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In this Issue

Women's Role in Grassroots Leadership in Rural, Regional and Remote Australia – the Potential for Western Australia By Fiona M Haslam McKenzie

Fiona Haslam McKenzie currently teaching and researching in the Faculty of Business and Public Management at Edith Cowan University in Perth presented this Speech at the Women and Resource Management Conference (WARM) for Australian Women in Agriculture in July 01 at Perth, WA.

She talks "about an emerging style of community leadership" that she observed "in the process of undertaking two research projects in the last 12 months both of which focused on, amongst other things, women's contribution to community and industry leadership particularly in rural, regional and remote in Australia."

Given that the "Commonwealth and State governments have tended to advocate a 'self help' approach to rural economic development and viable rural enterprises as the key to arrest rural decline and that the emergence of strong viable enterprises and rural communities, together devising strategies to change their economic, social, cultural, and/or environmental situation offers some hope for a reversal of rural decline," McKenzie asks the crucial question, "WHO IS GOING TO LEAD THE COMMUNITY IN developing strategies for growth?" Her response that, "**there is great potential here for transformational leadership, and women are well suited and placed for practicing transformational leadership,**" is supported with 3 excellent examples of transformational leadership which McKenzie encountered during her research. Such "examples of grass roots leadership ... have the potential to make a real difference to communities and move 3R (Rural, Regional and Remote) Australia forward. Generally, their type of leadership is not extraordinary, but by virtue of its low key nature, it has been effective and, I suspect transformational," she comments.

This Paper will "challenge you to think about transformational leadership, which is about sharing the leadership role and the load, nurturing those who are not yet 'labelled' as leaders and to continue to think about share visions."

It also illustrates that women's leadership styles are important, that we can make a difference about what we are personally affected by and that this has ramifications that go beyond the radius of our experience, and even has the potential to achieve sustainability and direction for Australia, itself.

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2001

**Rural, Regional and Remote Australia – the
Potential for Western Australia** By Fiona M
Haslam McKenzie



Fiona M Haslam McKenzie

Fiona M Haslam McKenzie was brought up on a farm in the West Australian Wheatbelt. Having attended universities in the USA and Australia, she has several under-graduate degrees and a Masters in Philosophy. Fiona is currently finishing her PhD in Political Geography at the University of Western Australia.

She teaches and researches in the Faculty of Business and Public Management at Edith Cowan University in Perth, including most recently the Theme Paper for the Commonwealth Office of the Status of Women Year Book and the Evaluation of the Progress Rural WA Programs for the Office of the Minister for Primary Industries; Fisheries, Western Australia.

Women's Role in Grassroots Leadership in Rural, Regional and Remote Australia – the Potential for Western Australia

By Fiona M Haslam McKenzie

Presented at the Women and Resource Management Conference

(WARM) for Australian Women in Agriculture held at the

Rendezvous Observation City Hotel, Perth 27 July, 2001

I would like to thank the many organisers for their hard work and preparation in putting together such an excellent gathering and also for inviting me to be here amongst extraordinary women, in such a venue, to talk with other women about issues important to us personally, but also to our industries and livelihoods.

I also congratulate the sponsors who had the good business sense to see the advantages of supporting this Gathering and I hope those sponsors who didn't get

behind the Western Australia WARM Gathering this year realise their foolishness and the fabulous opportunity missed and are breaking the door down to get involved next time.

Today, I would like to talk about an emerging style of community leadership that I have observed in the process of undertaking two research projects in the last 12 months both of which focused on, amongst other things, women's contribution to community and industry leadership particularly in rural, regional and remote in Australia. It has struck me and the others on our research teams that women's leadership styles are hugely important if 3R Australia is not only going to sustain itself, but in fact move forward. It has been shown in two recent large research projects on the East coast (Irons, 2001; Sinclair (1998) that women are overwhelming more holistic in their thinking about rural issues whereas men tend to be more single-minded. I suspect that is no news to many of you however, in doing these two research projects, one a Commonwealth government sponsored project and the other, a State government study, many of the women we spoke to, were almost apologetic in suggesting themselves to be women with something to say. At one level, this really irritated me, because 99 times out of 100, the women who apologised to us as collectors of information, usually had something very important to contribute. At another level, I realised that women, and I suspect, women across all of Australian society have a long way to go before they are comfortable calling themselves leaders.

I don't wish to dwell today talking about the reasons why that might be, nor the different types of leadership. Rather, I would like to share with you some exciting examples of grass roots leadership that we have observed that has the potential to make a real difference to communities and move 3R Australia forward. Generally,

their type of leadership is not extraordinary, but by virtue of its low key nature, it has been effective and, I suspect transformational, but I'll come to transformational leadership a little later. ... but first, a little bit of background regarding why I think it is important that women in rural, regional and remote communities be aware of, and develop their everyday leadership skills.

Over the last two decades international trade and economic activity particularly in the primary resource industries have increasingly tested the ability of Australian regional communities and businesses to adapt and achieve a competitive edge in order to survive in unprotected, global networks. Governments at State and Federal levels have endeavoured to internationalise the Australian economy in the last two decades. There have been numerous reports that have emphasised the importance of local economic development in promoting economic and job growth and have argued that strengthening regional economies by encouraging local leadership was essential to the growth of the Australian economy.

Given that primary industries are in the midst of global change and that Australian governments at all levels have shifted the emphasis away from government intervention and the protection of individual equity to one where the market has been deemed the best arbiter of efficiency of resource allocation, there is a sense of urgency to promote leadership at every level throughout Australia. The Australian Federal Government (Keating, 1994; Sharp, 1996, Taksforce on Regional Development, 1993) suggested that, in the search for sustainability, greater reliance should be placed upon local populations to become more self-determining; to take responsibility for both

❖ economic development and

❖ natural resource management, and

❖ to manage their affairs within locally determined, yet globally responsive, community based decision-making frameworks.

Commonwealth and State governments have tended to advocate a 'self help' approach to rural economic development and viable rural enterprises are considered the key to arresting rural decline. Communities in traditional farming areas of Western Australia have limited diversity and have struggled against unprecedented rates of change in their industries. The emergence of strong viable enterprises and rural communities, together devising strategies to change their economic, social, cultural, and/or environmental situation offers some hope for a reversal of rural decline. But the really important question is, WHO IS GOING TO LEAD THE COMMUNITY IN developing strategies for growth? I think there is great potential here for transformational leadership, and women are well suited and placed for practicing transformational leadership.

Transformational Leadership?

Leadership is a social construction; the product of emotional needs, experience and group aspirations. It involves influence and goal attainment in a group context (Northouse, 1997) . Formal leadership has tended to be a male domain. Traditional leadership tends to be top down in its decision making, paternalistic and operating in a stable and often narrow environment. REGIONAL Australia IS EXPERIENCING A VOLATILE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

A number of authors and commentators on leadership (Handy, 1989 ; Hearn, 1992 ; Mant, 1997; Sinclair, 1998) argue that a sea-change is occurring in leadership trends,

where the new style of leader seeks to solve problems and achieve outcomes through developing the capabilities of others (Sinclair, 1998).

The transformational approach to leadership is a broad-based perspective. In general, it describes how leaders can initiate, develop and carry out significant changes in organisations (Northouse, 1997) , or in this case, communities. Authors and commentators on leadership emphasise the transformational leader's role as a change agent, initiating and implementing new directions, often in line with a vision that they and/or their followers have conceived.

