



The State of Working Victoria
Project Series
REPORT NO. 1

The Challenge of Balancing Work and Family Responsibilities



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The Challenge of Balancing Work and Family Responsibilities

The State of Working Victoria Project Research Report No. 1

Introduction

Work and family balance is 'the desire to have access to employment opportunities and earn an adequate income while at the same time looking after the caring responsibilities of family life'.

During the last quarter-century, the labour market and the workplace have been transformed. While many of these developments have been for the better, these changes have also posed a number of challenges for employers, employees and their families. They also pose challenges for government in balancing economic, social and environmental objectives.

Among them is the growing challenge faced by workers in balancing work and family responsibilities. Work and family balance is 'the desire to have access to employment opportunities and earn an adequate income while at the same time looking after the caring responsibilities of family life' (Russell and Bowman, 2000, cited in Charlesworth, S., Campbell, I., Probert, B., Allan, J. and Morgan, L. (2002). *Balancing Work and Family Responsibilities: Policy Implementation Options*. Melbourne, DPC and IIRD).

Reflecting the significant changes in the world of work, work and family balance has become a priority issue for the Victorian Government. The Government's policy blueprint, *Growing Victoria Together*, set as a priority target the achievement of a better balance between work and family responsibilities. This has been reinforced in its 2002 election policy statement (*Working for Women: Labor's Plan for Victoria's Women*) and its commitment of \$2 million dollars in the 2003-04 budget to support and encourage the adoption of work-family initiatives by businesses and public sector organisations.


The Victorian Government has made a number of commitments in its *Working for Women* statement to improve the work/family balance of employees.

These include:

- providing grants of \$1000 to assist return-to-work training for 10,000 parents (predominantly women) wanting to return to the workforce after caring for children;
- working in partnership with employers to fund projects that assist women and men balance their work and family commitments, encouraging the take-up of successful initiatives by other businesses, and funding research and developing policy to support innovative industry practices;
- lobbying the Federal Government to ensure that there are sufficient places available in federally funded child care and outside school hours care to meet the needs of Victorian parents;
- working towards an integrated system of child care and preschool placements aimed at ensuring maximum flexibility for working parents, and helping school communities establish out of school hours care and vacation programs;
- funding tax exemptions for employers providing maternity or adoption leave for their employees; and
- continuing to lobby the Federal Government to introduce a national paid maternity leave scheme of at least 14 weeks, paid at minimum adult wage.

As part of its commitment to work/family policy development, in 2002 the Victorian Government commissioned RMIT's Centre for Applied Social Research to examine trends and policy options that would assist Victorians to achieve work/family balance. A Final Report, entitled *Balancing Work and Family Responsibilities: Policy Implementation Options*, was handed to the Government in June 2002 (hereafter the RMIT Report).

The RMIT Report concluded that work/family balance is important because there is a growing level of dissent among workers who are having difficulties juggling family and work. This has occurred in the context of structural change, with the most significant being the increased participation of women in the workforce and the erosion of the male as the sole 'breadwinner'.



The RMIT Report also noted that in most OECD countries the participation of women in the workforce has increased significantly over time, particularly among women with dependent children. Between 1954 and 2000, the employment rate among women (i.e., the proportion of all working aged women employed) has more than doubled, increasing from 29 to 61 per cent. For mothers with children under 5 years, the participation rate was 45 per cent in 2000.

However, the pattern of participation by women with dependent children differs substantially to that of men – it continues to be punctuated by periods of complete withdrawal from the workforce and part-time participation. The RMIT Report revealed that in terms of hours of employment, a minority of mothers are employed full-time, with 56.6 per cent employed part-time. This appears largely to be a function of childcare responsibilities assumed by women.

However, the RMIT Report also concluded that the sole male breadwinner role is diminishing. The assumption that women permanently exit from the paid workforce to concentrate on domestic duties while the male ‘breadwinner’ works full-time to provide income is increasingly less likely to be the case. Buchanan and Thornwaite (2001 cited in Charlesworth, et al, 2002) argue that this model is being replaced with both the ‘one and a half breadwinner’ and the ‘dual breadwinner’ models, with the former being the most dominant.

Furthermore, the structure of families is changing. The RMIT Report found that ‘these changes include lower rates of marriage, higher rates of separation, higher numbers of sole parents and lower rates of childbearing. Women are having fewer children and also delaying having children, trends reflected in declining fertility rates’ (at p. 2). Delay of childbearing exacerbates difficulties of work/family balance as the responsibilities for caring for elderly parents occurs almost simultaneously.

These structural changes have resulted in an increasing pressure on individuals, particularly women, in managing their work/family responsibilities.

The RMIT Report highlights four reasons as to why policy is required to address the issue of work/family balance. The first relates to the need to address inequities in the labour market that arise because individuals have caring responsibilities. The second relates to the need to provide options for individuals to choose the balance that suits them. The third is the need to expand social choices for women in particular, by removing the costs associated with combining parenthood and work (which is increasingly becoming the preference). Fourth, there are benefits to businesses that introduce work-family policies, such as higher productivity, lower staff turnover and lower accident and injury rates.

Given the importance of the issue of work and family, it is opportune that we examine the way it affects Victorian workers with family responsibilities.

This report makes a significant contribution in understanding the difficulties of juggling work and family responsibilities faced by Victorian workers. Notwithstanding the common view that family responsibilities are largely an issue for women, this report confirms that achieving work/family balance poses challenges for men with family responsibilities as well. Both men and women with family responsibilities report higher levels of stress than workers without these responsibilities and are more likely to be dissatisfied with their working hours. Yet, as this Report makes clear, the challenge associated with finding work/family balance manifests itself very differently for women and men.



Women, who bear the primary caring responsibilities for children, are predominantly working part-time to meet their work/family commitments. For many of these women this work is precarious with fewer working hours than that preferred and few promotional opportunities. These women tend to be located in service sector jobs where working hours are dictated by the peaks and troughs of consumption patterns (ie hospitality). The report therefore confirms that many women with dependants suffer considerable disadvantage at the workplace.

For men, the experience is very different but the evidence reveals that they are also making sacrifices and experience considerable conflict with respect to work and family. A high proportion of men with dependants are working in jobs where there are extended hours and limited flexibility to meet family responsibilities. Many of these men are expressing their dissatisfaction with these hours by indicating a preference for working shorter hours.

The findings reported here confirms the view of Barbara Pocock. In her recent book entitled *The Work/Life Collision* (2003, Sydney, Federation Press), Pocock concluded that the expectation of employers that workers will be available to work extended hours has resulted in the reinforcement of stereotypical roles where women take on the 'mummy track' (accepting a reduction in status, pay or career to accommodate families) and men are forced to continue to work the long hours expected in many workplaces. These issues are discussed further in the Conclusion of this Report.



The State of Working Victoria Project

Industrial Relations Victoria commissioned ACIRRT to undertake a comprehensive survey of Victorian employers (based on workplaces) and employees (based on households) in order to provide an overview of the state of work in Victoria.

The *State of Working Victoria: Household Survey* was conducted during July 2002, and asked Victorian households a range of questions related to their working lives. All employees and self-employed persons were eligible for inclusion, and a final sample of 800 persons was achieved. The fieldwork produced a typical household response rate of 29 per cent.

The *State of Working Victoria: Employer Survey* was conducted at the same time, and directed a range of questions to Victorian employers about their workplaces. Apart from the agricultural and mining industries, all workplaces with 5 or more employees were eligible for inclusion. A final sample of 800 workplaces was achieved, which gave a 49 per cent response rate and statistically represented some 65,000 Victorian workplaces. However, it is important to note that the vast majority of very small workplaces were outside the scope of the survey.

Appendix A provides a technical overview of the surveys.

Workers with Work/Family Responsibilities

The following section examines household data to build a profile of individuals that have work/family responsibilities. It reports on the number of individuals that have family responsibilities, their demographics, the industries in which they work, their occupations and working hours, and their preferences.

How many Victorians juggle work and family commitments?

- **Almost half of working Victorians have dependent children or other family members to care for.**
- **Two out of five Victorian workers have dependent children.**
- **Over a quarter of all workers have children of preschool age.**
- **A further 1 in 20 workers (5.7 per cent) reported they have other relatives that they have to care for.**

The issue of work/family balance affects a significant number of Victorian workers. Based on the sample from *State of Working Victoria Project*, we can extrapolate to the larger population.

Just under half of the working population – or around 906,950 employees – have dependent children or other family members to look after. Of the total working population, 42 per cent – or around 838,450 workers – have dependent children.

