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Australia

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Population	2004	19.9 million
Total Fertility Rate	2000-05	1.7
GDP per capita	2004	US\$30,331
Female economic activity	2004	56.1 per cent
As % male rate	2004	79 per cent
% of employed working part time (ECLC)		
Men	2005	No data
Women	2005	No data
Employment gender gap (full-time equivalent) (ECI)	2005	No data
Employment rate		
Mothers	2003	No data
Fathers	2003	No data
Employment impact of parenthood	2005	No data
Gender-related Development Index		3 rd
Gender Empowerment Measure		8 th
Access to regulated ECEC services		
Children 0-2 years	2005	29 per cent
Children 3-5 years (inclusive)	2005	70 per cent

NB Australia is a federal state

1. Current leave and other employment-related policies to support parents

Note on federal and state awards: In Australia, the employment conditions of employees have traditionally been detailed in *awards*, which are usually occupational or industry-based prescriptive documents determined by industrial tribunals. Historically, Australia has had a different state-based industrial relations system for each of its six States, as well as a federal system. Federal awards usually applied to employees working for companies with similar operations in more than one State, while State awards covered company operations operating in a single State. Traditionally, the federal system has set the standard for conditions, with State systems usually ratifying federal decisions shortly afterwards. Until recently,

approximately 40 per cent of employees were covered by the federal system, 40 per cent by the State systems, with the remaining 20 per cent falling outside the award system, usually because of being in managerial positions.

However, amendments to the federal Workplace Relations Act in December 2005 have significantly reduced the coverage of the State systems, bringing into the federal sphere all employees working for incorporated businesses (i.e. those falling within the federal government's constitutional power over 'corporations'). In addition, these changes and the associated 'award rationalisation' process will reduce the number of awards and the matters they are able to address, as well as reduce award coverage through prioritisation of individual and collective bargaining and removal of overlapping coverage of awards and agreements.

a. Statutory maternity leave

Maternity leave in Australia is conflated with the statutory entitlement to 52 weeks' unpaid Parental leave that can be shared between a mother and her spouse (see below). The portion of this parental leave entitlement taken by the mother is referred to in the legislation as 'maternity leave' (Workplace Relations Act, s265-s281). Since amendments to the Act in 2005, the mother must take six weeks' 'maternity leave' immediately following the birth of her child (s273).

While there is no general entitlement to paid Maternity leave, some employees have access to this through industrial awards or workplace agreements, company policies, or through legislation covering public sector employees. In response to a survey conducted in 2005, 41 per cent of female employees indicated they had access to paid Maternity leave in their main job, with prevalence considerably higher in public sector employment: 72 per cent of female employees in the public sector indicated that they had access, compared with 32 per cent in the private sector (ABS Employee Earnings, Benefits and Trade Union Membership Survey, August 2005, Cat. No. 6310.0, Table 12). Organisational data indicate that the prevalence of paid maternity leave has been increasing over recent years, with 46 per cent of large organisations surveyed by the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA) in 2005 providing paid maternity leave, compared with 23 per cent in 2001 (*Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Survey 2005: Paid Paternity Leave*, available through EOWA website, <http://www.eowa.gov.au/>). The amount of paid leave that is granted varies significantly across employers (see later comments).

b. Statutory paternity leave

As with Maternity leave, Paternity leave in Australia overlaps with the statutory entitlement to 52 weeks' unpaid Parental leave that can be shared between a mother and her spouse. The portion of this Parental leave entitlement taken by a man when his spouse gives birth is referred to in the legislation as 'paternity leave', and is formally divided into 'short paternity leave' (up to one week at the time of the birth) and 'long paternity leave' (leave taken as the child's 'primary carer') (Workplace Relations Act, s282-s297). While short Paternity leave can be taken simultaneously with the mother's Maternity leave, long Paternity leave cannot, and the total period of Parental leave shared between the parents cannot exceed 52 weeks. Following recent amendments that require a mother to take six weeks' Maternity leave immediately following the birth of her child, the maximum period of leave available to her spouse to use as Paternity leave has been reduced.

