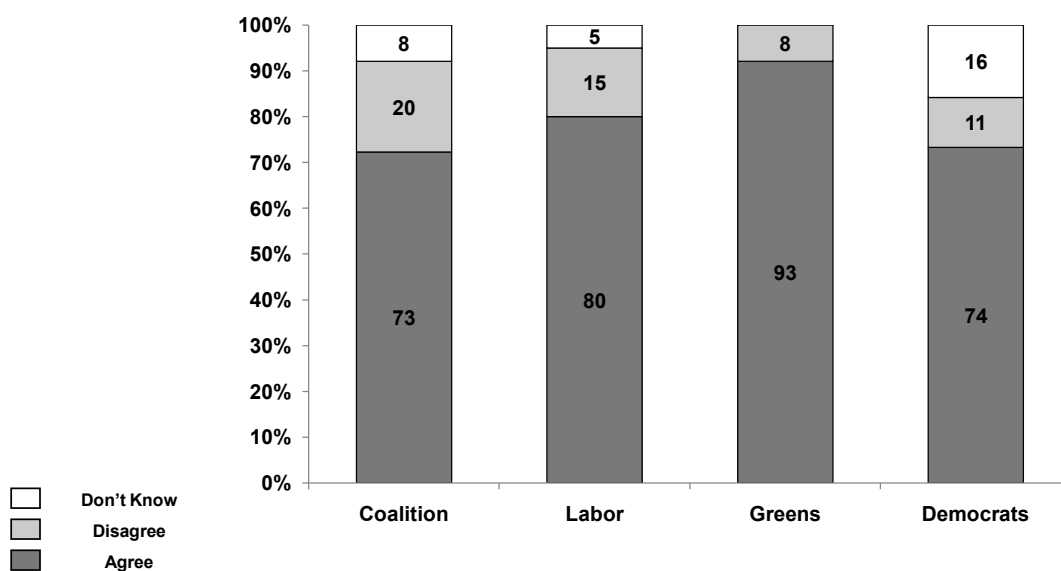


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## A government's prime objective is achieving happiness, not wealth (II)

**"A Government's Prime Objective Should Be Achieving  
The Greatest Happiness Of The People, Not The Greatest Wealth"**  
(%, 2006)



Note: Based on a national telephone survey of 1,000 people conducted by Ipsos Mackay during August 2006. A stratified sampling method was used to ensure the sample was representative of all Australians by location and the results were weighted to reflect ABS population figures.  
Source: Hamilton & Rush (2006), The attitudes of Australians to happiness and social well-being, The Australia Institute.

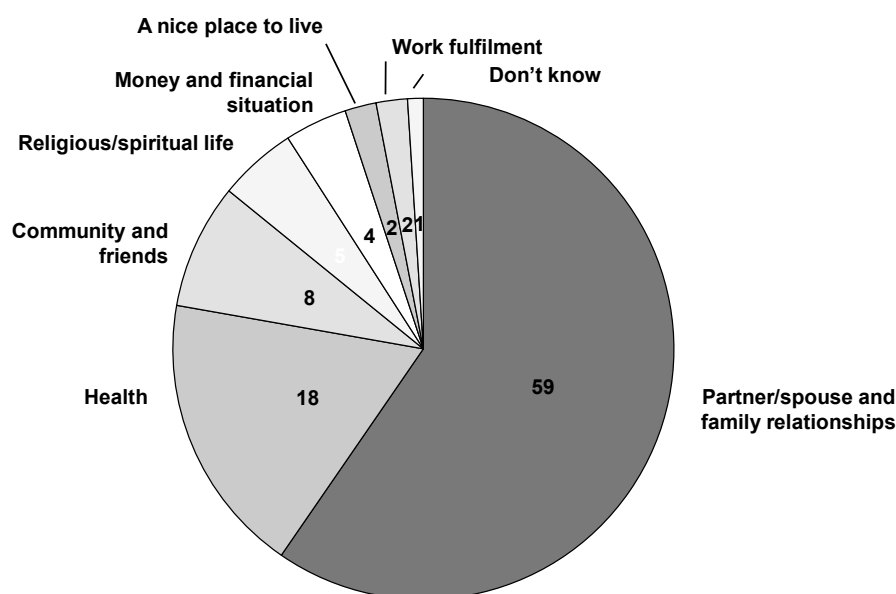


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## Partner/spouse and family relationships are the most important things for happiness

**“What Is The Most Important Thing For Your Happiness?”**  
(%, 2006)



Note: Based on a national telephone survey of 1,000 people conducted by Ipsos Mackay during August 2006. A stratified sampling method was used to ensure the sample was representative of all Australians by location and the results were weighted to reflect ABS population figures.  
Source: Hamilton & Rush (2006), The attitudes of Australians to happiness and social well-being, The Australia Institute.