Over a quarter (28.8 per cent) of Victorian workers have preschool children, with a further 13.3 per cent of workers being responsible for children over the age of 5 years. Caring for preschool-aged children places particular demands on carers, especially in relation to childcare facilities.

Caring responsibilities of individuals for family members is not limited to dependent children. Workers may also have caring responsibilities for aged or disabled family members.

The study found that 5.7 per cent – or around 113,500 Victorian workers – have other family members to care for.

Table 1: Proportion of workers with caring responsibilities

	No. of employees	%
Have caring responsibilities	906,950	45.6
Do not have caring responsibilities	1,083,529	54.4
Total	1,990,119	100
Have preschool children	573,114	28.8
Have older children	265,338	13.3
Have no dependent children	1,151,667	57.9
Total	1,990,119	100
Care for other family members	113,527	5.7
Don't have to care for other family members	1,876,592	94.3
Total	1,990,119	100

Source: State of Working Victoria: Household Survey

What is the profile of workers with family responsibilities?

- **Most individuals with dependent children are aged from 30-49 years old.**

Approximately three-quarters of women and men with dependent children are aged between 30 and 49 years. That is to say, a substantial proportion of prime-aged men and women face the difficult challenge of balancing work and family responsibilities.

A substantial proportion (42.6 per cent) of women with preschool age children are aged under 30 years, compared with only 18 per cent of men with preschool children. A majority of women with preschool children are aged from 30-49 years, which supports the contention that many women are delaying child rearing.

Table 2: Age profile of workers (%)

	Under 30 years	30-49 years	50+ years	Total
Male				
Dependent children	11.1	75.7	13.2	100
No dependent children	47.6	24.9	27.5	100
Female				
Dependent children	11.7	76.6	11.7	100
No dependent children	45.3	29.9	24.8	100
Male				
Preschool children	18.0	80.6	1.4*	100
No preschool children	34.9	39.8	25.3	100
Female				
Preschool children	42.6	51.1	6.4	100
No preschool children	29.8	49.4	20.8	100
All	31.7	47.8	20.5	100

Source: State of Working Victoria: Household Survey.

* Too few cases to make this statistic reliable.

- **The proportion of workers with dependent children is higher in Manufacturing, Education and Health and Community Services than other industries.**

Just over half of workers in Manufacturing, Education and Health and Community Services have dependent children.

People with dependent children are less likely to be located in Retail Trade (30.1 per cent), Accommodation, Culture, Recreation and Personal Services (24.1 per cent) and Property and Business Services (28.4 per cent).

The lower proportion of individuals with dependants in Retail can partially be explained by the fact that this workforce is younger. The average age of Retail employees is 29.48 years, compared with the overall employee average of 37.73 years. However, there is also a high proportion of workers in this industry that work shifts (42.8 per cent), which may make balancing work/family commitments difficult for individuals with dependants.

'Family unfriendly' practices might also explain the results for Accommodation, Culture, Recreation and Personal Services and Property and Business Services. For example, 32 per cent of employees working in Property and Business Services work extended hours (40+ hours) and 43.5 per cent of workers in Accommodation, Culture, Recreation and Personal Services are on shift work.

Table 3: Industry location of workers with dependants (%)

Industry	Dependent children
Agriculture, fishing and mining	40.8
Manufacturing	55.3
Construction	46.2
Infrastructure	44.5
Wholesale trade	41.6
Retail trade	30.1
Accommodation, culture, recreation and personal services	24.1
Finance and insurance	44.4
Property and business services	28.4
Government	38.1
Education	55.8
Health and community services	53.7
All	41.8

Source: State of Working Victoria: Household Survey

- **Almost half of individuals in Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service occupations have dependent children.**

Individuals with dependent children are more likely to be in occupations such as Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Services (49.7 per cent), and are less likely to be Associate Professionals (35.2 per cent) or in Elementary Clerical, Sales and Services (29.3 per cent).

Forty-two per cent of Managers and Administrators have dependent children. A large majority (72 per cent) of these workers work extended hours (greater than 40 hours).

Table 4: Occupations of workers with dependent children (%)

Industry	Dependent children
Managers and administrators	42.2
Professionals	41.5
Associate professionals	35.2
Tradespersons and related workers	42.8
Advanced clerical and service workers	38.7
Intermediate clerical, sales and service	49.7
Intermediate production and transport	46.2
Elementary clerical, sales and service	29.3
Labourers	42.6
All	41.6

Source: State of Working Victoria: Household Survey

- **Nearly one-quarter of all workers took time off to care for a sick family member and two-fifths of workers took time off to deal with personal matters.**

The survey asked respondents whether they had had to take time off to care for a sick relative or to deal with personal matters.

Nearly one in four (22.3 per cent) of employees took time off to care for a sick family member. Two out of five employees had time off in the previous year to deal with personal matters.

The data suggests that a substantial proportion of workers require flexible arrangements to deal with family responsibilities.

Table 5: Proportion of workers who took time off to care for sick relative or took time off for personal tasks (%)

	Workers
Took time off to care for sick relative	22.3
Did not take time off for sick relative	77.7
Total	100
Took time off to care for personal tasks	41.7
Did not take time off for personal tasks	58.3
Total	100

Source: State of Working Victoria: Household Survey

- **Caring responsibilities are still predominantly the responsibility of women.**

The survey results show that although the proportion of women (44.7 per cent) and men (46.3 per cent) who identified that they had responsibilities for dependants or other family members was approximately the same, women overwhelmingly took on the responsibility to care for these individuals when they were sick.

Almost half of all women with dependent children (45.3 per cent) had taken time off in the previous 12 months to care for a sick family member. This contrasts with only 26.7 per cent of men with dependent children.

A slightly higher proportion (50 per cent) of women with preschool children had to take time off to care for a sick relative, compared with 28.4 per cent of men with preschool children.

Table 6: Proportion of workers that took time off to care for a sick relative (%)

	Time off to care for sick family
Male	
Dependent children	26.7
No dependent children	15.1
Female	
Dependent children	45.3
No dependent children	10.4
Male	
Preschool children	28.4
No preschool children	18.3
Female	
Preschool children	50.0
No preschool children	22.0
Total	100

Source: State of Working Victoria: Household Survey

- **Two-thirds of women with dependent children work part-time.**

Most men with dependent children (93 per cent) work full-time. In contrast, two-thirds of women with dependent children are employed on a part-time basis.

The differences between men and women and their employment status is even more dramatic in examining individuals with preschool aged children. Nine out of ten men with preschool aged children work full-time, compared with 17.2 per cent of women.

Women are primarily responsible for the care of dependent children. As discussed in the Introduction, many women sought to reconcile work/family responsibilities by working part-time and forgoing continuous employment.

Although part-time work may make the combination of work and family easier, the quality of part-time work in Australia raises a number of issues. First, the hours offered for part-time work are frequently inadequate, with many workers reporting that they would prefer more hours. This is defined as *underemployment*. In comparison with other OECD countries, Australian workers are more likely to report underemployment (The RMIT Report). Second, part-time jobs are usually low status jobs with no opportunities for advancement. Third, two-thirds of all part-time jobs are casual. Therefore, there is low job security and the work frequently involves irregular hours and earnings. Given these issues, it is argued that 'part-time work cannot be regarded as unambiguously 'family friendly' (The RMIT Report, p. 36). These concerns were confirmed by the State of Working Victoria Project surveys.

Table 7: Working hours of workers (%)

	Full-time	Part-time	Total
Male			
Dependent children	93.0	6.9	100
No dependent children	77.8	22.2	100
Female			
Dependent children	37.5	62.5	100
No dependent children	60.3	39.7	100
Male			
Preschool children	93.2	6.8	100
No preschool children	93.0	7.0	100
Female			
Preschool children	17.2	82.8	100
No preschool children	44.0	56.0	100
All	69.1	30.9	100

Source: State of Working Victoria: Household Survey

- **One-fifth of women with dependent children have precarious forms of employment.**

Indeed, when we examine the nature of the employment contract we find that one-fifth of women with dependent children are employed on a casual basis. That is, 22 per cent of women with dependent children are employed casually compared with only 6 per cent of men with dependants. The proportion of women without dependants employed on a casual basis is similar, suggesting that women generally suffer greater disadvantage with respect to their status of employment.