There is no general entitlement to paid Paternity leave, but some company policies and industrial agreements do provide a period of paid leave for fathers. In response to a survey conducted in 2005, 32 per cent of male employees indicated they had access to paid paternity leave in their main job. As with paid Maternity leave, prevalence was higher in public sector employment, even though the various legislative provisions for public sector employees focus on maternity rather than paternity leave. Fifty-eight per cent of male employees in the public sector indicated that they had access, compared with 27 per cent in the private sector (ABS Employee Earnings, Benefits and Trade Union Membership Survey, August 2005, Cat. No. 6310.0, Table 12). Organisational data indicate that the prevalence of paid paternity leave has been increasing over recent years, with 32 per cent of large organisations responding to the 2005 EOWA survey mentioned above providing paid paternity leave, compared with 15 per cent in 2001. The amount of paid leave that is granted varies significantly across employers (see later comments).

c. Parental leave

Note: As discussed above, Parental leave in Australia is a shared entitlement that overlaps with Maternity and Paternity leave; all three terms refer to the one entitlement.

Length of leave

- Fifty-two weeks per family around the birth or adoption of a child. A woman can start to take leave up to six weeks before her baby is due. Except for the week following the birth of the child when both parents may take parental leave, the remainder of the leave may only be taken by one or other parent (the child's nominated primary care provider). Under recent amendments, a mother must take six weeks of the 52-week entitlement immediately following the birth.

- Parental leave can be taken sequentially with other types of paid leave, such as annual leave or long service leave (or paid maternity/parental leave, if it is available to the employee through their employment conditions). However, for each period of paid leave used, the unpaid parental leave entitlement is reduced by the same amount so that the maximum time available for parental leave is still 52 weeks.
- A decision of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission on 8 August 2005 in the Family Provisions Test Case provided employees on federal awards with the right to request from their employer the following extensions to the above entitlements:
 - a period where both parents may take simultaneous unpaid parental leave up to a maximum of eight weeks (currently one week);
 - a further continuous period of unpaid parental leave not exceeding 12 months (from the current 12 months) – that is, a maximum of two years all up;
 - return to work from a period of parental leave on a part-time basis until the child reaches school age.
- While the 2005 amendments to the federal Workplace Relations Act did not adopt these extended entitlements, they may be passed on to employees under the State-based systems through the State-based award system or enacted in relevant State-based legislation (see Section 1, 'note on federal and state awards'). This has already occurred to some extent. However, recent changes to the federal Act mean that only a small proportion of employees will receive these benefits, as most employees previously covered by State awards have now been brought into the federal jurisdiction.

Payment

- None for statutory provisions under the federal Act. Where paid leave is offered (for example, under company policies, industrial agreements or legislative provisions for public sector employees) duration of such leave varies, with the most common provisions for paid maternity leave being six or 12 weeks and for paid paternity leave one or two weeks. The rate of pay is typically the employee's normal pay rate, although in some cases there are provisions to double the duration by taking the leave at half-pay.

Flexibility in use

- None for statutory provisions under the federal Act. See above for possible variations in duration and pay where a period of paid leave is available.

Eligibility (e.g. related to employment or family circumstances)

- Employees in permanent positions (full-time or part-time) are eligible for the above entitlements provided they have 12 months' continuous service with the same employer by the expected date of the birth of the child.

- Casual employees are also eligible for the above entitlements provided they have been engaged by a particular employer for a sequence of periods of employment during a period of at least 12 months and, but for the birth or adoption of a child, would have a reasonable expectation of continuing engagement. Since amendments to the Workplace Relations Act in 2005 all such 'eligible casuals' have a statutory right to unpaid parental leave. In the States of New South Wales and Queensland, this right preceded the changes made to the federal Act for those meeting the relevant States' eligibility criteria and falling under the jurisdiction of those States' industrial relations laws.

Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g. multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; lone parent); or delegation of leave to person other than the parents

- Special maternity leave may be taken in cases of pregnancy-related illness or miscarriage within 28 weeks of the expected date of delivery. Any leave taken for a pregnancy-related illness must be subtracted from the total entitlement to parental/maternity leave.

Additional note (e.g. if leave payments are often supplemented by collective agreements; employer exclusions or rights to postpone)

- Paid parental leave, usually specified as maternity or paternity leave, is available in some awards or workplace agreements and/or company policies. In these situations conditions might be attached, such as a requirement to return to work before receiving some or all of the payment or a guarantee to return for at least a period equivalent to the leave taken. Such conditions do not appear to be common. For example, among respondents to the 2005 *Parental Leave in Australia Survey* who had taken some paid maternity leave, around 5 per cent reported that some or all of their pay was delayed until their return to work.

d. Statutory childcare leave or career breaks

No general statutory entitlement.

e. Other statutory employment-related measures

Adoption leave and pay

- The same statutory rights apply as to parental leave when a child under five years old is adopted.

