



success through diversity
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He Pānui mō ngā Take Mahi me ngā Take Oranga

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Where work and family collide

The effects of stress spillover from work to family and vice versa have been investigated in a study which forms part of a major Foundation of Research, Science and Technology project, known as the Work-Family Transactions project, which is being conducted from the University of Waikato

The study was undertaken by Paula Brough (now at Griffith University, Queensland) and Anouk Kelling (of Victoria University) and involved 371 employed women completing a questionnaire which asked them about:

- the relationship between their work and family life,
- the impact of having a partner on their sense of control at home and
- the effect of having a partner on whether they feel supported by their family.

The research was undertaken in recognition that women are increasingly playing dual roles as mothers and household managers and in the paid workforce. It

investigates the interdependence of women's work and non-work roles and the conflicting demands between these roles.

The study found that women who were caring for children on their own were most likely to be under psychological strain and to be affected by the conflicting demands of work and family life. It also showed that, to some extent, partners had a positive effect on psychological well-being, while the number of dependents was related to levels of family→work conflict. Importantly, however, women reported both positive and negative spillover between their job and family lives.

A more comprehensive description of the study is being published in the *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, June 2002. Further information on the Work-Family Transactions project can be obtained from Prof. Michael O'Driscoll, Department of Psychology, University of Waikato. m.odriscoll@waikato.ac.nz

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Maximising the value of your membership

If you're an EEO Employers Group member and would like others such as line managers or supervisors to get enthusiastic about work and life issues, feel free to forward the Bulletin PDF onto other people in your workplace or print it out and distribute it around your workplace. Don't forget that the *Work & Life Bulletin* is available only to members, subscribers and some key influencers so please don't distribute it outside your organisation.

Age and unemployment – a challenging combination

A study by Professor Judy McGregor and Lance Gray of Massey University has shown that mature job seekers energetically look for employment but face barriers of ageism and societal perceptions that youth is best. The study also showed that the emotional consequences for mature unemployed people can be severe.

As our understanding of work/life issues deepens, we are becoming aware of the challenges facing those with caring responsibilities for their parents. Employees whose parent(s) are unemployed may also be facing the challenge of assisting their parent(s) practically and emotionally.

Here, Professor McGregor describes the study.

Mature job seekers face a number of barriers in their job search including perceptions of inflexibility, an inability to learn, not having the right skills or having skills that are now redundant. The primary barrier mature job seekers felt they faced, however, was their age. Mature job seekers suggested that there was a strong perception that younger people were cheaper to employ and that younger people should be given a chance.

The study was undertaken by conducting brief questionnaires with 954 people over 40-years-old at Mature Employment Support Agencies (MESA) in Invercargill, Christchurch, Lower Hutt, Palmerston North and Whangarei from November 2000 to May 2001. Participation was voluntary and participants were informed that MESA staff were collecting the data on behalf of Massey University.

A key point of the data collection was to identify active job seekers rather than those who had effectively retired. Present government policy means that job seekers over 55 years are not subject to the “work-

test” and are therefore not required to actively seek a job in order to receive a benefit.

More than 85% of the respondents described their emotional experience of unemployment. As a result, we created a “trajectory of emotion” as detailed by mature job seekers. The trajectory of emotion begins with “shocked” and describes the shock of exiting the paid workforce. Further on mature job seekers attempt to “adjust” to unemployment with many experiencing bouts of “optimism” “boredom” and “indifference”. Others began expressing a nagging “worry” that they were never going to get work. Others still were beginning to feel “guilty” and “stressed” by their lack of employment. At its worst mature job seekers were expressing “depression” and “suicidal” thoughts.

A point that cannot be overstated is that in New Zealand paid employment is a significant aspect of our identity. To question the work ethic of many mature job seekers in the present study was regarded by them as demeaning. Policy agencies need to heed the social and emotional costs of mature unemployment.

There have been some reports that the ageing workforce could lead to some form of inter-generational tension yet mature job seekers themselves supported younger workers and were more interested in having their own skills and contribution recognised by employers and recruitment agencies.