Table 8: Status of workers (%)

	Casual	Permanent	Total
Male			
Dependent children	6.0	94.0	100
No dependent children	19.2	80.8	100
Female			
Dependent children	22.0	78.0	100
No dependent children	21.2	78.8	100
All	17.2	82.8	100

Source: State of Working Victoria: Household Survey

Working hours arrangements and working time preferences

Working hours represent a major contributing factor to work-family imbalance. The following tables examine the working hours of individuals with family responsibilities by categorising these into part-time (less than 35 hours), standard (35-40 hours) and extended hours (greater than 40 hours). The report then examines the preferences of individuals for greater, less or the same hours.

- **A high proportion of men with dependent children work extended hours.**

Almost half of men with dependent children (47%) work extended hours. This contrasts with 33.6 per cent of men without dependent children and women with (10 per cent) or without (17.9 per cent) dependent children.

- **A high proportion of women with dependent children work part-time, particularly women with preschool-aged children.**

Two out of three (63 per cent) women with dependent children work part-time, although a substantial proportion of women (37.5 per cent) work either full-time or extended hours.

When we examine women with preschool aged children, a considerably larger percentage (82.8 per cent) of women work part-time, with a further 17.2 per cent working full-time or extended hours.

Table 9: The distribution of hours of work (%)

	Part-time	Full-time	Extended hours	Total
Male				
Dependent children	6.9	46.1	47.0	100
No dependent children	22.2	44.2	33.6	100
Female				
Dependent children	62.5	27.5	10.0	100
No dependent children	39.7	42.5	17.9	100
Male				
Preschool children	6.8*	50.6	42.6	100
No preschool children	17.4	43.9	38.7	100
Female				
Preschool children	82.8	13.6	3.6*	100
No preschool children	45.4	38.8	15.8	100
All	30.9	41	28.1	100

Source: State of Working Victoria: Household Survey

* Too few cases to make this statistic reliable.

- **Over one-quarter of men with dependent children would prefer to work fewer hours.**

Although two out of three men with dependent children are happy with their hours, 27.5 per cent prefer to work fewer hours. For women with and without dependants and men with no dependants the proportion of workers that prefer to work less hours is approximately one-fifth.

One in three men with preschool-aged children prefer to work less hours, compared with 22 per cent of men without preschool children, 15.6 per cent of women with preschool children and 20.2 per cent of women without preschool-aged children.

- **Two out of five workers working extended hours prefer to work less hours.**

When we explore hours preferences of individuals with and without dependants working part-time, normal hours or extended hours, we find that 42.4 per cent of people with dependent children and 37.3 per cent of those without dependent children who work extended hours would prefer to work less hours. Indeed, the proportion of workers that prefer to work fewer hours increases as the number of hours worked increases, particularly for individuals with dependants.

- **There are no real differences between part-time workers who have dependants and those without dependants in terms of the preferences for hours.**

Approximately one out of four individuals working part-time (regardless of whether they have dependants) prefer to work more hours.

Table 10: Hours preferences of workers (%)

	Happy with hours	Prefer to work more hours	Prefer to work less hours	Total
Male				
Dependent children	61.4	11.1	27.5	100
No dependent children	67.4	11.2	21.5	100
Female				
Dependent children	65.2	14.6	20.2	100
No dependent children	69.1	11.5	19.4	100
Male				
Preschool children	51.0	14.3	34.6	100
No preschool children	67.5	10.5*	22.0	100
Female				
Preschool children	68.8	15.6	15.6	100
No preschool children	67.3	12.5	20.2	100
Part-time				
Dependent children	68.0	24.1	7.9	100
No dependent children	72.1	24.4	3.5	100
Normal Hours				
Dependent children	67.9	8.7	23.4	100
No dependent children	70.8	7.1	22.1	100
Extended Hours				
Dependent children	51.9	5.7	42.4	100
No dependent children	59.4	3.3*	37.3	100
All	66.0	11.9	22.1	100

Source: State of Working Victoria: Household Survey

* Too few cases to make this statistic reliable.

- **Men with dependants are significantly more likely to work long overtime hours.**

Approximately 18 per cent of men with dependent children work 11 or more hours of overtime each week. This contrasts with 4.1 per cent of women with dependants, 11.5 per cent of men without dependants and 10.4 per cent of women without dependants. Further, the proportion of women with preschool-aged children working overtime is substantially less than men with or without preschool children and women with no preschool-aged children.

Table 11: Overtime worked (%)

	0 hours overtime	1–5 hours overtime	6–10 hours overtime	11+ hours overtime	Total
Male					
Dependent children	30.8	26.9	24.7	17.5	100
No dependent children	26.8	40.4	21.3	11.5	100
Female					
Dependent children	50.2	29.6	16	4.1	100
No dependent children	37.7	36.6	15.3	10.4	100
Male					
Preschool children	17.7	32.1	33.5	16.8	100
No preschool children	31.1	34.5	20.6	13.8	100
Female					
Preschool children	50.3	40.2	9.5	0*	100
No preschool children	42.2	33.1	16.2	8.5	100
All	35.0	33.9	19.7	11.4	100

Source: State of Working Victoria: Household Survey

* Too few cases to make this statistic reliable.

Work Attitudes

Workers with dependants were asked whether they agreed with a number of statements designed to measure their attitudes on a number of factors related to work. The factors examined measured stress, workload, job insecurity, distributive justice (perception that they are treated fairly) and promotional opportunities.

Stress

- **Men with dependent children express higher levels of stress than men with no dependent children. Women without dependent children express higher levels of stress compared with women with dependent children.**

Just fewer than 45 per cent of men with dependent children stated they felt stressed at work. This compares with 37.8 per cent of men without dependent children. This difference is reversed in the case of women: while 47.6 per cent of women without dependants agree that they experience stress in their job, 35.6 per cent of women with dependent children stated that they were stressed at work. This difference is largely explained by the fact that men are generally more likely to be found in extended hours jobs. This was particularly so in the case of men with dependent children who were found to be more likely to work extended hours jobs than either men without dependants or women.

- **Women with preschool children tend to express lower levels of stress compared with other groups.**

Over one-quarter (27.3 per cent) of women with preschool children express the fact that they are stressed at work, compared with 42.2 per cent of men with preschool children; 40.5 per cent of men with no preschool children and 44.3 per cent of women without preschool children. Lower levels of stress experienced by women with preschool children appear to be explained by working hours arrangements: a substantial proportion of women with preschool children worked part-time.

- **A higher proportion of full-time workers (either with or without dependants) express the view that their job is very stressful compared with part-time workers.**

Indeed, when we examine stress levels of full-time workers and part-time workers with dependants we find that almost half of all full-time workers (either with or without dependants) agree that they experience stress in their job. Lower proportions of part-timers without dependants (32.8 per cent) and with dependants (26 per cent) state that this is the case.

It appears that stress is linked with hours, rather than whether individuals have dependants or not.

Workload


- **Women with no dependent children are less likely to agree that they have workloads that make it difficult to get everything done, compared with other groups.**

Just over one-quarter of women without dependants agree that their job leaves them very little time to get everything done. Proportions of men (with and without dependants) and women with dependants who agree are substantially higher. Thirty-eight point two per cent of men with dependants, 38.2 per cent of men without dependants and 35 per cent of women with dependants agree that they are unable to get their work done.

Having dependants increases time pressures at work for both women and males, although men without dependants also experience difficulties with their workloads. The latter finding might be related to the fact that men are more likely to be in full-time work.

- **More men with preschool children state that they have problems getting everything done at work.**

Almost half of men with preschool age children (45.7 per cent) agree that it is difficult to get everything done at work, compared with 36.7 per cent of men without preschool aged children, 35 per cent of women with preschool aged children and 29.5 per cent of women without preschool aged children.



Men with preschool children experience the most difficulties in reconciling their workloads. This result also should be considered in the context that more men with preschool children work full-time when compared with women.

- **A higher proportion of full-time workers (compared with part-time workers) have high workloads.**

Approximately two-fifths of full-time workers agree that it is difficult to get everything done at work. Substantially fewer part-timers agree, although the figure is higher for part-timers with dependants (26.9 per cent) compared with those without dependants (19.2 per cent).

Job insecurity

- **A substantially larger number of men with dependants experience insecurity regarding their job compared with other groups.**

Over a quarter (26.7 per cent) of men with dependants state that they feel insecure about their future at their workplace. This contrasts with men with no dependants (18.6 per cent), women with dependants (19.6 per cent) and women with no dependants (14.9 per cent).

- **A substantially higher number of men with preschool-aged children feel insecure about their job.**

Over a quarter (28 per cent) of men with preschool children felt insecure in their job, compared with approximately one-fifth of men with no preschool-aged children and one-fifth of women with preschool-aged children.