Time off for the care of dependants

- All employees have access to a period of paid personal/carer's leave equivalent to one twenty-sixth of their nominal annual hours (ten days' leave for a regular full-time employee). In addition, employees can access up to two days' unpaid carer's leave for each 'permissible occasion' provided paid personal leave has not been exhausted. Personal/carer's leave includes 'sick' leave and may be taken because of a personal illness, or to provide care or support to a member of the employee's

immediate family or household who is ill or injured, or in the case of an unexpected family emergency.

Flexible work arrangements.

- Some parents covered by State provisions have a right to request part-time work upon returning to work from parental leave until their child reaches school age.

2. Changes in leave policy and other related developments since 2004 (including proposals currently under discussion)

The previous section has documented some recent changes to leave policy arising out of amendments to the federal Workplace Relations Act in December 2005 and State-level responses to the 2005 decision of the Family Provisions Test Case. No other changes in leave policy are currently under formal discussion, although there has been a series of inquiries, reports and test cases in recent years.

The government introduced a one-off 'Maternity Payment' for children born after 30 June 2004, replacing the earlier Maternity Allowance and Baby Bonus. The Maternity Payment began as a lump-sum of A\$3,000 per child (approximately €1,875), rising to A\$4,000 in July 2006 (approximately €2,500) and A\$5,000 (approximately €3,125) in July 2008. The allowance is paid irrespective of a mother's employment status prior to the birth of the child. If spread evenly over a 14-week period, the 2006 allowance of A\$4,000 is approximately 70 per cent of the Standard Federal Minimum Wage as at the end of 2006, and around 37 per cent of average female adult full-time weekly earnings at that time.

While the pursuit of paid Maternity leave lost some momentum following these changes, other advances in leave policy and flexibility in working time on return to work were pursued in 2004, when the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), with 46 affiliated trade unions, brought its Family Provisions Test Case (or as it is colloquially known, the Work and Family Test Case) before the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC). The test case included the following claims:

- an employee right to unpaid Parental leave of up to 104 weeks (an increase from the previous 52 weeks), plus a right to an unbroken period of eight weeks' simultaneous unpaid leave for both parents at the time of the birth or placement of the child (previously one week);
- consultation with an employee during periods of Parental leave about any significant workplace changes and their effect on the employee's position;

- an employee right to work on a part-time basis after Parental leave for specified periods until the child reaches school-age;
- an employee right to request, and employer obligation to avoid unreasonable refusal of, a variation in working arrangements such as hours, times and place of work; and
- an employee right to request further periods of unpaid leave in conjunction with annual leave or to purchase up to six weeks' unpaid leave and an employer obligation to avoid unreasonable refusal of such requests.

The ACTU's position was strenuously opposed by the major employer associations and by the Australian Government.

In reaching its decision on 8 August 2005 on this test case, the AIRC provided employees on federal awards with the right to request from their employer the following extensions to the pre-existing parental leave entitlements:

- an extension of the period of unpaid Parental leave parents could take simultaneously up to a maximum of eight weeks (previously one week);
- an extension of the period of unpaid Parental leave by a further continuous period of leave not exceeding 12 months (that is, up to 24 months from the previous 12 months);
- return from a period of Parental leave on a part-time basis until the child reaches school age.

The employer was required to consider the request having regard to the employee's circumstances and, provided the request was genuinely based on the employee's parental responsibilities, could only refuse the request on reasonable grounds related to the effect on the workplace or the employer's business. Such grounds could include cost, lack of adequate replacement staff, loss of efficiency and the impact on customer service.

A conciliated outcome was also reached between the industrial parties around the ACTU's claims for unpaid emergency leave for employees to deal with emergency situations and carers leave. This agreement was subsequently ratified by the AIRC as part of its final decision, which included the following conditions:

- access of up to ten days of personal leave per annum (an increase from the previous five days per annum) for the purposes of caring for immediate family or household members who are sick and require care and support or who require care due to an unexpected emergency, with specified evidentiary requirements;
- where all paid personal leave entitlements have been exhausted, unpaid personal leave to be used to care for immediate family or

- household members who are sick and require care and support or who require care due to an unexpected emergency, with the employer and employee to agree on the period of this leave;
- in the absence of agreement between the employer and employee about the period of unpaid personal leave to be taken, an employee could take-up to 16 hours (i.e. two days) of unpaid personal leave per occasion, provided that specified evidentiary requirements are met.