How do they look for work?

The questionnaires asked people which job search sources they had used in recent attempts to gain employment. The results showed that mature job seekers tended to use formal sources like job advertisements and contact with agencies such as Mature



Employment Support and WINZ.

Searching the Internet, telephoning to make an appointment with an organisation and door-knocking were used less often and there was little difference in the findings by gender. The job search literature suggests more emphasis on the informal approaches to employers (building networks) and using friends and family for leads. Why mature workers tend to use formal sources can only be speculated upon.

The study's findings contradicted international speculation that mature job seekers may not be as active in their job-seeking as younger job seekers. Mature job seekers are, in fact, vigorous in their attempts to look for work.

When the sample of mature job seekers was split into two groups aged 40-55 years and 56 years and over, it was found that the older age group looked for work just as hard as the younger group. When the sample was examined with regard to gender there was again no meaningful difference.

What affects job search effort?

Two factors stand out with regard to how much effort mature job seekers put into their job search: (1) the amount of time they have been out of work, and (2) why they became mature job seekers in the first place.

Time out of work slowly but surely destroys confidence and motivation to keep looking for work. For up to six months, mature job seekers are able to sustain a high level of job-searching effort. That is, they are able to use as many as five job search sources such as answering job advertisements, registering with MESA, contacting WINZ, sending out CVs and trying friends and family. Unfortunately an examination of those who have been out of work for long periods will show many without formal qualifications; a problem for all older age groups.

The connection between job search

effort and why people become job seekers in the first place has been little explored internationally and represents a significant first for this New Zealand study. In particular, the findings showed that those who were made compulsorily redundant looked for work much harder than those who were returning after taking early retirement or seeking work for the first time. Shock at involuntary job loss and shame about unemployment may be factors in the job-search intensity of many mature workers made compulsorily redundant.

What about Pacific Island job seekers?

To obtain the views of mature Pacific Island job seekers, a series of four focus groups were conducted with 69 Tongan, Cook Island and Samoan mature job seekers in South Auckland.

The barriers to employment for these mature job seekers were more fundamental given the significant decline in manufacturing and subsequent loss of unskilled jobs in Auckland and the rest of New Zealand in the late 1980s. Consequently the concerns of this cohort of job seekers is likely to be very different from that of their children.

For mature Pacific Island job seekers key barriers were their written and spoken English skills with many commenting that they could not confidently represent themselves through CVs, and most importantly, the interview situation.

Other barriers emphasised a lack of skills that was not helped by training certificates that were seen as essentially worthless. Many of this sample of mature job seekers were keen to emphasise that they were more encouraged by the future of their children than with their own job-seeking circumstance.

For a copy of the Mature Job Seekers in New Zealand report go to www.eeotrust.org.nz/information/maturejob.shtml.



Children's opinions helpful to working parents

A recent Australian report of research into the experiences of children whose parents are in paid work concludes that parents should talk to their children about issues of work and family.

The report's authors, V. Lewis, K. Hand and J. Tudball, say: "Children have opinions about whether the amount of time that parents can spend with them feels like enough, and they have opinions about what they would like to do in the time that parents are available to them."

They says these opinions are not easily predicted by the hours the parents work and question whether time spent together is the key variable.

The research was conducted by interviewing 69 parents and 71 children from 47 families in Melbourne. The children were aged between eight and 21. The interview schedule was based on Ellen Galinsky's (1991) quantitative questionnaire, restructured for the Australian context and with some additional material. (See *Work & Life Bulletin*, October 2001 for a summary of some of Galinsky's work.)

Topics covered included the family's daily routine, time spent together, the children's knowledge of their parent's work and the perceived impact of work on family.

The researchers found that for the children there was no strong and direct correspondence between the time their parents worked and their satisfaction with their relationships with their parents. And for parents too, their opinion about whether they spent enough time with their children was not necessarily related to their time at paid work.