- **A substantially higher proportion of full-time workers with dependants experience job insecurity compared with part-timers (with and without dependants).**

Approximately one-quarter of full-time workers with dependants (25.2 per cent) state that they are insecure at work. This compares to one-fifth of part-timers (with or without dependent children) and 16.3 per cent of full-timers with no dependent children.

Promotional opportunities

- **Men and women with dependants feel that they have fewer promotional opportunities.**

Men (43.5 per cent) and women (34.1 per cent) with dependants are less likely to agree that they have promotional opportunities, when compared with men and women without dependants. Women, overall express the view that they are less likely than men to be promoted.

- **Over half of men with preschool children state they have promotional opportunities.**

More men with preschool-aged children express the view that they have promotional opportunities when compared with men and women without dependants and men without preschool-aged children. This appears to reflect that men with preschool-aged children are prime age. Generally prime-aged men are more likely to report they expect to have promotional opportunities than non-prime age men.

A lower proportion of women with or without dependants express agreement that they have promotional opportunities when compared with men (with or without dependants).

- **Fewer part-timers (with or without dependent children) state that they have promotional opportunities.**

Full-timers with no dependent children (49.5 per cent) have the highest percentage expressing the view that there are promotional opportunities, compared with part-timers with preschool aged-children (36.9 per cent) and those without preschool-aged children (35 per cent).

Table 12: Worker attitudes (%)

	Agree: My job is very stressful	Agree: My job leaves me very little time to get everything done	Agree: I feel insecure about my future at my workplace	Agree: There is a good chance to get ahead in my organisation
Male				
Dependent children	44.6	38.2	26.7	43.5
No dependent children	37.8	38.2	18.6	49.5
Female				
Dependent children	35.6	35.0	19.6	34.1
No dependent children	47.6	26.6	14.9	40.9
Male				
Preschool children	42.2	45.7	27.8	55.4
No preschool children	40.5	36.7	20.9	45.3
Female				
Preschool children	27.3	35.0	19.6	42.6
No preschool children	44.3	29.5	16.6	37.5
Full-time				
Dependent children	47.4	41.4	25.2	40.2
No dependent children	46.4	38.8	16.3	49.5
Part-time				
Dependent children	26.0	26.9	19.9	36.9
No dependent children	32.8	19.2	18.2	35.0
All	41.6	34.5	19.7	42.8

Source: State of Working Victoria: Household Survey

Workplace Practices and Family-Friendly Policies

The previous section discussed the characteristics of workers with dependants and other family responsibilities. In that section, evidence was presented that showed that a substantial proportion of workers had family commitments, that caring responsibilities are still predominantly the domain of women and that many women, in order to juggle their work/family commitments are working part-time and in precarious forms of employment.

Men with dependants are predominantly in fulltime work and almost half work extended hours. The difficulties for men with preschool children working extended hours in particular is evidenced by more than a third of this group indicating a preference to work fewer hours.

In this section, we will examine the prevalence of family-friendly policies and practices in workplaces. Statistics will be presented on the percentage of establishments that offer paid maternity leave and paid or unpaid paternity leave and other forms of working time flexibility.

Family-friendly entitlements

- **Under a quarter of workplaces provide paid maternity leave for the majority of their non-managerial staff.**

Twenty-two per cent of Victorian workplaces have paid maternity leave. Considerably more workplaces (37 per cent) provide paid or unpaid paternity leave.

- **Larger workplaces are more likely to have maternity or paternity leave**

Fifty-eight per cent of workplaces with 200+ employees provide paid maternity leave. Eighty-six per cent of these large workplaces have paid or unpaid paternity leave. This compares with only 21 per cent and 31 per cent of small workplaces (under 20 employees) that provide paid or unpaid maternity leave and paid or unpaid paternity leave, respectively.

Table 13: Leave entitlements and workplace size (%)

Workplace characteristics	Paid maternity leave	Paid or unpaid paternity leave
All workplaces	22	37
Number of employees		
Under 20	21	31
20 to 99	22	51
100 to 199	30	74
200 plus	58	86

Source: State of Working Victoria: Household Survey

- **The hospitality industry is less likely to provide paid maternity or paid/unpaid paternity leave.**

Few workplaces in the hospitality industry have family friendly policies. Only 14 per cent of workplaces in hospitality provide paid maternity leave and 23 per cent provide paid or unpaid paternity leave.

The most family friendly industries are Government (49 per cent have maternity leave and 50 per cent paid or unpaid paternity leave) and Human Services (41 per cent have paid maternity leave and 40 per cent paid or unpaid paternity leave).

While maternity leave was not common in Infrastructure (19 per cent), a substantial proportion of workplaces (62 per cent) did provide unpaid or paid paternity leave.

Table 14: Leave entitlements and industry (%)

Workplace characteristics	Paid maternity leave	Paid or unpaid paternity leave
Industry		
Manufacturing	20	38
Construction	17	29
Infrastructure	19	62
Wholesale and retail trade	21	37
Hospitality	14	23
Finance and business	19	41
Government	49	50
Human services	41	40

Source: State of Working Victoria: Employer Survey

- **The public sector provides greater leave entitlements**

Forty-four per cent of public sector workplaces provide paid maternity leave to the majority of non-managerial staff. This contrasts with only 19 per cent of private sector workplaces providing this leave.

This pattern is mirrored with respect to paternity leave, with 47 per cent of public sector organisations providing paid or unpaid paternity leave compared with 35 per cent of private sector workplaces.

Table 15: Leave entitlements and sector (%)

Workplace characteristics	Paid maternity leave	Paid or unpaid paternity leave
Sector		
Private	19	35
Public	44	47

Source: State of Working Victoria: Employer Survey

- **Paternity leave is more likely in workplaces that are part of larger organisations.**

Forty-eight per cent of workplaces that are part of larger organisations have paternity leave, compared with only 32 per cent of stand-alone workplaces. The provision of maternity leave does not differ between

workplaces of larger organisations and stand alone workplaces.

Table 16: Leave entitlements and workplace status (%)

Workplace characteristics	Paid maternity leave	Paid or unpaid paternity leave
Organisational status		
Part of organisation	22	48
Stand alone workplace	23	32

Source: State of Working Victoria: Employer Survey

- **Certified agreements are associated with maternity and paternity leave provisions.**

Forty-two per cent and 48 per cent of workplaces where the dominant arrangement is certified agreements have paid maternity leave or paternity leave, respectively. Only 18 per cent of workplaces with own arrangements as the predominant arrangement, have maternity leave, although a substantial proportion of this group (46 per cent) provide paternity leave.

Table 17: Leave entitlements and industrial coverage (%)

Workplace characteristics	Paid maternity leave	Paid or unpaid paternity leave
Industrial coverage		
Federal awards	20	30
Certified agreement	42	48
Own arrangements	18	46
More than one dominant	24	36

Source: State of Working Victoria: Employer Survey

Working time flexibility

The survey asked a number of questions of workplace managers to measure working time flexibility made available to workers. These included the provision of paid time off to attend to personal matters, banking of hours and RDOs.

- **Paid time off for personal matters is a common entitlement but other forms of flexibility are less prevalent.**

Most workplaces (69 per cent) provide paid time off to workers for personal matters. However, other forms of flexibility, such as banking of hours (20 per cent) and rostered days off (RDO) (26 per cent) are less common.

Table 18: Flexible working time (%)

Workplace characteristics	Paid time off for personal matters	Compressed work week or banking of hours	Rostered days off
All workplaces	69	20	26

Source: State of Working Victoria: Employer Survey

- **Banking of hours, RDOs and paid personal leave are more likely in larger workplaces.**

Paid personal leave is common in larger workplaces, with 79 per cent of workplaces with greater than 200 employees providing this. Similarly, a substantial proportion of these larger workplaces allow employees to bank their hours (44 per cent) or have systems of RDOs in place (56 per cent).

Table 19: Flexible working time and workplace size (%)

Workplace characteristics	Paid time off for personal matters	Compressed work week or banking of hours	Rostered days off
Number of employees			
Under 20	69	18	24
20 to 99	66	25	32
100 to 199	74	32	36
200 plus	79	44	56

Source: State of Working Victoria: Employer Survey

- **RDOs, banking of hours and personal leave are most common in Infrastructure and Government and are least common in Construction and Wholesale and Retail Trade.**

The banking of hours is most common in Infrastructure (38 per cent) and Government (36 per cent) and least common in Construction (7 per cent) and Wholesale and Retail Trade (13 per cent). RDOs are most likely in Infrastructure (57 per cent) and Human Services (40 per cent), and least likely in Finance and Business (17 per cent) and Construction (19 per cent).