All these decisions arrived at in the Family Provisions Test Case were subsequently overtaken by changes to industrial relations legislation passed by the Federal Parliament in December 2005. This legislative initiative (referred to as 'Work Choices') significantly changed the nature of regulation of the Australian labour market, leaving all but a core set of minimum entitlements to be negotiated directly between employers and employees at the workplace. Most of the extended parental leave entitlements provided for in the AIRC's decision earlier in the year were not given effect in the legislation. Only the previously existing entitlements of 12 months unpaid Parental leave and one week of simultaneous leave following the birth of the child were retained as universal entitlements, although these provisions were formally extended to 'eligible' casual employees (as defined earlier). Employees who are currently covered by award entitlements (approximately 20 per cent of all employees) will retain the new higher entitlements; however, it is anticipated that the number of award employees will continue to decrease over time (as it has for the last 15 years) as employees move to individual or collective agreements, and as that occurs these higher entitlements will need to be negotiated along with all others outside the core set of minima.

The institutional changes also effectively abolished the State-based industrial relations systems for all except government employees and those not in 'incorporated' businesses in those systems, bringing close to 90 per cent of employees under the newly deregulated federal system. The Federal Government introduced these changes on the grounds that they would provide employers and employees with the means to determine the most appropriate work and family arrangements for their particular circumstances, as well as increased productivity and improved employment opportunities.

Besides these legislative changes, there have been two inquiries of note in the area of work and family that have been under way since the beginning of 2005. First, the Sex Discrimination Commissioner (under the auspices of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission) undertook an inquiry to examine how gender roles in the area of unpaid caring work impact on the ability of men and

women to participate in paid work. The terms of reference for the Inquiry were to:

- identify existing systemic barriers in employment faced by men and women in balancing paid work and family responsibilities;
- identify how gender roles in unpaid caring work affect the participation of men and women in paid work;
- examine data on: men and women's access to current and proposed family-friendly employment provisions; community attitudes toward unpaid caring work; and the gender dimensions of efforts to achieve work and family balance; and
- examine legislation, policies, practices and services to ensure men and women are able to combine their paid work and family responsibilities.

The final report of the inquiry, *It's About Time: Women, Men, Work and Family*, was released on 7 March 2007. The main recommendations were:

- the introduction of a federal Family Responsibilities and Carers' Rights Act to provide protection from discrimination for employees with family and carer responsibilities;
- a legislated right for workers to request flexible work arrangements, with a corresponding duty on employers to reasonably consider these requests;
- introduction of a government-funded scheme providing 14 weeks' paid maternity leave, paid at the level of the minimum wage; and
- consideration of a more comprehensive scheme of paid parental leave including
 - a minimum of two weeks' paid paternity leave
 - the phased introduction of an additional 38 weeks' paid parental leave available to either parent.

The second development was a parliamentary inquiry into balancing work and family life. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Family and Human Services investigated ways in which the Australian Government could better help families balance their work and family responsibilities. The committee was particularly interested in:

- the financial, career and social disincentives to starting families;
- ways of making it easier for parents who so wish to return to the paid workforce; and
- the impact of taxation and other matters on families in the choices they make in balancing work and family life.

The Committee sought submissions and held public hearings and delivered its report in December 2006. Its most widely reported recommendations were for tax concessions around childcare, including removal of fringe benefits tax from employer provided childcare and making childcare expenses tax deductible for working parents. Other recommendations relating to the issue of returning to paid work were for:

- systematic collection of workplace level data;
- analysis of the effects of different types of industrial agreements on how employees balance work and family responsibilities;
- monitoring of flexible working in Australia and comparison with countries like the UK with 'right to request' provisions;
- a public campaign to highlight the benefits of family-friendly arrangements to managers and employees.