Just under half the parents said they would like more time with their children and, of those parents working full-time, about two-thirds said they would like more time with their children.

Very few of the children reported:

- that they had trouble getting their parents to focus on them,
- having to wait for their parents because of their work, or
- that their parents worked at home in a way that made them unavailable.

Similarly very few parents reported that work interfered with their capacity to pay attention to their children.

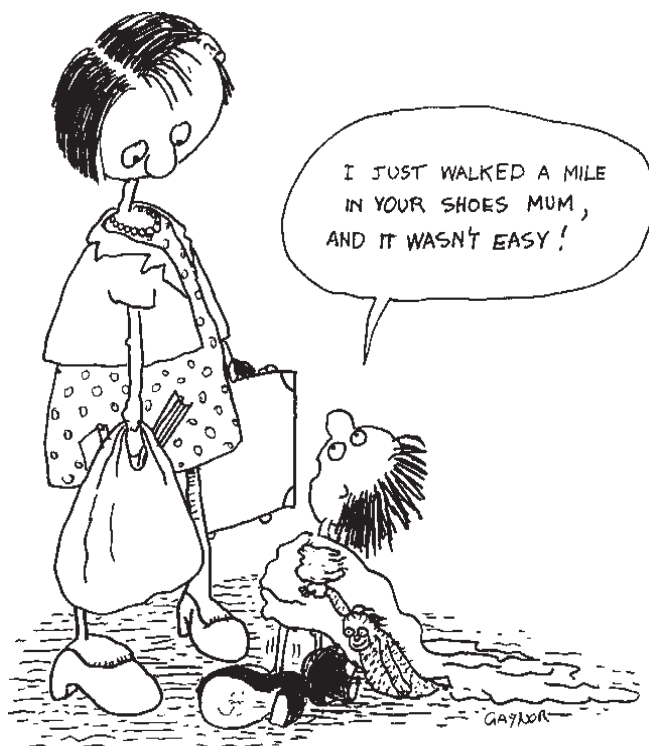
The authors say the question that needs to be addressed is whether the family is functioning well. "There is every indication from most of the families interviewed for this study that it is possible to function well in a wide variety of circumstances."

They say the children were very adaptable and most of the parents were pursuing strategies that make their families function well within the constraints they face.

"Many parents need to be less critical of themselves, and feel less guilty about the way that they are navigating work and family.

Family and Work: The Family's Perspective, Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra (2001).

[www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/family/family and work.htm](http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/family/family%20and%20work.htm)



Training kit for recruiters

A new training kit for recruitment professionals is now available on the EEO Trust website. Called Tools For Tapping Into Talent, the kit has been developed in response to the 2000 *Recruiting Talent* study which showed that recruiters can face pressure to discriminate from their clients and employers.



Family status is one of the prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Human Rights Act outlined in the training kit. Other work/life issues which affect employment options and the possibility of discrimination are also explored in the training kit.

The kit comes in six modules and is designed to be explored in in-house training sessions. It covers topics like the labour market of the future, how to manage clients who want to discriminate and how to give candidates useful feedback. It includes a range of case studies and scenarios which can be selected from to reflect the industry sector in which consultants mainly work.

Tools For Tapping Into Talent was developed by Top Drawer Consultants and funded by the Government's EEO Contestable Fund.

Go to www.eeotrust.org.nz/tools to download the kit for free or order it from the EEO Trust for \$15 (admin@eeotrust.org.nz).

Mother's Day snapshot

- There are 900,000 mothers in New Zealand, that's around a quarter of the population. Each year 56,000 women start or add to their family by giving birth.
- New Zealand women are having fewer children and giving birth later in life. The average age of giving birth is 29.4 years, four years older than the norm one generation back.
- Today's grandmothers (born in the early 1950s) averaged 2.5 children. Today's new mothers are likely to average less than two children.
- New Zealand women are having more multiple births. Around one in 65 will have twins and one in 2,000 will have triplets, compared to one in 100 and one in 10,000 respectively 30 years ago.
- The highest fertility rates are recorded in Northland and Gisborne with around 2.5 children per mother. Otago has the lowest rate at 1.54.
- More than 100,000 mothers are the only parent in the family, caring for 208,851 dependent children.