With respect to paid time off for personal matters, Infrastructure has the highest proportion of workplaces with this entitlement (85 per cent) while Manufacturing has the lowest proportion (65 per cent).

Table 20: Flexible working time and industry (%)

Workplace characteristics	Paid time off for personal matters	Compressed work week or banking of hours	Rostered days off
Industry			
Manufacturing	65	24	28
Construction	79	7	19
Infrastructure	85	38	57
Wholesale and retail trade	70	13	20
Hospitality	59	22	29
Finance and business	70	27	17
Government	66	36	34
Human services	67	18	40

Source: State of Working Victoria: Employer Survey

- **The public sector is more likely to have RDOs and banking of hours.**

While there are no differences between the public and private sectors regarding paid time off for personal matters, there are differences with respect to other forms of flexibilities, with RDOs (30 per cent) and banking of hours (29 per cent) more common in the public sector.

Table 21: Flexible working time and sector (%)

Workplace characteristics	Paid time off for personal matters	Compressed work week or banking of hours	Rostered days off
Sector			
Private	68	19	26
Public	70	29	30

Source: State of Working Victoria: Employer Survey

- **RDOs and banking of hours are more commonly found in workplaces that are part of larger organisations.**

One out of four establishments that are part of larger organisations have banking of hours, compared with 18 per cent of stand-alone workplaces. Thirty per cent of establishments that are part of larger organisations have RDOs, compared with 25 per cent of stand-alone workplaces. There are no differences in terms of organisational status with respect to paid time off for personal matters.

Table 22: Flexible working time and organisational status (%)

Workplace characteristics	Paid time off for personal matters	Compressed work week or banking of hours	Rostered days off
Organisational status			
Part of organisation	69	25	30
Stand alone workplace	69	18	25

State of Working Victoria: Employer Survey

- **Workplaces where federal awards or certified agreements are dominant have a higher propensity to have RDOs.**

Around one-third of workplaces covered by awards and certified agreement have RDOs in place, compared with only 12 per cent of workplaces with own arrangements.

There are no discernible patterns with respect to banking of hours and personal leave by industrial coverage.

Table 23: Flexible working time and industrial coverage (%)

Workplace characteristics	Paid time off for personal matters	Compressed work week or banking of hours	Rostered days off
Industrial coverage			
Federal awards	67	20	33
Certified agreement	73	23	32
Own arrangements	72	20	12
More than one dominant	64	18	26

Source: State of Working Victoria: Employer Survey

- **Highly unionised workplaces more commonly have RDOs in place.**

Only 20 per cent of non-unionised workplaces offer RDOs to employees, compared with 75 per cent of highly unionised workplaces (greater than 75 per cent density).

There appears to be no relationship between union density and banking of hours in workplaces and the presence of paid time off for personal matters.

Table 24: Flexible working time and union density (%)

Workplace characteristics	Paid time off for personal matters	Compressed work week or banking of hours	Rostered days off
Union density			
No members	69	21	20
1 to 9%	83	23	43
10 to 24%	72	12	32
25 to 49%	46	19	49
50 to 74%	56	27	50
Over 75%	80	21	75

Source: State of Working Victoria: Employer Survey

Take-up of Flexible Leave Entitlements

Earlier in this paper, the proportions of individuals that took time off to deal with a sick relative and whether they had time off to deal with personal matters were discussed.

Twenty-two point three per cent of employees took time off to care for a sick family member. Forty-one point seven per cent of employees had time off in the previous year to deal with personal matters.

- **Most workers who took time off to care for a sick relative had paid leave.**

Of the workers who had leave to attend to a sick relative, 73.2 per cent had paid time off, 25.4 per cent had unpaid time and 1.4 per cent had their time partially paid.

Table 25: Proportion of workers that had paid time off for caring responsibilities (%)

	Workers
Paid time off for care	73.2
Partly paid time off for care	25.4
Unpaid time off for care	1.4
Total	100

Source: State of Working Victoria: Household Survey

Of the workers who took time off to deal with personal matters, 67.8 per cent had their time paid, 30 per cent had unpaid leave and 2.2 per cent had part of their time paid.

Table 26: Proportion of workers that had paid time off for personal matters (%)

	Workers
Paid time off for personal matters	67.8
Partly paid time off for personal matters	2.2
Unpaid time off for personal matters	30.0
Total	100

Source: State of Working Victoria: Household Survey

Conclusion

Work and family balance is an important issue affecting almost half of working Victorians who care for children or other family relatives.

This report is based on an analysis of data collected for the *State of Working Victoria Project*. It provides unique insights into identifying which workers have work/family balance issues and what policies and practices exist in workplaces in Victoria designed to assist individuals to achieve balance.

The report begins with developing a profile of workers with potential work/family conflicts. The report shows that family responsibilities predominantly remain with women. For example, almost half of women with dependants took time off over the last 12 months to care for a sick relative.

Women tend to reconcile work-family conflicts through part-time or discontinuous participation in paid work. This is reflected in the fact that two-thirds of women with dependent children work part-time. Much of this work is precarious, with one-fifth of all women with dependent children working on a casual basis. The RMIT Report noted that part-time work arrangements are not necessarily family-friendly, as part-time work in Australia is of poor quality. Frequently the hours are less than preferred, the jobs lack status and provide little employment security. Indeed, the results of this study support the first two propositions, with 24 per cent of part-timers with or without dependants indicating a preference to work more hours and two-thirds of part-timers stating that they did not have promotional opportunities.

There is a need to provide secure, quality part-time work for working parents.


The challenge for men in reconciling work and family manifests itself quite differently. This report found that around half of all men with dependent children work extended hours. This proportion was higher than for all other groups of workers. The difficulty this poses for achieving work life balance was most evident in

working time preferences expressed by men with a significant proportion preferring to work less hours. The growth of long hours has contributed to what Pocock (2003) has described as the collision of work and life. Indeed, she argues that the long hours culture in many workplaces has reinforced the tendency for men to work full-time in these long hours jobs and for women to either opt out of the workforce or take substandard employment that provides flexibility. The toll that these long hours jobs places on families is considerable, affecting the physical and mental health of individuals and reducing the amount of time that they can spend with their families.

The trend towards longer working hours at the workplace has placed significant pressures on men in particular to balance work and family commitments.

Aside from identifying workers with work/family responsibilities, the report examines the policies and practices of employers in providing family-friendly workplaces. There is a growing acceptance that parental leave is an important entitlement to retain skilled workers. In terms of family-friendly entitlements such as paid maternity leave and unpaid or paid paternity leave, the report shows that the majority of workplaces do not provide these forms of leave. However, access to such benefits varies across different types of workplaces. Smaller workplaces and those in the Hospitality industry in particular were significantly less likely to provide maternity or paternity leave. These forms of leave are most commonly associated with larger workplaces, in Government and Human Services and in workplaces with certified agreements.

While the provision of personal leave is reasonably common (69 per cent), the majority of workplaces did not provide other flexible working time arrangements such as banking of hours or RDOs. RDOs and



banking of hours are most commonly found in larger workplaces, in Infrastructure and Government, in unionised workplaces and in workplaces where federal awards or certified agreements are dominant.

This report makes a significant contribution to the debate surrounding work/family balance. In particular, the report shows that men and women with dependants experience different difficulties in relation to achieving work/family balance. Evidence from the report indicates that there is a growing need for good quality part-time work (particularly for women), more reasonable hours and greater provision of maternity, paternity leave and flexible working time arrangements. To date, only a minority of workplaces provides these conditions of employment. For men, the real challenge lies in addressing extended working hours.

Appendix A – Part 1: Household Survey

Introduction

The *State of Working Victoria: Household Survey* (SWVHS) was conducted during July 2002 by a market research company – Field Works Market Research – using a CATI (computer aided telephone interviewing) system.

The aim of the survey was to sample all households in Victoria listed in Desktop Marketing System's (DMS) electronic residential phone directory and to produce estimates which could be generalised to the whole of the Victorian labour force. Eligibility for inclusion was based on the criteria of employee status or contractor status.

The SWVHS achieved a sample of 800 individuals, with a response rate of 29 per cent. The calculation of this response rate is discussed below. The survey used a simple random sample design and the final sample was weighted to take account of differential response rates by particular subgroups. The weighting procedure is also discussed below.