3. Take-up of leave

Until recently, Australia has had limited data on who has access to various types of leave, and even less information on who is accessing their entitlements and in what manner. This situation has now been addressed with the release in 2006 of figures on the availability and take-up of different leave arrangements around the birth of a child. Two surveys collected information on these and related issues. *The Parental Leave in Australia Survey*, conducted as part of Wave 1.5 of the Australian Government-funded *Growing Up in Australia – the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children*, collected information from parents with a child born between March 2003 and February 2004, focusing in particular on employment and leave arrangements prior to and following the child's birth. (This longitudinal study is managed by the Australian Institute of Family Studies – see www.aifs.gov.au/growingup/, and for an overview of the survey findings, see www.uq.edu.au/polsis/parental-leave). In addition, a supplementary labour force survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2005 (*Pregnancy and Employment Transitions*, Cat. No. 4193.0) collected information on employment and leave from mothers of children under two years of age.

a. Maternity leave

Data from *The Parental Leave in Australia Survey* show that 37 per cent of mothers who worked as employees in the 12 months prior to the birth of their child used some paid Maternity leave, although very few leave-takers (around 4 per cent) used paid Maternity leave only. Close to 60 per cent of mothers working as employees in the lead-up to the birth used some unpaid Maternity/Parental leave, with around one-quarter of leave-takers relying solely on this form of leave. Most of those who took leave combined paid and unpaid

forms, often combining unpaid Maternity leave with other forms of leave such as paid annual leave. The overall average duration of leave taken by mothers who worked as employees prior to the birth was 40 weeks. Of the total maternity leave taken by this group, around 27 per cent was paid. A small proportion of this paid Maternity leave was taken at less than full-time pay: 18 per cent of mothers taking some paid Maternity leave took their leave at a different pay rate, commonly at half-pay in order to double the leave time available. If all forms of leave are taken into consideration (that is, including 'non-maternity' forms of leave), around 29 per cent of the total leave taken was paid leave.

b. Paternity leave

Use of Paternity leave was, unsurprisingly, shown to be considerably lower than use of maternity leave. Around one-quarter of fathers of young children who worked as employees in the 12 months prior to the birth of their child used some *paid* Paternity leave, but less than 10 per cent used any *unpaid* Paternity/Parental leave. Fathers relied very heavily on the use of non-parental forms of leave, with the most prevalent form of leave used being paid annual leave. Fathers were much less likely than mothers to combine different forms of leave, and their overall average duration of leave across all leave types was two weeks. Of the total leave taken by fathers working as employees, around 88 per cent was paid.

c. Parental leave

Overall, 68 per cent of mothers of children born between March 2003 and February 2004, who worked as employees in the 12 months prior to their child's birth, used some leave designated as 'Parental' or 'Maternity' leave; while the corresponding figure for fathers was 30 per cent. For fathers in particular, usage of Parental leave thus falls well below access and eligibility, as the survey indicates that around 80 per cent of employees with newborn children (both mothers and fathers) met the basic eligibility criterion of 12 months' continuous service with an employer. Estimates of eligibility and access are of course considerably lower if the focus is broadened to all employed persons. According to the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey (fourth wave 2004), 60 per cent of employed persons say they (or their fellow workers) have access to Parental leave (although the question does not specify whether it is paid or unpaid). Parental leave is not available to self-employed workers and many casual workers; between them, these groups make up 40-45 per cent of those in employment.

d. Other employment-related measures

According to the HILDA survey, access to carer's leave currently stands at 68 per cent of employed persons (those without access are mainly self-employed and casual workers). In terms of usage, around 13 per cent of mothers of children born between March 2003 and February 2004 who returned to work as employees after the birth of their child reported using some carer's (or 'family' or 'special') leave. In addition, around 16 per cent of this group reported using some of their own sick leave to care for their child (*The Parental Leave in Australia Survey*). Overall, around 24 per cent used at least one of these forms of leave. Among fathers working as employees after the birth of the child: 21 used some of their own sick leave to help care for their child; 15 per cent used some carer's (or 'family' or 'special') leave; and around 30 per cent used at least one of these forms of leave. As discussed earlier, entitlements to carer's and sick leave are now combined in the personal leave entitlement under Australia's current legislation.