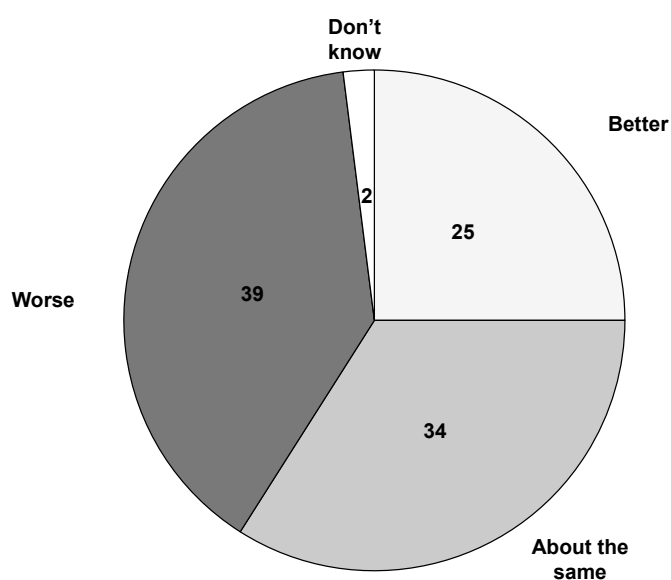
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## Only 25% of people think that life is getting better

**“Is Life In Australia Getting Better, Worse, Or Staying About The Same?”**  
(%, 2006)



Note: Based on a national telephone survey of 1,000 people conducted by Ipsos Mackay during August 2006. A stratified sampling method was used to ensure the sample was representative of all Australians by location and the results were weighted to reflect ABS population figures.  
Source: Hamilton & Rush (2006), The attitudes of Australians to happiness and social well-being, The Australia Institute.

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## Informing Public Opinion

- Employees' concerns about their lack of power relative to employers are regularly voiced through public opinion polls and articles written by sympathetic journalists. However, a broadly-held preference for governments to take positive action through policies that support household, family and community relationships is not often clearly articulated or heard
  - A notable recent exception, less than two years ago, was the West Australian referendum on extending trading hours for all businesses, where 61% of voters opposed later weeknight shopping and Sunday trading. And in January this year, the will of the people was reinforced as the WA Government heeded community calls to retreat from another push for Sunday retail trading and extended shopping hours.
- It seems that, like the frog in a pot of water being brought to the boil, many Australians are aware of increasing discomfort but do not have a sense of what action to take.
- The analysis and findings included in this report are intended to provide important grist for public debate. It is the task of politicians, journalists and other leaders within the Australian community to engage personally with this critical issue, encourage broad public discussion, independently gauge the public temperature and, ultimately, push for policy reform.