Response rate

As Table 1 shows, just over 5,500 attempted contacts were made to achieve the successful completion of 800 surveys. Of these contacts, 1,418 proved to be out of scope and another 1,269 were unable to be successfully contacted, largely because of dead phone lines (a major problem with electronic phone directories). This left a total of 2,805 phone numbers where the household was in scope, and an appropriate person contacted. Of these 2,805 contacted, 52 were unable to complete the survey once they began and 1,953 refused to take part. This produced a response rate of 29 per cent and a refusal rate of 70 per cent.

Table 1: Response rate calculations for household survey

Category	Details	Number	Final
Attempt Contact		5,587	
Out of scope	Business Number	91	
	Not an employee or contractor	1,327	
	Other out of scope (incl fax machine)	93	
Total out of scope		1,418	
Unable to contact successfully	Language problems	105	
	Deal line/Telstra message	934	
	10 attempts with no answer	194	
	No answer after some initial contact/engaged	36	
Total unsuccessful contact		1,269	
Contacted but survey not completed	Respondent unavailable for duration	52	
	Refused	1,953	
Total where not completed		2,005	
Successful completions		800	
Total in scope			4,169
Total In scope and contacted			2,805
Response rate	Success/total in scope and contacted		29%
Refusal rate	Refused/total in scope and contacted		70%

Source: Fieldwork outcomes provided by Field Works Market Research

Weighting

Weighting is used to produce population estimates from survey sample counts. To move from a sample count to a population estimate entails multiplying the former by some constant, thereby 'expanding' the size of the estimate. The 'expansion' weight may be a constant that is uniform across the whole sample, but more often the constant varies from observation to observation, depending on the characteristic of the observation. The reasons for this variation in weights are two-fold:

1. Generally, most surveys achieve differential response rates for different sub-groups, so the expansion weight is used to compensate for these differential response rates. This situation is applicable to both the household survey and the employer survey.
2. If a non-proportional sampling design is used (as in the employer survey), then the expansion weights are also required to bring the strata in the sample 'back into line' with the strata in the population (eg. if the retail industry constitutes 20 per cent of the population of workplaces, then the weights should ensure that 20 per cent of the (weighted) counts within the sample are retail workplaces). This situation is only applicable to the employer survey and is discussed further later.

An expansion weight generally has two results: it inflates the sample count to match the population size, and it re-apportions different age/education/occupation/industry/culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) combinations (or industry/workplace size combinations) so that their proportionality within the sample is the same as it would be in the population. (The expansion weight is sometimes termed a 'probability weight' or a 'sampling weight'.)

In the case of the household survey, the sample design did not make use of stratification (as the employer survey did) so the main requirement of the weighting was to take account of differential response rates amongst sub-groups. The key sub-groups for this purpose were:

- occupation
- industry location
- educational level
- non-English speaking country of birth
- age group

The proportion of categories within these groups differed considerably from the population proportions (as reflected in the ABS 1996 Census) and this warranted the construction of sampling weights to bring the SWVHS sample closer into line with the population that it sought to represent. The discrepancy between the original sample and the Census is shown in Table 2, which also shows the results after weighting. It is clear that the original sample had a considerable over-representation of professionals (27 per cent, compared to 18 per cent in the Census), a considerable over-representation of persons with tertiary qualifications (34 per cent compared to 18 per cent), and an under-representation of young people (22 per cent compared to 31 per cent). These outcomes are consistent with what one would expect with household telephone surveys that tend to elicit a better response rate from middle-aged, well educated householders.

Table 2: Effect of weighting on household sample (%)

Sub-group weighted	SWVH raw sample	1996 census	SWVHS sample
Occupation			
Managers and administrators	8.4	10.0	9.1
Professionals	27.4	18.4	18.7
Associate professionals	8.7	11.8	11.4
Tradespersons and related workers	8.8	13.7	13.5
Advanced clerical and service workers	5.5	4.7	4.4
Intermediate clerical, sales and service workers	21.1	17.0	16.7
Intermediate production and transport workers	5.7	9.5	10.9
Elementary clerical, sales and service	6.5	9.7	10.0
Labourers and related workers	7.9	5.2	5.3
Industry			
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	2.9	2.2	4.0
Manufacturing	16.7	16.0	17.0
Electricity, gas and water supply	1.2	3.0	1.0
Construction	5.2	10.0	8.0
Wholesale trade	3.5	7.0	3.0
Retail trade	10.0	10.0	14.0
Accommodation, cafes and restaurants	2.8	2.0	3.0
Transport and storage	2.4	2.0	3.0
Communication services	2.1	3.0	3.0
Finance and industry	4.7	6.0	4.0
Property and business services	12.5	11.0	12.0
Government administration and defence	4.4	6.0	3.0
Education	10.8	10.0	6.0
Health and community services	14.3	7.0	11.0
Cultural and recreational services	2.5	3.0	3.0
Personal and other services	3.3	1.0	4.0
CALD status			
Persons who are culturally and linguistically diverse	6.0	18.0	14.0
Education			
Yr 10 Cert and basic vocational education	21.0	39.0	35.0
Yr 12 Cert and skilled vocational education	23.0	35.0	36.0
Further qualifications	22.0	9.0	9.0
Tertiary qualification	34.0	18.0	20.0
Age Group			
Aged Under 30 years	22.1	31.0	31.7
Aged 30 – 49 years	56.6	52.0	47.8
Aged 50 years and over	22.3	17.0	20.5

Source: ABS Census 1996 and SWVHS

The procedure for developing the weights was a two-stage process. In the first stage, a matrix of cells based on occupation by education was used to adjust all of the sample counts by a specific weight so as to exactly match a similar matrix based on the Census. In the second stage, an iterative process was used to introduce the age, industry and CALD status variables. In so doing, the stage one weights were adjusted so that the categories within the second stage variables moved closer to their Census proportions. Of course, an exact match was not possible because trade-offs between different variables were inevitable. For example, the final sample weight raised the CALD proportion to 14 per cent from a very low 6 per cent, but it was not possible to match the Census proportion of 18 per cent because this would have introduced severe disproportionality into industry (particularly Manufacturing). The ultimate set of trade-offs are evident in the final column of Table 2, where very good occupational and educational alignment has been achieved, a reasonable result has been achieved for age, and an acceptable result has been achieved for industry. Only, CALD status remains under-represented by a noticeable amount (about 4 percentage points), but this result was unavoidable given the constraints of iterative procedures.

Attribution for attitude items

The attitude items used in the Household questionnaire came from a number of other sources as well as the Industrial Relations Victoria (IRV) team. Table 3 indicates which items came from which sources. The full reference for each author is shown below the table.

Table 3: Sources for attitude items

Item	Author
Stress	IRV
Distributive justice	Price and Mueller (1981)
Job satisfaction	Price and Mueller (1981)
Task involvement	Godard (2001)
Job security (1)	IRV
Work overload	Price and Mueller (1981)
Organisational commitment	Porter, Steers, Mowday and Boulian (1974)
Job security (2)	Oldham, Kuilk, Ambrose and Stepina (1986)
Intention to leave	Iverson & Roy (1994)
Promotional opportunities	Price and Mueller (1981)
Autonomy	Tetrick and LaRocco
Consultation	IRV
Industrial relations climate	Dastmalchian, et al (1989)

Dastmalchian, A., Blyton, P. and Adamson, R. 1989. 'Industrial relations climate: Testing a construct', *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, vol. 62, pp. 21-32.

Godard, J. 2001. 'High performance and the transformation of work? The implications of alternative work practices for the experience and outcomes of work', *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, vol. 54, 776-805.

Iverson, R.D. and Roy, P. 1994. 'A causal model of behavioural commitment: Evidence from a study of Australian blue collar employees', *Journal of Management*, vol. 20, pp. 15-41.

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Appendix A – Part 2: Employer Survey

Introduction

The State of *Working Victoria: Employer Survey* (SWVES) was conducted during July 2002 by a market research company, Field Works Market Research, using a CATI (computer aided telephone interviewing) system. The aim of the survey was to sample all workplaces in Victoria and produce estimates that could be generalised to the whole of the Victorian labour force. Two important exclusions were made:

1. **industry:** agriculture and mining were excluded; and
2. **workplace size:** workplaces with less than 5 employees were excluded.

All references to the 'population' in the following discussion are based on the population of workplaces within this scope.

The SWVES achieved a sample of 800 workplaces with a response rate of 49 per cent. The survey used a non-proportional stratified sample design, based on the 15 ANZSIC industry categories and drew its sample from two sources: 'Desktop Marketing Systems' electronic directory and Dun and Bradstreet's database of large organisations. The final sample was weighted using the ABS Business Register for Victoria so that final estimates would represent all workplaces in Victoria according to their industry and size characteristics. Unfortunately, because of changes to the way the ABS maintains the business register, the most recent data was from 1998.