4. Research and publications on leave and other employment-related policies since January 2004

a. General overview

There has been some research around the issue of Maternity leave specifically and family-friendly policies generally in Australia since 2001. Much of this has been generated as a result of the work and family test case brought before the Australian Industrial Relations Commission in 2004, and also by the inquiries into paid maternity leave and into the gender division of paid and unpaid work conducted by the Sex Discrimination Commissioner (and published by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission). In addition, as noted above, new surveys have been conducted on the use of parental leave; and Wave 5 of the HILDA survey has also included increased information on parental leave compared to earlier waves.

b. Selected publications from January 2004, including results from research studies

Bittman, M., Hoffmann, S. and Thompson, D. (2004) *Men's Uptake of Family-friendly Employment Provisions (Policy Research Paper No.22)*. Canberra, ACT: Department of Family and Community Services. Available at

www.facs.gov.au/publications/research/prp22/contents.htm.

This report of research into men's uptake of family-friendly workplace provisions comprises two parts – a review of the literature in the area; and two case studies of companies that have introduced Family-Friendly policies into the workplace – and identifies barriers to men's use of available provisions.

Whitehouse, G. (2004) 'From family wage to parental leave: The changing relationship between arbitration and the family', *Journal of Industrial Relations*, Vol. 46, No. 4: 400-412.

This article examines how, from the establishment of a 'family wage' for men in the early 1900s through to ongoing test cases over parental leave in the early 2000s, the arbitration system has played a central role in shaping the policy framework affecting families and the intersection of market and domestic labour. Abandonment of the family wage and the protectionist environment, along with changing social values and labour force patterns, has recast the relationship between arbitration and the family over the course of the twentieth century; nevertheless, the wage-selling system continues to sustain a contemporary variant of the male breadwinner model and is playing a pivotal role in shaping parental employment rights into the twenty-first century.

Submissions to the Family Provisions Test Case. Available at:

www.e-airc.gov.au/familyprovisions/

This website details the Commission's final decision, as well as each of the submissions by interested parties and includes references to many other studies. Much of the background information for the ACTU's initial submission can be found in: Campbell, I. and Charlesworth, S. (2004), *Background Report: Key Work and Family Trends in Australia*. Melbourne: Centre for Applied Social Research, RMIT University.

Baird, M. and Cutcher L. (2005) "'One for the father, one for the mother and one for the country": an examination of the construction of motherhood through the prism of paid maternity leave', *Hecate*, Vol. 31, No. 1: 83-92.

This paper provides a categorisation of constructions of motherhood in Australia, including a view of the historical role of mothers in Australia as nation-builders. The authors argue that a social and historical understanding of these constructions provides insights into the Australian policy framework and helps explain the difficulties in moving towards a policy such as paid maternity leave in spite of marked changes in the labour force participation of Australian women and changing income arrangements in households.

Whitehouse, G., Baird, M. and Diamond, C. (2005) *The Parental Leave in Australia Survey*, funded by Australian Research Council Linkage Project LP0453613, and conducted in conjunction with Wave 1.5 of the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children.

This survey was distributed in May 2005 to a cohort of parents of children born between March 2003 and February 2004 (the 'infant cohort' of the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children), and was explicitly designed to address the lack of statistical information on the use of Parental leave in Australia, as well as inform analyses of

the influences on, and impact of, parental leave usage. Information was collected on parents' employment status prior to the birth of a child, their use and experiences of Maternity/Paternity/Parental leave and related policies, including reasons for using/not using leave provisions, employment status and experiences on return to work after the birth of a child, and parents' policy needs and preferences. Further information including a detailed report can be found on *The Parental Leave in Australia* website: www.uq.edu.au/polsis/parental-leave.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006) *Pregnancy and Employment Transitions, November 2005*, Cat. No. 4913.0.

This is a household survey conducted as a supplement to the labour force survey conducted in November 2005. It focuses on birth mothers with a natural child living with them who was under two years of age at the time of the survey. The information collected covers women's working hours during pregnancy, their use of leave associated with pregnancy and the birth of their child, and reasons for entering or not entering the workforce following the birth. Details of the work arrangements of the mother's partner, both before and after the birth, were also collected.

Pocock, B. (2006) *The Labour Market Ate May Babies*. Annandale, NSW: Federation Press.

This book examines the impact of current labour market arrangements on families and children, arguing that Australians' capacity to care is being undermined by the pressures of paid work. The author argues that a sustainable future needs new policy approaches to work and family life that incorporate the perspectives of children as well as adults.

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (2007) *It's about Time: Women, Men, Work and Family*. Sydney: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

This is the final report from an inquiry held into how gender roles in the area of unpaid caring work impact on the ability of men and women to participate in paid work.