The transformational approach has many strengths because it requires that leaders become social architects, where they help shape and drive emerging values and norms of the environment (Northouse, 1997) . It is a process that is inclusive of the followers and the collaborative achievement of a vision. Transformational Leadership is not the sole preserve of the leader, but rather, emerges from the interplay between leaders and followers. The needs and growth of others are central to the transformational leader.

In the past, the traditional country town leader tended to be from an exclusive breed with a long birthright to community leadership, knowing all and doing all in a stable environment (see Dempsey 1990) . However as already discussed, the last three decades have seen a severe rationalisation of all strata of rural life in Western Australia in a turbulent economic environment. Those who have survived in their country communities have usually experienced significant economic and social change (see Haberkorn, Hugo et al., 1999 ; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2000) .

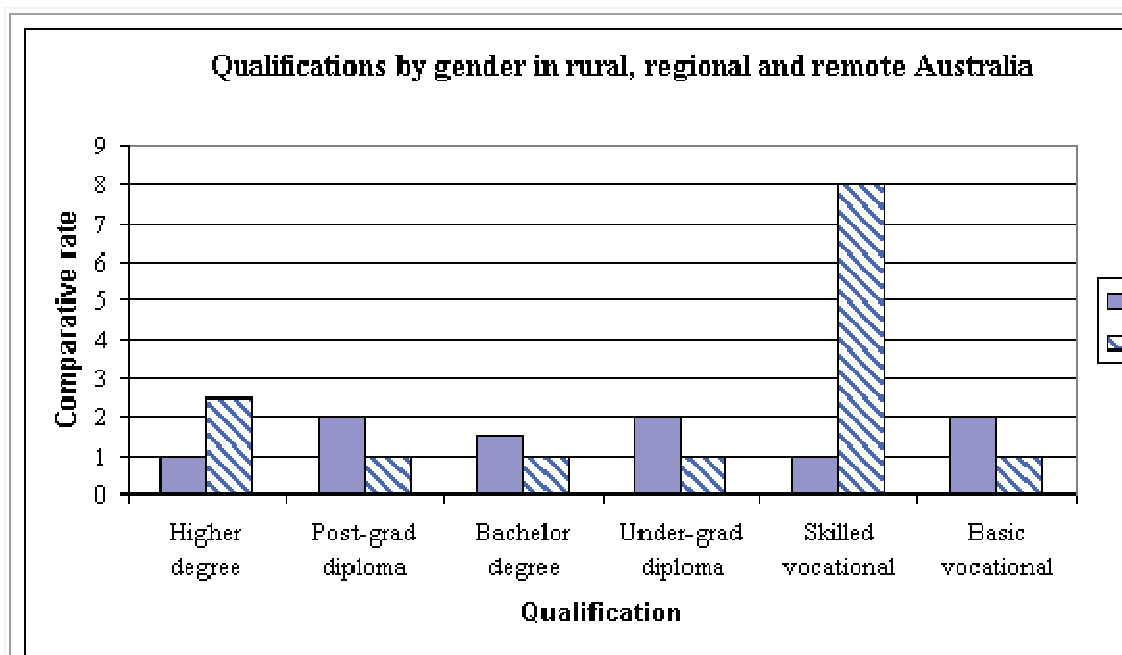
And consequently if leadership is the key to viable and sustainable communities, new leaders and leadership styles are crucial.

What has all of this to do with women? A great deal. In the last decade, important documents (Alston, 1998) ; (Elix & Lambert, 1998) ; (Franklin, Short, & Teather, 1994) ; (Dimopoulos & Sheridan, 2000) have been published that show very clearly, that women are and have been always, a significant work force in rural, regional and remote industries as well as being the glue that holds communities together. State and Federal government departments also recognise that women are important constituents that not only vote, but are an important resource to be used and supported for the future good of 3R Australia.

In the process of doing these two research projects referred to earlier, we reviewed much of the data that describes women living in 3R Australia, we were aghast at the amount of information and data that is not known, or perhaps just not published about women, outside metropolitan Australia. Our research teams were increasingly wondering how much governments really do know about women, or whether they realise how much they don't know.

We know from doing the national study last year, that

- ❖ women outside metropolitan Australia are 8 times more likely than their male partner to be tertiary educated, but that their formal qualifications do not guarantee them middle or senior management jobs.



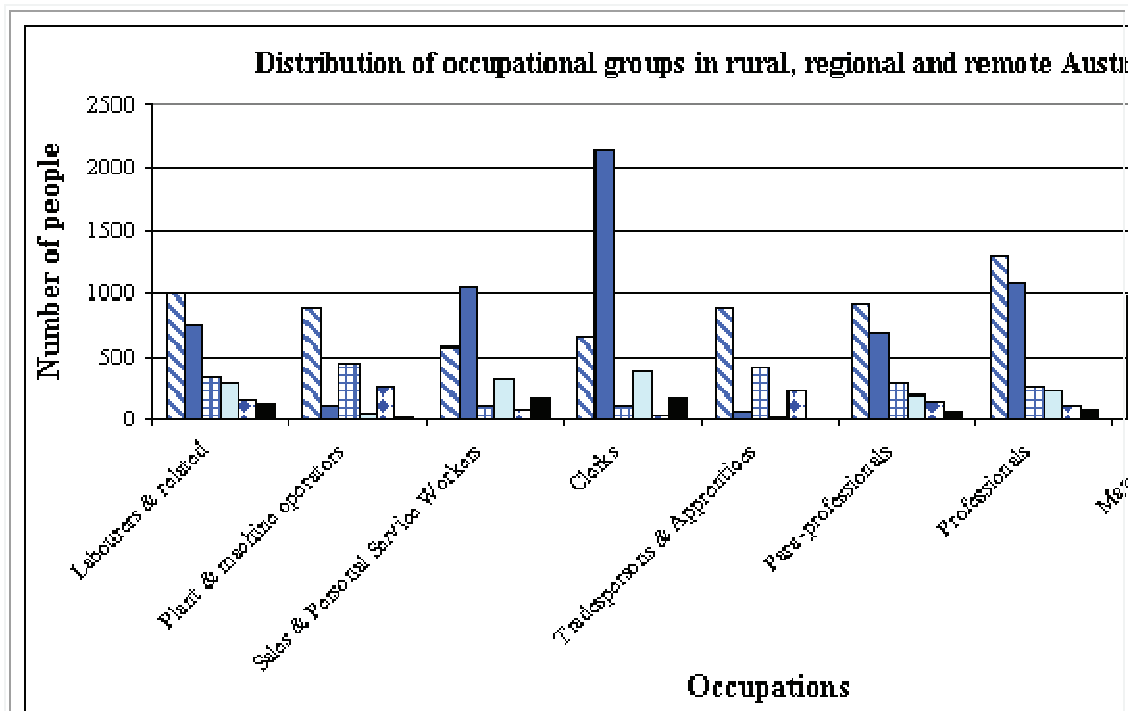
Highest qualification by gender for regional, rural and remote locations.

Source: ABS 1996 Census of Population and Housing (Various catalogues).
(Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1996)

(This statistical trend goes against the national trend which show that females throughout Australia in 1999 are only 45.2% of the population with post school educational qualifications (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2000a , p. 82)).

❖ Outside metropolitan areas, men are twice as likely to be managers and six times as likely to have senior management or professional positions. (While this may follow the same pattern as gender segregation in the Australian workforce generally, it should be remembered that women dominate the formally educated cohort in non-metropolitan Australia).