Paid parental leave arrives

The new paid parental leave legislation takes effect for parents taking leave to care for babies due, born or adopted on or after July 1. Under the Government's new scheme eligible parents will receive up to \$325 per week to replace wages for the first 12 weeks of parental leave.

For national and international background information on paid parental leave go to www.eeotrust.org.nz. The Employment Relations Service had developed a paid parental leave entitlement calculator for employers and employees at www.ers.dol.govt.nz/parentalleave.

Parental leave video

Educational Resources is launching a video in July to explain to employers the new paid parental leave provision, their responsibilities and the application process for employees. On the video, New Zealand businesses will share how they approach parental leave and the business benefits of being a family-friendly workplace for employees returning to work after parental leave.

Educational Resources say this new video will be suitable for general managers, human resources managers and trainers, demonstrating how parental leave can be used as an effective human resources tool. This 20 minute video will cost \$55 + GST and can be ordered through the Educational Resources (04) 801 7066 or enquiries@edresources.co.nz.

A Case in Point

Flexible hours in Australia

A recent decision by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal confirms that Australian employers cannot deny an employee's request to work flexible hours by raising a cloud of remote "possibilities" as to why it would be "inconvenient". The Tribunal agreed that Ms Schou, a sub-editor of Hansard, had been indirectly discriminated against on the basis of her caring responsibilities by her employer's failure to implement an agreed plan of action to enable her to work partly at home.

Co-director of Australian organisation WORK+LIFE Strategies, Juliet Bourke, says the case shows that Australia is leading the way in supporting employees with caring responsibilities. "We have introduced legislation federally and in the majority of states explicitly protecting carers/parents from discrimination in employment. Moreover our Tribunals have developed a robust body of case law supportive of flexible work practices to enable employees to care for family members."

Upcoming Events

EEO Trust Work & Life Awards

The presentation dinner for the EEO Trust Work & Life Awards, sponsored by Blackmores Ltd, will be held on Thursday August 22 at the Crowne Plaza Auckland. The Prime Minister, Rt Hon Helen Clark has been asked to present these prestigious Awards again this year.

This event is a must for anyone interested in the progress New Zealand organisations are making on work/life issues. It is an excellent opportunity to network with peers, celebrate with the winners and find out more about best New Zealand best practice in work/life. For more information go to www.eeotrust.org.nz/news/events.php or email admin@eeotrust.org.nz.

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Women, Management and Employment Relations Conference

Speakers at this Sydney conference on 25-26 July include chair of the UK's Equal Opportunities Commission, Julie Mellor and EEO Trust Executive Director, Trudie McNaughton. EEO Employers Group members are being offered a discounted registration fee of A\$1,300. More information at www.gsm.mq.edu.au/eelcpm.

Work/Life Issues: Making a Difference to People and the Bottom Line

Work/Life Issues conferences are being held in Melbourne and Canberra on 1 and 5 August respectively. This is a similar conference as was held in Sydney on 14 March this year. A 10% discount is being offered to EEO Employers Group members. Standard cost is \$795+GST. More information tel: 00 61 2 9233 6118.

Working time today: threats and opportunities for business, family and community life

This conference is being held in Sydney on August 16. EEO Employers Group members are being offered a 15% reduction on the conference fee of A\$595. For more information email acirrt@econ.usyd.edu.au.

Please Read On...

Flexible Employment

This publication by the Work and Age Trust explores and summarises the challenges and benefits of a wide range of flexible work options. Written for employers and employees, it includes case studies and guidance on how to set up individual arrangements. Download it from www.eeotrust.org.nz/worklife/index.shtml from the end of June. Funded by the Government's EEO Contestable Fund.