Response rate

As Table 4 on page 30 shows, just under 3500 attempted contacts were made in order to achieve the successful completion of 800 surveys. Of these, 852 contacts proved to be out of scope, and another 927 were unable to be successfully contacted, largely because of dead phone lines or because the quota had already been filled. This left a total of 1,649 phone numbers where the employer was in scope, and an appropriate person contacted. Of these 1,649 contacted, 104 were unable to complete the survey once they began and 745 refused to take part. This produced a response rate of 49 per cent and a refusal rate of 45 per cent.

Table 4: Response rate calculations for employer survey

Category	Details	Number	Final
Attempted contact		3,454	
Out of scope	Residential number	11	
	Sole trader or less than 5 employees	681	
	Company no longer exists	103	
	Other out of scope (inc fax machine, duplicate numbers)	57	
Total out of scope		852	
Unable to contact successfully	Language problems	6	
	Dead line/Telstra message	352	
	10 attempts with no answer	4	
	No answer after some initial contact/engaged	68	
	Referred to other or head office	78	
	Quota full	419	
Total unsuccessful contact		927	
Contacted but survey not completed	Respondent unavailable for duration	104	
	Refused	745	
Total where not completed		849	
Successful completions		800	
Total in scope			2,602
Total in scope and contacted			1,649
Response rate	Success/total in scope and contacted		49%
Refusal rate	Refused/total in scope and contacted		45%

Sample design

The sample design for the SWVES was a stratified, non-proportional random sample. Stratification was based on both industry and workplace size. In developing the sample design we made use of count data from the ABS Business Register for each of the main industry divisions. This is shown in Table 5, which illustrates dramatically the dominance of small workplaces (and keeping in mind that workplaces of under 5 employees were already excluded). The goal in SWVES was to achieve adequate precision in our estimates for the main workplace size categories and for each industry grouping (a condensed version of the full ANZSIC divisional groupings). This meant that medium and larger workplaces required over-sampling and the smallest workplaces required under-sampling.

Table 5: ABS Business Register for Victoria: counts by industry and workplace size

Industry	Workplace size (employee numbers)				Total
	5-9	10-19	20-99	100+	
Manufacturing	3,733	2,441	2,293	610	9,077
Electricity, gas and water	68	57	73	39	237
Construction	2,395	779	423	42	3,639
Wholesale trade	3,496	1,509	941	121	6,067
Retail trade	8,253	2,621	1,358	360	12,592
Accommodation, cafes etc	2,402	1,175	936	61	4,574
Transport	1,270	542	487	82	2,381
Communication	165	129	194	58	546
Finance	1,193	686	455	94	2,428
Business & property services	4,806	1,905	1,387	248	8,346
Government admin & defence	218	185	393	180	976
Education	837	940	1,290	177	3,244
Health and community services	3,153	1,322	975	241	5,691
Cultural and rec services	1,023	441	444	60	1,968
Personal services	1,510	531	478	61	2,580
Total	34,522	15,263	12,127	2,434	64,346

Source: ABS Business Register, September 1998, Business location counts for victoria.

For our sample frame we drew upon two sources: Desktop Marketing System's (DMS) electronic directory of businesses (which included public sector workplaces) and Dun and Bradstreet's (D&B) database of large businesses (which also included public sector workplaces). The DMS directory listed workplace locations with phone numbers and included all workplace sizes. It was expected to be dominated by smaller businesses, which was one of the reasons for also drawing upon the D&B database. The latter was based on workplaces with 100 or more employees and also included branches of large enterprises.

Table 6 shows the targets we set using this sample frame. While the sampling frame was stratified by industry, it was not possible to aim for precise workplace size targets because our sampling frame did not provide such information.

Table 6: Sampling targets for Victoria: counts by industry and workplace size

Industry	Workplace size (employee numbers)				Total
	5-9	10-19	20-99	100+	
Manufacturing	29	44	74	67	214
Electricity, gas and water	3	1	5	7	16
Construction	11	7	17	0	35
Wholesale trade	9	13	19	6	47
Retail trade	16	4	19	26	65
Accommodation, cafes etc	8	5	21	6	40
Transport	9	7	15	5	36
Communication	1	5	15	8	29
Finance	12	6	17	15	50
Business & property services	13	5	17	16	51
Government admin & defence	3	5	14	11	33
Education	2	5	18	19	44
Health and community services	6	9	15	22	52
Cultural and rec services	9	8	23	8	48
Personal Services	10	4	21	5	40
Total	141	128	310	221	800

Source: ABS Business Register, September 1998, Business location counts for Victoria.

Turning to industry targets, Table 7 illustrates the over-sampling and under-sampling strategy. It highlights the extent of our over-sampling in manufacturing, where we aimed for 214 workplaces. This represented 27 per cent of our total, whereas manufacturing only constituted 14 per cent of the ABS Business Register's enumeration. Other industries that were over-sampled included finance and government administration and defence. On the other hand, under-sampling was used for property and business services. Our target of 51 workplaces represented just over 6 per cent of our target, though these kinds of workplaces constituted 13 per cent of all workplaces counted in the ABS Business Register. Other industries which were under-sampled included retail trade and wholesale trade.

Table 7: Sampling targets for Victoria: industry (%)

Industry	SWVES Targets	ABS Business Register
Manufacturing	26.8	14.1
Electricity, gas and water	2.0	0.4
Construction	4.4	5.7
Wholesale trade	5.9	9.4
Retail trade	8.1	19.6
Accommodation, cafes etc	5.0	7.1
Transport	4.5	3.7
Communication	3.6	0.8
Finance	6.3	3.8
Business & property services	6.4	13.0
Government admin & defence	4.1	1.5
Education	5.5	5.0
Health and community services	6.5	8.8
Cultural and rec services	6.0	3.1
Personal services	5.0	4.0
Total	100	100

Turning to workplace size targets, the over-sampling of large workplaces is very evident: SWVES aimed for 28 per cent of the sample to come from workplaces with 100 or more employees, even though this size band only constituted 4 per cent of the population (Table 8). On the other hand, the under-sampling of the smallest workplaces is also evident: SWVES aimed for just 18 per cent of these kinds of workplaces, even though they made up more than half of the population.


Table 8: Sampling targets for Victoria: workplace size (%)

Workplace size	SWVES Targets	ABS Business Register
5-9	17.6	53.7
10-19	16.0	23.7
20-99	38.8	18.8
100+	27.6	3.8
Total	100	100

Source: ABS Business Register, September 1998, Business location counts for Victoria

The logic behind the over-sampling and under-sampling strategy was as follows:

1. With the exception of very small industries (Electricity, Gas and Water Supply; and Communication Services), minimum cell counts of at least 30 were aimed for. Even though we intended to aggregate the 15 ANZSIC categories into a smaller number of categories, we wanted the majority of industries at the ANZSIC divisional level to meet this minimum requirement.
2. Without over-sampling, many industries would have been dominated by the smaller workplaces. This would have been a problem in industries such as manufacturing where large workplaces are very important. In general, we sought a good representation of industries within the D&B database in order to ensure that smaller workplaces did not dominate the sample.



By necessity, this led to a particular pattern in over-sampling and under-sampling. It was one of the reasons why manufacturing was over-sampled to such a degree, whilst property and business services was considerably under-sampled. The latter industry is not important in the large workplace category and so a much smaller number of workplaces for this industry were drawn from the D&B database.

In summary, the stratification used in the sampling frame reflected the importance of industry divisions and the large workplace/ not large workplace distinction. Though the latter was only imperfectly implemented as a stratification factor (using the D&B database), it was successful in producing adequate cell counts in all workplace size categories. While the cost in implementing a non-proportional design is an overall increase in the standard errors of the estimates, the benefits outway this cost. Greater reliability of the estimates within particular industries is possible if reasonable cells counts can be achieved for most industries. Similarly, greater reliability in the estimates for larger workplaces are also achieved through the over-sampling strategy.