Distribution of Occupational Groups in regional, rural and remote locations.



Source: (Strachan & Burgess, 2000) p. 46; The Australian Workplace Industrial Relations Survey, 1995.

- ❖ A greater percentage of women in regional and rural areas are classified as labourers, sales and personal service workers compared to women in metropolitan areas.

It is really hard to be a leader when women are consistently in the lower categories of job classifications.

We also know that women's chief off-farm source of work is either in education or health. The service sector employs 71% of women and 46% of men in rural localities.

As government services are trimmed or closed altogether, women's participation in these professions is effected, but by how much is hard to gauge because changes in

Australian Bureau of Statistics definitions making it not possible to compare

employment in the service sector in the last two censuses.

The task of researching women's participation in small business in 3R Australia is difficult because there are limited published statistics on rural small businesses

generally. They are not included in the *Annual Review of Small Business* nor the 1995 *Business Longitudinal Study*. Similarly, few studies have analysed the differences in employment status that apply to women or men outside of capital cities and the little research that has been done is considered "biased and patchy due to a dependence on middle-class, professional women from an Anglo-Saxon background" (Mankelov & Gardoll, 1999 , p. 179). The Bureau of Rural Science has acknowledged there is an under-estimation of the female labour force participation in 3R areas, usually because of their involvement in family small business which are not always explicitly asked for by the data collecting agencies. We do know though that 27.4% of all female self-employed and employers in Australia live in small rural areas of less than 200 people (Garnett & Lewis, 2000) . Even though many women in 3R locations involved in small business are hard to statistically access and identify because of remoteness, or the businesses are home-based or operated by non-English speaking background women whose spouse takes the formal business identification.

There is even less data gathered regarding Indigenous women's involvement in the mainstream labour force of the wider economy. The values and assumptions of the dominant culture determine the concepts and methodologies used to measure employment and unemployment in a cross-cultural setting. No questions are asked of Indigenous Australians other than those defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics as 'economic work'. Their hunting and gathering tasks are not included in the official definition of economic work. Consequently, the static picture portrayed by official employment indicators regarding 3R women can be misleading and their usefulness for describing the actual patterns of work life and economic status, particularly in regional, rural and remote locations is questionable.

So while great gains have been made in the last decade regarding the recognition of women's contribution to the economic and social fabric of 3R Australia, there is still much work to be done.

So now, I would like to share with you some examples of transformational leadership in 3R Australia focusing particularly on women whose style of leadership has made a difference. I would like to add here, that one of the differences in female perspective in the 3R environment is the focus on their community, their families and their industries, rather than promoting themselves as part of a partnership be it familial or industry based.

Sister Ursula Freyne

Came to Swan River colony in the 1840s when Roman Catholics were only about 9% of the small population and were usually the lower and labouring classes. At the time, the Church of England enjoyed elite status in the colony, and more importantly, the majority share of government funding. Sister Ursula Freyne arrived in the colony with six other well educated middle class Sisters of the Church of Rome. Despite assurances and an ecclesiastic contract giving the Sisters a guarantee of no interference from the church hierarchy in Australia, particularly the local Vicar General Bishop Brady, the Sisters encountered antagonism from every quarter. Not only were they bothered by anti-Romanist sentiments, fleas, heat and the dust, but their own Bishop regularly questioned their ability and interfered in their finances, whom they mixed with in the colony and their methods of ministering. Despite his regular punishments, and the physical and ecclesiastic privations, they won over the lower orders of the colony and soon after, the Protestants too, through their dedication to good schooling, justice, and giving assistance to all who were sick or needy regardless of their religious affiliation or class position. To augment their few educational aids, the Sisters organised very popular musical events and bazaars and generally gave the colony a cultural injection it was badly in need of, and despite continued criticism by their bishop, the Sisters continued to win favour with both Protestants and Catholic.

I admire Sister Ursula for her great sense of determination, but she didn't do it on her own,

1. From the outset, Sister Ursula remained in regular contact with the Reverend Mother in Ireland and used her as a mentor and sounding board.

2. Despite their ill-health and loneliness she kept her small coterie of nuns motivated, informed and made herself available to be their mentor.
3. Through their sense of solidarity to each other, but also the Sister's of Mercy Mother house far away in Ireland, they sustained each other.
4. She together with her five followers (one of their number died six months after arriving) remained committed to their purpose, never lost their focus and developed respect from the colonists.
5. Despite their vows of obedience, the nuns were able to influence other women through the teaching of lapsed Catholics and the cultural influence they were able to impart to non-Catholics
6. Sister Ursula was a great user of networks and was able to procure for her school and small convent all sorts of goods and services through her contacts.

Whether sister Ursula knew it or not, she practiced many of the principles of transformational leadership.

The next case study is more about the emergence of a realisation of the potential of networks and grass roots activism and the blossoming of transformational leadership.

The fishing woman and the beef producer,

During the national study of women's experience of living in 3R Australia last year, a deckhand telephoned me from the Mackay region in Queensland to tell me her story.

It was pretty dismal and during the interview she vented her spleen regarding her opinions about canegrowers, beef producers and government environmental

authorities whom she felt had had a hand in closing their fishing industry down temporarily to enable aquaculture stocks to recover from pollutants flowing down the river and out onto the Great Barrier Reef.

I asked her what she was doing about these perceived injustices. She then told me another sad tale about trying to attend fishing industry meetings, but being made to feel small or marginalised all together by the traditional leaders of the local fishing industry. She did add however, that she had got together a group of women who were either directly or indirectly involved with the local fishing industry, and they regularly walked, talked and coffeed together.

It seemed to me as the person listening to this, that this was a lobby group forming. I asked her what these meetings had come up with. Her answer was, “not much, but an awful lot of anger about being powerless”. I suggested she might like to talk with women cane growers and beef producers and ask them for their perspective. Her response to me was (to be polite in this company) “yeah, right.” All in all, it was a very negative telephone call and definitely not the sort of information that the government was looking for from this project. Nonetheless, the conversation really bothered me, and I rang a friend who was at the finishing stages of her PhD, the focus of which was women canegrowers, AND she had grown up in this general area and knew something about the tensions and issues. I told her of the conversation and asked her whether there was any potential for canegrowing women and these fishing women just getting together and talking. She thought there was.

Several days later during another interview for this study, I was speaking with a farmer from the same area whose farm was equally divided between canegrowing and beef production. Bells rang, lights went on. The interview was unusually long and all

the time I am thinking that there could be potential for conversations here. This interviewee struck me as someone who was concerned about her industries, her town, her children's future – all the things that the fishing woman was really concerned about too. After this interview, I talked over with my co-researcher, my PhD friend in Queensland and the project co-ordinator in Canberra the possibility of suggesting to these two women that they at least speak to each other.

To cut a long story short, they did speak and continue to speak. They have found a great deal of common ground and through various contacts given them by interested 'others', the two groups are talking with each other but also government, industries groups and environmental experts. The fishing woman with two friends has joined a national fishing women's forum, and to attend meetings in Canberra, has had to fundraise. Guess who was on her fundraising committee?

What is important about this anecdote? Another superb example of transformational leadership.