Family and work in Australia

The Autumn 2002 issue of the Australian publication *Family Matters* focuses specifically on issues of work and family. It includes articles on:

- Family-friendly workplaces particularly looking at the retail and public service sectors
- The implications of men working extended hours
- Fathers' views on family life and paid work
- A British study of the effects of long or unusual working hours on family life
- How single mothers combine paid work and child-rearing

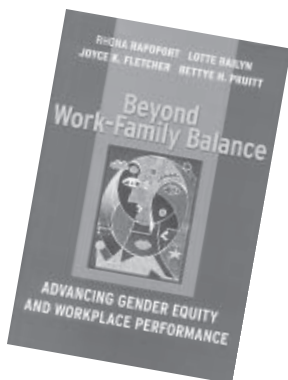
Family Matters is available from the Australian Institute of Family Studies, tel 00 61 3 9214 7888, www.aifs.org.au/

Designing a life that works

Fast Company magazine has collected a series of articles on work/life balance into this new American electronic booklet. Articles include

- *Are you on the right track*, practical advice and strategies for rebalancing work and life
- *A living or a life*, the experience of one person who escaped the rat-race,
- *Enough is enough*, the experiences of a group of people on a work/life training course
- *Are you deciding on purpose*, practical questions and advice by Richard Leider
- *Unit of one*, the personal experiences of business people who have confronted work/life issues

Download *The Work-Life Balance Guide: design a life that works* from www.amazon.com for US\$9.50.



Probing assumptions about work and home life

The authors of *Beyond Work-Family Balance* attempt to show that it is the deeply engrained separation of work and personal life that has limited people's ability to deal effectively with the conflict between the two. They suggest that the image of work/life "balance" is out-moded and a new approach of "integration" offers greater promise. They do this by looking at the underlying assumptions about men's and women's roles in family, community and paid work that give rise to gender inequity.

Authors: Rhona Rapoport, Lotte Bailyn, Joyce K. Fletcher, Bettye H. Pruitt. Published by Jossey-Bass in 2002. ISBN 0-7879-5730-5.

Different approaches to family-friendly workplaces

This new Australian report is the first large-scale analysis of the extent to which Australian employees have differential access to a range of family-friendly work practices.

It shows that people with high skills levels or those in whom their employer has invested training dollars are most likely to have access to these practices. The variations in access

were greater among employees working in the same workplace than between workplaces. Employees with dependent children were no more likely to have access to the options than childless employees.

The authors say that policy makers need to focus on increasing the availability of such practices within organisations to all employees who would benefit from them regardless of occupational status or training.

Family friendly work practices. Differences within and between workplaces by Matthew Gray and Jacqueline Tudball. Research report no. 7. Free download from www.aifs.org.au.

Creating a holistic approach to work and family

The authors of this electronic book say that despite the majority of American working families facing the challenge of integrating work and family life, American society suffers from a severe policy and institutional lag in this area. "While work and family have changed, the public and private policies and practices governing employment remain mired in the past, modelled on the ideal worker as a male breadwinner, with a supportive wife at home."

They suggest that work and family life requires well-informed and collaborative effort on the part of all the key actors that share interests and responsibilities for these issues, including employers, unions, professional associations and advocacy groups, government and communities.

Integrating work and family life – a holistic approach by Lotte Bailyn, Robert Drago, Thomas A. Kochan. Available from Susan Cass, MIT Sloan School of Management scass@mit.edu.

Working your way through pregnancy

This Australian booklet is available for free from www.dewr.gov.au/workplacerelements/publications. It is intended for employers and employees and describes their rights and responsibilities around pregnancy. The New Zealand Human Rights Commission is currently working on a pregnancy guidelines publication which is due out in August.

How working families cope

Another American publication, *Working Families, The transformation of the American home*, explores how working families manage and how children respond to the demands of their parents' lives. The chapters were contributed by leading American scholars. Edited by Rosanna Hertz and Nancy L. Marshall, published by University of California Press in 2001. ISBN 0-520-22222-9.