Sampling outcomes

The outcomes achieved from the fieldwork are shown in Table 9. With a few exceptions, the overall outcomes were close to what we had aimed for. The most obvious industry shortfalls were in finance – where we had aimed for 50 workplaces and only achieved 24 – and in communication – where we had aimed for 29 workplaces and achieved 22. Fortunately, in both these cases these industry divisions were aggregated for reporting purposes into larger groups. From a workplace size perspective, the shortfalls were in the largest category and the smallest. In the case of workplaces with 100 or more employees, we had sought 221 workplaces and achieved 168; whilst in workplaces with 5 to 10 employees, we had sought 141 workplaces and achieved 84. As mentioned earlier the sample frame did not contain precise workplace size information, so it was not possible to incorporate size into the quota requirements that guided the fieldwork.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, weighting can be used for at least two purposes: to deal with non-proportional designs (such as SWVES) and to deal with differential response rates. As we will see in the next section, the target shortfalls are adjusted by the weighting procedure in the same way that differential response rates are compensated for in the weighting.

Table 9: Sampling outcomes for Victoria: counts by industry and workplace size

Industry	Workplace size (employee numbers)				Total
	5-9	10-19	20-99	100+	
Manufacturing	14	61	100	46	221
Electricity, gas and water	2	3	5	4	14
Construction	4	10	25	3	42
Wholesale trade	8	18	25	5	56
Retail trade	10	11	33	8	62
Accommodation, cafes etc	8	6	19	5	38
Transport	3	13	25	2	43
Communication	5	6	6	5	22
Finance	1	4	13	6	24
Business & property services	7	19	29	15	70
Government admin & defence	1	1	11	17	30
Education	1	7	19	23	50
Health and community services	9	9	19	14	51
Cultural and rec services	5	8	18	11	42
Personal services	6	12	13	4	35
Total	84	188	360	168	800

Source: SWVES

Weighting

As discussed in the first part of the report, weighting is used to produce population estimates from survey sample counts. The 'expansion' weights created serve to adjust for both sample design and differential response rates. Unlike the SWVHS, the SWVES was based on a complex sample design using non-proportional stratification and this involved both under-sampling and over-sampling. For these reasons it is particularly important that population

estimates are always generated using the appropriate workplace weights. Unlike the SWVHS where the weights were constructed by an iterative process, in the SWVES the weights simply reflected the ratio between the cells in the population matrix (of industry by workplace size) and the corresponding cells in the sample matrix. In other words, the corresponding cells in Tables 5 and 9 shown above. These ratios (which become the workplace weights) are shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Workplace weights

Industry	Workplace size (employee numbers)				Total
	5-9	10-19	20-99	100+	
Manufacturing	266.64	40.02	22.93	13.26	41.07
Electricity, gas and water	34.00	19.00	14.60	9.75	16.93
Construction	598.75	77.90	16.92	14.00	86.64
Wholesale trade	437.00	83.83	37.64	24.20	108.34
Retail trade	825.3.	238.27	41.15	45.00	203.10
Accommodation, cafes etc	300.25	195.83	49.26	12.20	120.37
Transport	423.33	41.69	19.48	41.00	55.37
Communication	33.00	21.50	32.33	11.60	24.82
Finance	1,193.00	171.50	35.00	15.67	101.17
Business & property services	686.57	100.26	47.83	16.53	119.23
Government admin & defence	218.00	185.00	35.73	10.59	32.53
Education	837.00	134.29	67.89	7.70	64.88
Health and community services	350.33	146.89	51.32	17.21	111.59
Cultural and rec services	204.60	55.13	24.67	5.45	46.86
Personal services	251.67	44.25	36.77	15.25	73.71
Total	410.98	81.19	33.69	14.49	80.43

Source: ABS Business Register, September 1998, Business Location Counts for Victoria

Standard errors and design effects

The population estimates provided by sample surveys are always subject to a margin of error (termed the 'sampling error'). This results from the fact that were the same questionnaire administered to a different sample, the estimates would vary slightly. However, if such a survey were administered repeatedly (and the surveys were all genuine probability surveys), the mean estimate across all of these surveys would be equal to the 'true' population mean. In practice, no one ever repeatedly administers a survey, but statistical theory makes use of this phenomenon

to provide a method for calculating the extent of sampling error in any particular survey. The sampling error is expressed in terms of 'standard errors' and 'confidence intervals'. If we are using a 95 per cent confidence interval, for example, we can be confident that if we continued to sample over and over again, in 95 per cent of those samples we would find that the 'true' population value would lie within two standard errors of the estimate provided by our sample. In other words, for any particular survey, a margin of error exists around all the population estimates made from the sample, but we can calculate what that margin of error is.

The extent of sampling error (the standard error) depends on two main factors:

1. sample size; and
2. variability within the sample.

One can reduce the standard errors by increasing the sample size and/or reducing the amount of variability in the sample. Reduction of variability is one of the main reasons for using stratified sample designs. (The other factor which influences the size of the standard error is the finite population correction factor (fpc), but this is only influential when the sample constitutes a large fraction of the population, a fairly rare phenomenon in labour market and workplace surveys).

In practice, one rarely uses simple random sampling because of the need to stratify and (sometimes) cluster. In some cases, multistage sampling procedures are also used. A sample of workplaces might be drawn (based on stratification) and then a sample of employees within those workplaces might be selected using simple random sampling (this was the approach of the employee survey in AWIRS).

Whenever the sample design departs from a simple random sample (SRS), a 'design effect' (deff) comes into play (Kish 1965, p. 258). The deff is essentially the ratio between the estimated variance in the SRS design (without replacement) and the estimated variance from the more complex sample design (Stata Corporation 2001, vol 4, p. 72). If the deff is below one, then the standard errors in the sample design used are actually less than would have been achieved using a SRS. In practice, the deff is usually greater than one, and this means that the standard errors are greater (by that ratio) than would be the case in a survey that had been based on SRS. In AWIRS 95, for example, the median deff for the main workplace survey was 1.7 and for the employee survey it was 1.3 (AWIRS 1997).

Each variable in the survey has a particular deff associated with it. Some statistical software (eg. Stata and SUDAAN) allows for the calculation of exact standard errors (which take account of the deff)

each time a table is created, but most statistical software does not provide this facility. In the absence of such software, the user of the SWVES dataset has two options. Making use of the median deff for the dataset (discussed below), the user may:

- multiply all standard errors produced by the software (eg. SPSS) by the median deff, and then recalculate confidence intervals (or t-values or z-values in regression result); or
- calculate a revised weight (sometimes called an 'effective sample size' weight) which incorporates the median deff as a reduction factor. This was the approach taken by AWIRS. The steps for this are straightforward:
 1. divide the weight provided in the dataset by 80.4325 (that is, 64,346/800) to remove the 'expansion' component, leaving a set of weights which will sum to 800, the original sample size.
 2. divide this new weight by the median deff to create an effective sample size weight. These weights will now sum to (800 divided by the median deff).

(This procedure is slightly different when using a sub-set of the data, for example, workplaces with 20 or more employees. See the discussion below).

It is important to keep in mind that the deff has no relevance to the actual Point estimates calculated by statistical software, things like means, proportions, percentages and regression coefficients. It only affects the precision of these estimates, that is, the standard errors that are attached to these point estimates. The deff will influence the size of the confidence intervals around the point estimates, and it will influence whether the variables in a regression are statistically significant or not.

In the case of the SWVES, two median design effects have been calculated using Stata. One of these applies to the entire sample, the other to those workplaces with 20 or more employees. Using a selection of 72 variables:

- for the entire sample, the median deff was 3.7; and
- for a sub-set of workplaces – those with 20 or more employees – the median deff was 1.2.

The reason for this division is that the deff is much larger for the entire sample by virtue of the inclusion of small workplaces (those in the 5 to 19 employee size band). In creating the weights, small workplaces were allocated quite large weights (sometimes as large as 800 to 1100) in order to adjust for their under-sampling in the sample design (which was a stratified, non-proportional random sample design, as discussed earlier). As Kalton notes, when discussing this kind of sample design: ‘When a marked variation in weights is needed to adjust for unequal selection probabilities, a substantial loss in precision can result.’ (1983, p. 77). In other words, a large deff is inevitable if there is considerable non-proportionality in the sample design.

It is important to keep in mind that in the population of Victorian workplaces, some 49,785 workplaces fall into the small size category (ie. 5 to 19 employees). Yet in SWVES, this population of small workplaces was represented by just 272 respondents in the sample. This under-sampling is an inevitable part of any survey design that attempts to capture a wide range of phenomena (such as workplace sizes). The oversampling of the large workplaces is the other side of the coin, and is equally justified by the need to gain precision in the estimates for these fewer number of workplaces. In other words, a large design effect does not imply weaknesses in sampling, field work, or any other aspect of the survey. It simply reflects the ambitions of the survey team to capture small workplaces as well as medium and large workplaces.

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