1. There was a problem; it involved big environmental issues, families' livelihoods and a town's viability.
2. Both industry groups recognised that it was counter-productive to promote one industry at the expense of another; that outcomes that could be win-win for both groups should be the goal.
3. Women had experienced marginalisation in the organisations that traditionally have served their industries, and so developed their own lobby group.
4. When they felt conversations between the two/three interest groups were falling

apart, they would ask a facilitator to come along to meetings and help them. But what was really important to them was that the conversations continue to take place.

5. They shared and used contacts and networks and that was how they knew who in government they should be talking with.

6. It was decided that no-one would be a leader, but rather there would be a few leaders, so no one person could be picked off, or get tired and give up – the leadership responsibility is shared.

The Tulip Grower

I met a woman in Tasmania last year whose story was really awe inspiring. About 25 years ago she married a farmer, who with his father ran a sheep stud in the NW corner of Tasmania. Prior to marriage, this woman had qualified with a science degree and worked with plants. She felt that this particular part of Tasmania would be a fabulous spot to develop and breed flower bulbs. It is a long story, but after several short stints with her family visiting Holland and learning the science of tulips and other bulbs, she took 15 acres of the farm and some farm sheds and set up a laboratory. Her vision was that being so isolated and with such stringent quarantine laws, she in Tasmania would develop disease free bulbs. She has done that with great success and now exports all over the world, her most proud export being regular large export orders of disease free tulip bulbs back to the Netherlands each year. That is great story, but what has that do with community leadership?

The tulip breeder has worked with the local council and other residents, encouraging

them to get involved in the industry. Their community has an annual tulip festival that runs for a week that encompasses art exhibitions, flower displays, garden competitions, poetry readings as well as industry days and export information forums. Now when you drive to Wynyard, the town emblem is the tulip, decorative frieses on shop fronts are the tulip design, municipal gardens are planted with bulbs.

The tulip breeder has a vigorous work experience program, not only in her laboratories, but has organised the transport companies, the quarantine service, the export companies and the marketing companies to take on local students and other interested people who have shown interest in her business.

She has encouraged women who work with her to speak about her business as though it is their own so as to share the experience, develop networks, broaden the PR workload and free her to, as she says, “fiddle in the labs and take time to admire the blooms”.

She also has young women accompany her to government meetings and forums to encourage them to think about possibilities.

The final case study is *Rural Women in Leadership* course which was developed here in Western Australia as part of the Western Australian Progress Rural WA programs. This course was an opportunity for rural women over the age of 40 to examine leadership issues and learn to effectively manage the many issues facing women in rural WA. The course offered the women access to training opportunities, helped them to recognise their own skills and support them in their commitment to effectively contribute to their communities and industries. In the process, a network of likeminded women able to support and encourage each other in leadership endeavours

was developed.

The age base was chosen because women over the age of 40 are more likely to be less tied to domestic and young child rearing duties and are the demographic cohort most active in community and industry activities. Participants came from a variety of backgrounds and experiences but each shared a long term involvement in community work at local, regional or state level.

I did an evaluation of this program, and the outcomes were exciting, but in many ways not really surprising.

Generally, the participants realised that they learnt as much from each other as they did from the skilled presenters they were exposed to.

❖ The course rekindled their belief in their own ability to be effective leaders. One woman in her final visioning session remarked “I’ve found something during this course that I had pushed down so far I’d forgotten I ever had [it]. I know I can make a difference and I am going to”.

❖ a significant outcome for all of the participants was improved self-confidence and self-esteem.

❖ networking was recognised by all of the participants as a valuable outcome of the course.

Approximately 65% of the evaluations stated that the course had not changed participants’ goals or even direction but rather had consolidated or reinforced the goals to be achieved; “doing this Course has given me strength to pursue my goals”.

Another wrote, “my resolve has been strengthened to take on leadership positions that I have wanted for some time but too diffident to have a go at.”

Several women noted that they felt it was important to learn how to mentor others, particularly nurturing younger people in the community who are not yet 'labelled' as leaders. This was seen as an important strategy to contain older women's commitments but also to be more inclusive of younger people in the community and to share knowledge and networks.

The outcomes:

- ❖ Continuing to participate in community activities but formalising the role of leadership by volunteering to take it a step further.
- ❖ A mix of young women working together with CWA and older women, the Women's Forum was established in response to a need for community information sharing and development of facilities for women in the Cevantes Region.
- ❖ A Women's Agronomy group was formed to increase women's knowledge about agriculture in their area. The group gave the opportunity for women to learn in a comfortable environment with other women.
- The group has involved themselves in the Top Crop Program and have followed the progress of crops, sprays, weeds and relevant cropping issues in their area. Have started creating networks with the Yuna women also. It has been successful because the core group feel very strongly about the need for women to be more involved in their farming community.
- *"It's made women feel that they have the potential to contribute. They don't mind standing in the men's circle at the bar-b-que."*

This program emphasised people-oriented leadership characterised by relationship

building. Such relationships develop according to Burns (1978) , where there is “mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders” (p. 127).

The *Rural Women in Leadership* program enabled women whose commitment to their communities and industries is clear, to visualise and work towards achieving networks and leadership strategies that would enable them and those around them to have some control over the change process in a collegial and collaborative environment. The course aimed to give them specific leadership tools and knowledge that could be used to initiate and drive community social and economic development.

It would seem that individual transformational leadership does have the potential to translate to community development and local leadership. The specific economic outcomes of these contributions are not always quantifiable, although in some instances they have created jobs. Nonetheless, the intangible outcomes are

- ❖ a greater commitment to community,
- ❖ a sense of future and
- ❖ a binding together of sometimes disparate community groups, which have the potential of enhancing economic development strategies.

What relevance is all of this to you? I suspect you all know much of this

- ❖ It doesn't matter how old or young you are, anyone can be a leader, its for you to decide what you are passionate about and where or to whom you want to make a difference?
- ❖ It is a whole lot easier if you have a support network around you,

- ❖ Similarly, being the token representative on a board or committee is tough. Critical mass is important, its really easy to denigrate or marginalise one or two women, lobbyists whatever, but when there is a consolidated group, you are much harder to dismiss
- ❖ Its easier if you have a mentor to talk issues and strategy with; think about who is a good listener and whose views you value.
- ❖ At the same time, it might be a good time to think about your own role as a potential mentor; and don't under-estimate your own experiences or what you have to contribute to others.
- ❖ Build networks! Everyone here has made a commitment to their industry, to their own development just by being here; there are people here that want to know you, and people that you need to know. Don't leave this conference without getting to know, and I mean know in more than a superficial sense, at least a handful of people you didn't know before. Get their phone number and/or email address, but they are a resource to you, and you to them.
- ❖ To those of you who are in a leadership position, I challenge you to think about transformational leadership, which is about sharing the leadership role and the load, nurturing those who are not yet 'labelled' as leaders and to continue to think about share visions. It is an exciting process and I commend it to you.

See overheads

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Marriage and relationship research and education in Australia - where to from here?

Robyn Parker, Research Officer of the Australian Institute of Family Studies presented the Paper, *Marriage and relationship research and education in Australia - where to from here?* at Family Futures : Issues in Research and Policy, the 7th Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference in Sydney on July 2000

"In the past few years, creating and sustaining strong and resilient marriages and families has become a more prominent focus of government policy (via the National Families Strategy). Relatedly, researchers are directing their energies towards identifying and exploring the characteristics of strong families (eg the University of Newcastle Family Action Centre's 'Family Strengths Project') and marriages (the Australian Institute of Family Studies study, 'Marital Perspectives'). In the search for ways to promote and sustain stable and well functioning families, the long-established field of marriage and relationship education is receiving attention from both government and academics that is well overdue. This paper attempts to integrate recent developments in the study of marriage and relationships in general and the field of marriage and relationship education in particular, and discuss the implications of those developments for future research, practice, and the formulation of social policy." (Family Futures: Issues in Research and Policy Conference)

**Back to Leading Issues Journal Sept
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Marriage and relationship research and education
in Australia - where to from here?