## Tools For Policy Makers (I)

- The two key tools required by policy makers are *an integrated set of performance indicators*, so as to understand critical aspects of working patterns and relational outcomes, and *a set of practical policy options*, so as to be equipped to take appropriate and timely action to foster relational health within families and in the community more broadly.
- *An integrated set of performance indicators* should quantify both *inputs* and associated *outcomes*. Inputs include the various aspects of working patterns reviewed in this report: usual and actual hours worked for individuals and households, the actual and usual incidence of atypical work (weekends and weekday atypical), the amount of time spent in work at atypical times, and the predictability of work (including the proportion of workforce employed on a casual/temporary basis). All of this information needs to be available in sufficiently detailed groupings so as to permit segmentation by family/household type, demographic group, industry and occupation. Considerable data describing individual work hours are already available, but there is limited information concerning the combined work hours of households, and very little data (or consistency of definitions) for atypical working patterns. Outcomes include time spent at home by parents, parents' satisfaction with their own performance as parents, aspects of family dysfunction and breakdown (including parents' health, strain in family relationships, hostile and ineffective parenting and children's wellbeing). Importantly, sample sizes for this data gathering should be large enough to permit meaningful analysis of different groups within society, particularly across the socio-economic spectrum and across families with children of varying ages.
- These indicators will determine the relevant information that must be collected, building on the excellent longitudinal sets of data already being gathered (eg through ABS, HILDA and AIFS). Data collection should be closely coordinated, perhaps overseen by a panel of Australia's leading social researchers, so as to ensure that the resulting data sets leave as few gaps as possible in understanding all key inputs, outcomes and linkages. Relevant information should be collected and reported in short cycles to allow quick policy response.
- *A set of practical policy options* should be identified to help support strong relationships in families and in the community generally. The process of developing and assessing policy options should involve close consultation with employers and industry groups, trade unions and other interested parties within the community.





## Tools For Policy Makers (II)

- A shortlist of potential policies can be developed through a survey of local and overseas experience, and through consultation with community leaders, social researchers, and union and business leaders. A set of assessment criteria can then be applied to evaluate the short-listed options. Likely assessment criteria include:
  - The projected *effect on relationships*, including fostering of strong family and community relationships
  - Potential *micro- and macro-economic implications*. Broad-based consultation with employers and industry groups would help identify policies that will support a 'level playing field' domestically and minimise any potential deterioration of Australia's competitive standing internationally
  - *Equity* across different groups in society. Policies will need to be tested to ensure that all employees have access to any related benefits
  - Potential for *acceptance*, socially and politically, in the Australian context
  - Ease and cost of *implementation*.
- A preliminary list of policy options for assessment would include:
  - Regulating various aspects of employment, for example through:
    - Premium payments for long or atypical hours
    - Limitation on the hours or days of work per week that can be demanded of employees (such as in the EU's Working Time Directive)
    - Establishing a weekly, or perhaps monthly, shared weekend day off, allowing for the provision of essential services (as in Germany)
    - Special work provisions for parents. Examples include:
      - Parents with school-aged children to be protected from the requirement to work on both Saturday and Sunday on any given weekend so that all parents have at least one day a week with their children
      - The right to request flexible working for all parents who have children up to age 18<sup>(1)</sup>.
  - Empowering employees:
    - A new framework for collective bargaining
    - Providing information to help employees make informed choices (for example, requiring employers to report average hours per week actually worked by their employees)
    - Taking steps to help employees understand the dangers of consumer debt and how to escape from it.

(1) The UK has been successful in providing parents of children up to six years of age or of disabled children with the right to request flexible working arrangements. To date, around three-quarters of requests have received positive responses from employers.



## Additional Benefits

- It is feasible that, once implemented, a set of policies that builds a platform for relational wellbeing, while minimising any downside to employers, will have a strong ongoing positive impact on the Australian macroeconomy, as well as greatly improving the lives of all Australians.
- Improved relationships should provide a range of economic benefits. Healthier adults and children will place less demand on ballooning public and private health care expenditure. Improved productivity (including a reduction in absenteeism) should result from less stressed workers.
- A fall in separation and divorce rates will lead to reduced duplication of housing and transport requirements, reducing cost to individuals and the economy as a whole, and placing less strain on the environment.
- Improved family relationships stand to have a lasting impact on Australia's international competitiveness as children in stable families arguably have greater opportunity to develop the relational skills that will be critical in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global service economy.
- Reduced government expenditure should result, not only from lower healthcare requirements, but also from the lowered cost of education, aged care and welfare. Greater time availability for parents to spend with their children should lead to less disruption from children with behavioural problems and fewer special-needs children, which will lift a significant cost burden from schools. The cost of caring for the aged should fall as adults have more time available to care for elderly relatives. Lower welfare payments and lower costs associated with juvenile crime should result from the reduction in the number of broken homes and fewer dysfunctional young adults.



**Errata**

Page A-5, Exhibit 7, page A-7, Exhibit 12 and page A-9, Exhibit 15 - the proportion of Australian employees working long hours (>50 hours per week) should be 20% rather than 22%.

There is no change to the body of the text in the document.