By Robyn Parker

Robyn Parker

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Prior to her appointment as Research Officer at AIFS in 1998, Robyn lectured in research design and statistics, personality and social psychology at Monash. She is a member of the International Society for the Study of Personal Relationships, the National Council on Family Relations, and the Australian Association for Social Research.

Robyn's research activities concentrate on the marital relationship, with a special focus on the trajectory of relationships across the life span, and the evaluation of premarriage programs.

Recent Publications and Presentations:

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Marriage and relationship research and education in Australia - where to from here?

By Robyn Parker

Research Officer, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

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Sydney, 24-26 July 2000

INTRODUCTION

Once upon a time (ie around the 60's and 70's) providing services to families already in difficulty was justified because the number of such families was considered 'small'. However when the demand for such services began to climb, primary interventions aimed at reducing the incidence of social problems became more popular. As Paula Goodyer recently wrote, "putting money and resources into fixing the problems of troubled youth is a bit like parking an ambulance at the bottom of a cliff in case anyone falls off — it makes more sense to build a strong fence at the top" (9 July 2000). The same principle applies to potential relationships.

Thankfully there has been for many years a group of people trying to build that fence for couples — or at least help couples build and repair their own fence. The engine driving marriage and relationship education in Australia comprises a large group of committed people, some paid, many unpaid. All share a belief that what they do can help couples build and sustain strong marriages and, by extension, families.

I make no claims to being an expert in the field. My views have been shaped by both reading about the field and talking to educators over the past 7 years or so hovering at the edge, and so some of what I say today may not be totally accurate. But I think this points to one of the difficulties in this field — which I'll come back to later.

Today I want to briefly review the development of the field in Australia, to give a sense of how far it has travelled and where it is, look at a few of the developments that have a strong impact in the past couple of years, and try to pull the threads together in a way that suggests what could (or should??) happen next...

POTTED HISTORY

Somewhere around the late 1940's, when the divorce rate began to creep up [wartime relationships breaking up], pre-Cana "conferences" were offered wherein priests, doctors, bankers, married couples, and occasionally a specialist such as an interior decorator would provide lectures on various topics. The 50 or 60 couples attending would be segregated for the male and female anatomy and sexuality lectures. Don Burnard (1978) notes that these conferences have been described as the "authoritarian and enthusiastic promotion of Christian values as the solution to escalating marital breakdown".

During the 50's professional counselling or tutoring was increasingly provided by governments to premarriage and married couples, and the marriage encounter movement began to grow. Services expanded through the 60's although programs were still primarily offered through churches. The content of these courses is difficult to identify, and it is tempting to assume that they would have promoted very traditional roles and behaviours...

In the 70's things began to get more interesting, with attempts to coordinate and organise the providers. The first organised body was set up in 1973 by and for providers affiliated with the Catholic Church, followed in 1979 by a similar national body for non-Catholic affiliated providers. These two bodies, CSME (still existing) and AAME (long gone), were the joint focus and source of activity in the field during the 80's and into the 90's, in funding, provision and development, and training. At present CSME, MEAA (Marriage Educators' Association of Australia, AAME's replacement) are the two primary organisations involved in the provision and evolution of marriage and relationship education services.

Funding from the Attorney General began in the mid-late 1970's, and allowed professional training to become more widely available to educators. Gradually throughout the 70's adult education principles were adopted, to some degree or another, tentatively by some, wholeheartedly by others, and the focus of programs shifted to encouraging couples to reflect on themselves and their relationship. The training received by educators has, however, tended to remain variable: some are trained within a program via observation, supervision, and mentoring, while others go through a stand-alone training program designed according to the principles and orientation of the service provider, and there are some who do not receive any such formal training. The 80's also saw the introduction of training of communication and conflict resolution skills into programs.

For those of you who don't know a lot about the field, it's important to note here that service providers take many shapes and forms: ministers may conduct their own informal sessions with couples, and/or they may administer an inventory and provide the feedback; they may conduct discussions with small groups of couples. Agencies, whether church-based, church-affiliated, or secular run programs for groups of couples, using trained educators and combining information, activities such as individual and couple exercises and role plays, and exploration and development of communication and conflict resolution skills. A very creative field, it is not unusual for Lego blocks, coloured crayons and textas, and Monopoly money to be used to facilitate active learning.

A provider may also work with couples as a PREPARE or FOCCUS administrator, two widely used inventories that are used to identify couple strengths and weaknesses (not a term they would use). Civil celebrants tend to have little or nothing to do with education programs — some will hand out information leaflets but generally they do not see educative or preparation activities as part of their role. Indeed, as was pointed out at the field's National Conference just a couple of weeks ago, civil celebrants are often approached to perform a ceremony a very short time before the wedding is required...so they have very little time to engage in any meaningful preparation or education per se.

A fairly placid sort of field, marriage and relationship education has been buffeted somewhat in the past few years — variously misunderstood, dismissed, and underestimated. At times the field has been forced to examine itself closely. To their credit, members of the field have demonstrated a willingness and ability to engage in lively discourse and debate about the range of issues facing them.

RECENT EVENTS

Government Initiatives: *FAMNET; "To Have and To Hold"*.

As noted earlier, funding trickled into the field from about the mid-70's. In the mid-90's changes to the ways in which family and relationship services were administered led to increased focus on, among other things, quality of services and performance assessment...the bottom line being that **funding came to be linked to performance**. As part of the development of a system to improve service quality and information (FAMQUIS) FAMNET was introduced, its aim being to enhance communication with and between funded services and to collect data. The goal is to ensure better outcomes for service clients. Thus demographic information and measures of whether intended client benefits have been achieved were to be routinely collected by funded providers of marriage and relationship education programs.

Needless to say there were teething problems when the system was introduced, not least because of the sheer volume of data required, and the process is still not all it was expected to be. Concerns also related to terminology that didn't lend itself readily to the field, and the way in which "achievement" is measured is somewhat impractical. As I understand it, recently there have been positive steps towards reconciling these difficulties — a compliment to the commitment and abilities of both the educators and Family Relationships Branch members involved.

"To Have and to Hold"

An inquiry into aspects of family services, this comprehensive analysis of marriage and relationship education, and other family services such as family skills training, pre-empted the launch of the government's National Families Strategy. It examined the range of approaches to marriage and relationship education, the role of research in evaluating programs, the bases for funding of programs, promotion, and other international and local developments at various levels (such as legislative changes in the USA and programs developed for specific target groups in Australia). I can't cover all of the areas the committee explored in this paper, but I want to comment on one issue the Committee raised which I think pervades the general public, some levels of government and academe, and which I think requires considerable attention.

Among other things, one of the difficulties the committee identified that hampers progress in the evolution of the field is the consistent confusion of marriage and relationship EDUCATION with marriage COUNSELLING by parties who are not directly involved in the education field. This is a common and frustrating experience for anyone who has tried to explain what marriage and relationship education is to someone new to the term, and an issue which, unless dealt with, will continue to obstruct progress in the field both in terms of attracting couples to programs and in terms of raising the profile and credibility of the field in both government and academic circles.

The field of marriage and relationship education is a very complex one, but I think this report could form a sort of template for how to proceed in developing the field. The broad domains the report addresses (funding, research, promotion, etc) could usefully serve as a framework for an integrated program of analysis and action. The recently formed Marriage and Family Council already have a research subcommittee; other such committees could be formed to address the various areas of concern.

Australian Institute of Family Studies Roundtable on Research into Premarriage Education in Australia

Co-hosted by Moira Eastman of the Australian Catholic University, we gathered a group of relationship professionals — academics, practitioners and researchers — to discuss why the research so far has failed to convince us of the effectiveness of premarriage education, and to talk about ways in which this problem could be overcome. The major outcome of the discussions was a Briefing Paper (Australian Institute of Family Studies Briefing No. 8), setting out a framework for conducting research into marriage and relationship education in a way that works within the constraints of the field. In that paper I suggested using correlational studies to evaluate effectiveness rather than randomised controlled comparisons. It's not that I think randomised trials belong in the too-hard basket, but to my mind it is impractical to attempt experimental research in this field — there are simply too many variables to control for, and the issues of self-selection and appropriate control groups are always present. Couples allocated to a treatment group will still have to consent to participating in an education program, and those couples that do agree may already have high levels of motivation and/or other relationship skills that enhance the quality and longevity of their relationship.

I think it would be more productive to ascertain each partner's willingness to participate on intake, and analyse the effect of reluctance on longer-term outcomes. Educators will tell you that even the reluctant participants will admit to getting something of value out of a program, and there is some empirical evidence from the USA that reluctance does not impact on the outcome of the program. I also suggested that qualitative research would be a rich source of data on how the programs actually work — as Michele Simons, long-time marriage and relationship educator and lecturer in adult education reiterates, controlled comparisons will tell us about effectiveness but not how the learning is taken on board in the couples' day-to-day activities. One of the problems identified by John Simons in the excellent series of papers from the Lord Chancellors Dept in the UK, was that when evaluating the skill levels of partners, especially some years down the track, it is possible that the skills are being reproduced for the researchers and may not be used in the couples' daily lives at all.

Australian Couples in Millenium Three: Professor Kim Halford, Griffith University

In 1999, the Department of Family and Community Services commissioned a review of the marriage and relationship education literature and report on ways to enhance the effectiveness of programs. Conducted by Professor Kim Halford of Griffith University, this report has stimulated a great deal of discussion and consternation in the field. Halford raises a number of concerns about access to programs, their content and format. Some of these are quite valid and bear serious consideration while others reflect a lack of fit between Halford's portrayal of Australian programs and how educators describe them. Naturally this had led to serious concerns about policy decisions being made on the basis of Professor Halford's report.

One of Halford's main contentions is the absence of relationship skills training in Australian marriage and relationship education programs. In his review of the literature, skills-based programs are correctly identified as having empirical evidence of their effectiveness in the short- and medium-term. As such he recommends the adoption of skills training programs, in particular the US program PREP[®], in Australia.

The three basic components of the skills training involved in PREP[®] are:

- identify the danger signals (escalation, invalidation, withdrawal/avoidance, negative interpretation),
- learn the speaker/listener technique as a way of interrupting the danger signs, and
- employ a problem-solving model to resolve conflict issues (set agenda, brainstorm, agree/compromise, follow up).

When Australian programs are closely examined the various components of this three-step process can be identified; they are presented differently and often given different labels, but essentially the same skills are being presented. A key difference lies in the amount of time devoted to "coaching" couples during the actual program. Since both PREP and Australian programs vary in length the time available for coaching is sometimes limited, and in the PREP courses run over a single day session

no skills coaching occurs at all. As Kevin Andrews points out, skills training can not save all relationships — so there is a need for balance here.

Halford stresses the need for multimedia approaches to designing and conducting programs. Access to programs for couples in remote and rural communities can be facilitated by web-based programs that include varying degrees of contact with trained educators. I have concerns about completely self-directed programs since I wonder at the reliability and validity of self-evaluation (but then I am a bit of a cynic), however Halford's point that groups are not suitable for all couples is entirely valid, and developing alternative modes of service provision is clearly necessary to improve access.

A further access issue relates to high-risk (of relationship breakdown) and low-referral (not commonly attracted to or programs) couples. Indigenous couples and those from non-English speaking backgrounds are of particular interest and Halford recommends developing targeted programs. There are a number of programs currently offered to both of these groups, and while educators work to include such couples in their programs they are also aware that targeting may have the unintended consequence of labelling couples. Beth Seddon, National Director of Relationships Australia, notes that the issue is whether a targeted or universal system of developing programs is preferred, or whether both should be employed.

Halford also suggests the expansion of programs to transitions other than marriage, for example around the time of the birth of the first child or retirement. Such programs already exist but tend not to focus specifically on relationship issues. Parenting programs are available but only recently have relationship issues been incorporated into their curricula (Sanders, 2000), finding clear benefits to the couple in reduced conflict and increased relationship satisfaction (at least for husbands). Retirement programs are often focussed on financial planning. It seems reasonable to expect that cross-fertilisation of these various types of programs would produce increased positive outcomes for couples and their families.

A final point Halford makes that I will mention today is that programs are not sufficiently informed by research. I think the issue here is which research and what form it takes. Program content and provision does make use of the vast literature on marriage and relationships, but in my opinion the constructs tend to be over-simplified — perhaps due to the need to present the information in ways that stimulate and involve program participants. There is also a tendency for the work of a small number of researchers to be predominate, and for some of the less scientific "pop" psychology to be adopted — again because they are easily adapted for use in programs. One of the factors contributing to this situation may be the lack of access to sources of information for a large section of the field and the lack of resources available to service providers required to keep track of research developments.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

To address the above and other issues I think several things need to occur:

- address public confusion about the between education and counselling, and clarify what programs are actually about. Halford points out that there is little

evidence to suggest that mass media campaigns are effective. The government's RELATE campaign showed a slight increase in product recognition but the evaluators suggested that this could have been because the messages were not strong enough. Promoting marriage and relationship education programs to the point where they are accepted and considered part of the normal process of getting married or deciding to cohabit requires diverse and creative methods — media campaigns are but one of those methods, and should be considered as such.

- Halford sets out a number of project recommendations, and these and a number of others are currently before the Marriage and Family Council research subcommittee. I think whatever projects are adopted must be considered within a larger framework of government initiatives and current programs being offered by providers in various domains (ie. parenting, separation/divorce, retirement etc). I also think that the projects need to be designed so they can work within the constraints of programs and generate both quantitative and qualitative data — the 'how' as well as the 'what'.
- The lack of documentation that Halford comments on could be addressed by the establishment of a clearinghouse of some description, which could conduct a stocktake of currently available programs, review and analyse relevant research findings, help develop ways of applying research findings to practice, and disseminate information and provide comment on trends and developments in the field.

Marriage and relationship research and education in Australia - where to from here?

Coalition Of Responsible Taxpayers (*CORT*) By Eva Cox AO

Eva Cox, Sociologist, Lecturer, Feminist, Activist and Author is currently putting together a list of names and support for a Coalition of Responsible Taxpayers (CORT) who realise that tax cuts are not what we need, but also recognises we do need more publicly funded resources. "I started this list and group because I was cross at the widespread assumption in both political groupings that voters could be bought with tax cuts."



EVA COX AO

Eva Cox was born Eva Hauser in Vienna in 1938, and was soon declared non human and stateless by Hitler. So she grew up as a refugee in England, till 1946, lived in Rome till 1948, and arrived in Australia aged 10. These early experiences influenced her commitments and her rejection of injustices. She involves herself in many social and political issues and has worked for government and voluntary organisations in Australia. She has been an active and irrepressible advocate for creating more civil societies. She was co founder of the Women's Economic Think Tank (WETTANK), a long term member of Women's Electoral Lobby and an unabashed feminist. She is now involved in projects looking at social and ethical accounting for responsible business enterprises.

Her current work is focused on Social Capital and Political Culture and arose from her ABC Boyer Lecturer, the text is published as 'A Truly Civil Society' (ABC 1995). These dealt with the necessity for seeing social cohesion, trust and co-operation as keys to both democratic and civil society. She recently published another book, (Leading Women, Random House 1996) which looks at strategies for achieving change, including involving more women in leadership positions.

In 1995, she was made an Officer of the Order of Australia in recognition of her many contributions on social issues.

Eva is currently lecturing in the social sciences at the University of Technology in Sydney. She is a sociologist by trade and has undertaken many research projects for Government, the private sector and community groups. She has published widely and eclectically in books, journals and newspapers. Her interests include child care, superannuation, unpaid work, use of telephones, skills and training, labour force studies, public policy, social security and public health. She is currently researching the ideas of social and ethical accountability.

She has one daughter and lives in inner city Sydney and wonders whether she is becoming too respectable!

email eva.cox@uts.edu.au

Coalition Of Responsible Taxpayers (CORT) By Eva Cox

I started this list and group because I was cross at the widespread assumption in both political groupings that voters could be bought with tax cuts. Since then at least some Labor politicians are suggesting that spending on services should take precedence, but even these are careful to stress there will be no raising of taxes. Many groups such as the Taxpayers Association were calling for tax rate cuts and reductions in other taxes. The letters in papers suggested that many of us felt responsible taxpayers (direct and indirect, who were concerned about the lack of public resources, were not being represented in the debates.

I have also been concerned, as both activist and academic, that the debate is often very light on facts, with few people recognising either that we are already one of the lowest taxing countries in the OECD or even how much most Australians earn. So I see this list as a way of increasing the knowledge base for often passionate but ill informed arguments as well as counters to deliberate misrepresentations by some who want to see cuts for the better off.

The response so far has been terrific, considering that my efforts have been limited and desultory. Almost everyone I have approached directly plus many from email lists have agreed to join the Coalition. I am delighted at the widespread support for the reviving the idea of the common good and our responsibility for putting more money in the public pot. We have one of the smallest public sectors in the OECD and the pressure for better public health, education, spaces, services, and general issues of equity.

We already have over 200 members on the email list and many others without email. I hope we tap into many more as this will make us more able to enter debates at many levels and be seen as legitimate. The Taxpayers Association purports to speak for us but has only 10,000 members, mainly professionals who use their services and seem to see taxes as a burden not an ethical responsibility. So we can offer alternate voices.

People can now sign themselves onto the above list by using the following web entry point:

<http://listserv.uts.edu.au/mailman/listinfo/cort>

Some notes on the tax debate and the election:

A poll in the SMH 14/8/01 ACNielsen polls voters priorities

Choices for spending budget surplus

Health 43%

Education 27%

Tax cuts 16% (support higher for young families)

Rollback 11%

The above suggests that people are not as silly as the politicians think we are. Yet Michelle Grattan wrote an accompanying article reinforcing the political myth that voters are basically selfish and therefore the polls should not be taken seriously as an indication of voting intentions. Why do the bulk of press gallery pundits catch the political diseases from the parties? There is other research which suggests that people are prepared to pay more taxes, particularly those which are tied (hypothecated) to particular spending. (Glenn Withers). But much of the media coverage, apart from Margo Kingston, tends reinforce political prejudices.

Tax and public sector services facts

Redistribution is real albeit inadequate (ABS 98/99) cat 6537.0

Inequality is increasing

The combination of publicly funded services, income support and taxes does appear to redistribute from the top to the bottom income earners. However the inequality is increasing slightly as in 1984 the gap between the final incomes shares of top and bottom fifths was 28.1%, in 93/4 29.2%)and it is now 30.1%. NB this was all pre GST

Household shares of income show redistribution

The top 20% of h holds start with 51% of all income but drop to 38% of income and services

The next 40% of households received and ended up with 42% with slight internal adjustments

The bottom 40% of households received 6% of income and ended up with just over 20% of income and services

Taxable Incomes ATO 98/9 before GST tax cuts

There were just over 8M income taxpayers in 98/99 (8,019,250), and another 1,736,142 non taxable income earners,. There was a total \$301,520 M income collected, of which most, \$286,914M, was taxable, so \$67,562M was collected.. The median taxable income was \$28,600 and an average of \$8,425 net tax was collected per income taxpayer. Male median income was around \$33,000 and female around \$24,500. There were nearly a million more males than females so many more women were outside the income tax net.

37.75% of women earn below \$20,353 but only 23.9% of men.

66% of women earn below \$31,000, but only 46% of men

Tax cuts at higher levels go mainly to males

People in the lower tax brackets

73.3% of males earn \$45,764 or less

88.4% of females as above

80% of pop overall as above

They earn 57.9% of total taxable income and pay 45% of income tax.

79.3% of males, earn \$50,332 or less

92.2% of females, earn \$50,332 or less

85% overall earn \$50,332 or less

They earn 64.9% of income and pay 53% of income tax.

20% of males,

8% of females

15% overall earn over \$50,332

These 15% highest income earners paid 47% of income tax , which consists of

9.4% for the lowest quintile

12.1% for the next

and 25.4% for the top incomes over \$72,538.

Responsible Taxpayers (*CORT*)

Minister's Consultations 2002-2003 Migration and Humanitarian Programs and Associated Settlement Issues

For the 2002-2003 Migration and Humanitarian Programs and Associated Settlement Issues, Philip Ruddock, Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs invites all Australians to consider presenting their views on:

- Australia's population future;
- the size and composition of the Migration Program;
- ways of achieving the economic and social objectives of immigration; and
- Australia's Humanitarian Program

You can also access the Paper, the 2002-2003 Migration and Humanitarian Programs: A Discussion Paper at his Website:

<http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/consultations/index.html>

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS CADETSHIP PROJECT - Are You an Indigenous Australian who is studying or planning to study?

Indigenous Australians who are studying full time or who plan to study full time can apply for a cadetship under the national Indigenous Cadetship Project. If you are selected for a cadetship your employer will - pay you a study allowance and provide you with paid work experience during your long vacation break. When you have finished studying you may be offered full time employment.

For more information go to <http://www.nicp.dewrsb.gov.au> or phone 1802 102.

The New Zealand Time Use Survey Executive Summary

New Zealand's first national Time Use Survey was conducted in 1998/99. It was funded by the Government through the Ministry of Women's Affairs. The Survey took place between July 1998 and June 1999 with a sample of about 8500 people aged 12 and over. The Survey records how people in New Zealand spend their days, providing information on the amount of time spent on different activities such as paid work, voluntary community work, household work, caring and leisure. The Report shows how patterns of economic and social participation vary between different groups according to sex, age, ethnicity, and family and economic circumstances. The results of the Survey are important for specific policy applications given that the boundaries between paid and unpaid work are different for women and men, and for different groups in society.

Australia has conducted a Time Use Survey in 1992 and 1997. Conducted in four tranches over 12 months and using 48-hour diaries, Time Use Surveys are extremely important in providing relatively reliable data on the distribution and volume of unpaid work. They also complement other social and economic statistics.

The Executive Summary of the New Zealand Time Use Survey published in this Journal is part of the full publication launched on 8 May 2001. For a Copy of the Publication, Around the Clock Findings from the New Zealand Time Use Survey 1998-99 you can contact the New Zealand Ministry of Women's Affairs Tel: 04473 4112

The New Zealand Time Use Survey

The Ministry of Women's Affairs and Statistics
New Zealand

Executive summary

Introduction

The New Zealand Time Use Survey was conducted in 1998/99. The survey recorded the amount of time spent on different activities including paid work, voluntary work, household work, caring and leisure. The survey population was individuals aged 12 and over living in private households. This report present results of the Time Use Survey within a framework of economic participation in the form of paid and unpaid work, and social participation – people’s involvement in activities which contribute to social, human and cultural capital. The summary is part of the full publication launched on 8 May 2001.

Economic participation

Paid work

Males and females tend to combine paid and unpaid work quite differently. On average, females aged 12 and over spend about 2 hours more per day than males on unpaid work, while males spend about 2 more hours per day than females on paid work. In a year, the time spent on unpaid work in New Zealand as a primary activity equates, at 40 hours per week, to 2 million full-time jobs. This compares with the

equivalent of 1.7 million full-time jobs in time spent on labour force activity.

The amount of time people spend on paid work depends on variables such as sex, age, ethnicity, and (obviously) labour force status. Averaged across everyone aged 12 and over, males spend 29 hours per week on paid work compared with females' 16 hours per week. The longest hours spent in paid work occur in the same age group for employed women and men – 45-54 years – where women spend 33 hours per week and men spend 47 hours per week. The average time spent on labour force activity is less for Māori than non-Māori. Among employed parents with dependent children, mothers with a youngest child aged less than 5 years spend the fewest hours per week on paid work – 22 hours. Males living in rural areas spend much longer working for pay or profit than their urban counterparts (46 hours per week compared with 39 hours per week). Full-time employed workers spend an average of 29 minutes per day travelling to and from work compared with 14 minutes per day for part-time employed people.

Unpaid work

The report analyses unpaid work in terms of whether it is undertaken for people inside or outside the home.

Women's unpaid work – inside or outside the home – averages 4.8 hours per day, compared with men's 2.8 hours. Age is a major factor in the amount of unpaid work undertaken, reflecting life cycle factors. The age range at which women's unpaid work most surpasses that of men is when most family formation takes place – 25-44 years. Mothers spend more time on unpaid work than fathers regardless of the age of the youngest dependent child.

On average, women spend more time than men on all four main categories of unpaid work – household work, caregiving for household members, purchasing goods and services for own household, and unpaid work outside the home. Most of the time spent on household work is food preparation, clearing up after meals, indoor cleaning and laundry. Women spend twice as much time on these tasks as men, but men spend more time than women on home maintenance.

Māori women spend more time caring for household members than do non-Māori women. With the exception of the full-time employed, where women and men spend about the same amount of time providing care, women spend much more time on caregiving than men do. The amount of time spent caring for household members also depends on the age of children being cared for.

Until the age of 65, women spend more time than men on informal unpaid work outside the home, such as helping friends and neighbours. Māori men spend more time on informal unpaid work than both non-Māori men and non-Māori women.

Formal unpaid work outside the home is comprised of unpaid productive activities coordinated through an organised group, such as Meals on Wheels or Women's Refuge. Formal unpaid work, when analysed by age, shows a pattern of increasing activity for both sexes until age 75.

Total work

The concept of total work combines the time spent on paid work with the time spent on unpaid work, thus providing a measure of total productive time. The total work time of females and males aged 12 and over is very similar at 7 hours per day.

However, 60 percent of men's work is paid but almost 70 percent of women's work is unpaid. The total work time of Māori is slightly lower than that of non-Māori. People aged 25-54 spend the greatest time on total work when many are both raising children and participating in paid work. When simultaneous activities are included in the analysis, women's total work time is considerably higher than men's.

Social participation

The report conceptualises time spent on social participation as investment in social, human and cultural capital.

Social capital

Social capital arises from relationships between people and their involvement in the community. This includes both everyday interaction with friends, colleagues and

families, as well as active involvement in community organisations and community events. People aged 12 and over spend an average of 2.5 hours per day socialising and conversing. For more than half of this time, socialising is a simultaneous activity occurring while people are engaged in other pursuits. The survey measures the time spent on religious, cultural and civic participation. These activities tend to be fairly infrequent for many people so the average daily time spent on them is quite low at 8 minutes per day. Another aspect of social capital is investment of time in unpaid work outside the home. Overall, people do an average of 48 minutes per day of unpaid work outside the home, including 29 minutes where it is the primary activity. The survey shows patterns of participation in unpaid work outside the home for Māori and non-Māori, for males and females, for different age groups, and the type of organisation that formal unpaid work is done for or through.

Human capital

Human capital encompasses people's capacities for contributing as healthy, educated and informed members of society. The Time Use Survey measures the time people spend on maintaining personal health and on participating in education. The category Personal care includes personal hygiene, grooming, sleeping, eating and drinking. Of the 10.8 hours per day people aged 12 and over spend on personal care as a primary activity, 8.5 hours are spent sleeping, 87 minutes on eating and drinking, and 46 minutes on personal hygiene and grooming. Organised sport and exercise takes up a relatively small amount of time on a daily basis – 8 minutes per day and 13 minutes per day respectively. Time spent thinking, relaxing and planning occupies 26 minutes per day and a further 7 minutes per day as a simultaneous activity. On average, people spend 5.4 hours per week on education and training, but this varies greatly by age. Those aged 12-24 spend 19 hours per week on average on education and training. But this figure falls to 2.5 hours per week for the 25-34 age group, and 1.8 hours for those aged 35-44.

Cultural capital

Cultural capital consists of the values, histories, traditions and behaviours that link people and contribute to a common identity. Cultural capital is absorbed and

replenished through participation in everyday activities, such as reading, watching TV, listening to the radio, or less common activities such as attending or performing in artistic or cultural events including activities significant to Māori culture.

Television is the dominant cultural medium for most people today. People on average watch 2 hours of TV per day as a primary activity and a further 48 minutes as a simultaneous activity. This compares with 8 minutes per day listening to music or the radio as a primary activity and a further 59 minutes as a simultaneous activity.

Reading occupies 24 minutes per day as a primary activity and a further 20 minutes as a simultaneous activity. Attending entertainment as a spectator occupies 29 minutes per week, on average, compared with hobbies and games which take up 107 minutes per week. Survey respondents were asked whether they had participated in Māori cultural activities in the previous four weeks. Thirty-five percent of Māori said they had.

Conclusion

The Time Use Survey measures different patterns in people's economic participation. It quantifies the very different mix of paid and unpaid work undertaken by women and men. It shows how people's participation in total work relates to life cycle stages, and it provides information on the Māori/non-Māori dimension of work and cultural contribution. The survey provides a detailed picture of the time people invest in their own welfare, their communities and the wider society.

Source: The Ministry of Women's Affairs and Statistics New Zealand