

‘Organisational effectiveness and the flexible workplace’

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Professor Marian Baird, Women and Work Research Group, University of Sydney¹

I acknowledge the Ngunnawal people on whose land we are meeting - and their elders past and present.

Thank you Clare for the kind introduction

Thank you Liddy and Iain for inviting me to speak to you at breakfast – somewhat ironically perhaps, my topic is high performance and work-family/life spillover! So, thank *you* all for attending -I hope you can enjoy both your breakfast and what I have to say to you.

I will try to cover the four (huge) areas noted in the advertisement for this breakfast:

1. leading and supporting a flexible workplace
2. productivity and effectiveness in a flexible workplace
3. the changing face of the APS workforce
4. the organisational impacts of the work-life balance revolution.

But I won't cover them in quite in that order. I'll begin with an overview of the Australian workforce, the APS workforce and follow this with a

¹ I extend sincere thanks to Alex Heron, Research Associate the University of Sydney's Women and Work Research Group for research assistance and advice in the preparation of this speech. I also thank Sue Williamson, PhD student, for research and guidance in better understanding the APS. All opinions and errors, however, are my own.

discussion of High Performance Work Systems (HPWS). I'll turn to the issues of flexible workplaces and briefly to leadership in the second half of my speech.

Characteristics of the Australian workforce – the Australian workforce now numbers potentially 10.5-11 million (that is Australians >15), and it is ageing, as we are constantly reminded. Much of the growth in the overall size of the workforce can be attributed to the increasing participation rates of women – indeed men's participation rates have been declining steadily and slowly.

The traditional family (full-time male breadwinner and full-time female homemaker, the Harvester model) represents just 30% of all households; 35% are the 'one and a half, or one plus' households with a full-time worker and part-time worker and 25% have two full-time workers.^{2, 3}

- › Lone Parent families now represent 11% of all households of whom 52% were in paid work 2009.⁴
- › The pattern of female workforce participation is different to men's however, and is divided between full-time work and part-time workers.
- › A pattern largely (though not fully) explained by part-time participation rates of women after childbirth – that is, as we found in our Parental Leave in Australian study,⁵ an expectation among new mothers of having the right to return to work part-time *and, importantly*, for many, the desire to do so.

² The remainder are not in workforce

³ Hayes, A., Weston, R., Qu, L. and M. Gray (2010). Families then and now: 1990-2010, Australian Institute of Family Studies factsheet, Melbourne, p.5, accessed on 18 August 2010 at:

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/factsheet/fs2010conf/fs2010conf.html>

⁴ Hayes et al., (2010), p.6.

⁵ Parental Leave in Australia Study, accessed on 18 August 2010 at:

<http://www.polsis.uq.edu.au/index.html?page=54055>

- › The changing gender order in society and therefore in the workplace becomes clear when we examine female participation over the life course. The labour economists ‘M curve’ shows that between 1979 and 2009 there has been a significant shift in female participation; women are having their first baby later⁶, leaving the work force for a shorter period of time and returning for longer periods before retirement – and retiring later. This has led to the flattening out in the dip (period out of the workforce)- or the gradual removal of the ‘nappy valley’ as the Productivity Commission referred to it.⁷
- › One of the most profound shifts has been in the proportion of mothers with dependent children in paid work – which increased from 43% in 1981 to 63% in 2009.⁸
- › Female participation, including the participation of mothers, is needed to feed the Australian work force (which is otherwise shrinking and ageing) and ‘greedy organizations’ that are keen for ‘talent’ - or what we used to call, workers.
- › What are the repercussions of this profound change?
- › As you are probably all too familiar with in your daily lives - there are repercussions for women, for their male partners, for their children, for grandparents, for employers, unions and for governments.
- › And there are repercussions for work-life balance.
- › The latest AWALI (the Australia Work and Life Index)⁹ found that ...

⁶ Hayes et al. (2010: 4)

⁷ APC – labour force participation paper 2007

⁸ Hayes et al. (2010), p.5

⁹ Pocock, B., Skinner, N. and S. Pisaniello (2010). *How much should we? Working hours, holidays and working life: the participation challenge. The Australian Work and Life Index 2010*, Centre for Work + Life, University of South Australia, pp. 20 and 26, accessed on 18 August 2010 at:

- › 61% of women saying they often or always feel rushed or pressed for time compared to 47% of male respondents.

Mothers in particular are scrambling to do everything they want to do: 70% (69.4%) reported they were almost always pressed for time, compared to 58% of fathers.

- › We have found in previous research (Baird et al¹⁰) that it is not just the number of hours, and the employment status that impact on women (and their families) *but the predictability of hours that is so important* to allow women to balance their work and care responsibilities. In our qualitative research, mothers also commented on the tight timelines they operate under – and their need for ‘precision parenting’. Rarely did they complain about their husbands or their bosses – they saw themselves as ‘lucky mothers’ if they could keep their job and be a mother. That is, they often internalised and adapted to the stresses they were under rather than ask for more flexibility at work – or help from home!

Turning to the APS:

- › 162,000 employees work in the APS¹¹ and women comprise 58 per cent of this workforce.
- › The number of SES¹² employees is 2,845, almost 2% of the overall APS workforce. (The key feeder group (EL 2s¹³) has also grown: there are now 13,000 ongoing EL 2 employees.)

<http://www.unisa.edu.au/hawkeinstitute/cwl/documents/AWALI2010-report.pdf>

¹⁰ Baird, M., Cooper R. and Ellem, B. (2009). 'Low-paid women: the impact of regulatory change in Australia', *Industrial Relations Journal*, vol.40:5, pp. 393-407

¹¹ State of the Service Report 2008-2009, access on 18 August 2010 at:

<http://www.apsc.gov.au/stateoftheservice/index.html>

¹² Senior Executive Service 1-4, are senior management in the APS

¹³ Executive Level 2, with Executive Level 1 comprise middle management in the APS

- › However- and I quote from the State of the Service 08-09 report¹⁴ - ‘women continue to be under-represented at leadership levels. At June 2009, women comprised 37.0 per cent of the SES (unchanged from 2008) and 46.0 per cent of EL employees (up from 45.1 per cent in 2008). (*a slowly moving pipeline?*) Within the SES, women’s representation at SES 2 level *fell slightly* (from 34.9 per cent to 34.5 per cent). This was the first drop at that level in over 15 years!

Women’s representation also fell at SES 3 (from 27.4 per cent to 25.7 per cent). Based on current trends, women are likely to reach equal representation at the SES 1 classification within 10 years. – *where there’s time there’s hope!*

- › Interestingly, the State of the Service report also notes that ‘*The SES leadership group is highly engaged and motivated, and employees reported being keen ‘to make a difference’, although they were generally finding it more difficult than other APS employees to achieve a satisfactory work-life balance.*’ (p.xix)

At June 2009, 13% of ongoing APS employees were working part-time – and women are still much more likely to work part-time, with 20 per cent working part-time compared with 4% of men. - Part-time work for women is highest in the 30–44 years age group

An unpublished study of the APS by Donnelly¹⁵ paints a less rosy picture than some of the official publications. The article found that

- for Professional women in the APS, family friendly working arrangements were less likely to be available at higher

¹⁴ State of the Service Report 2008-2009

¹⁵ Donnelly, M. (2006) ‘Women in the Australian Public Service’. Unpublished paper, Community and Public Sector Union. Cited in Sue Williamson, 2009

classifications. Where available, they are likely to be discretionary – and there was general organisational pressure *not* to access these conditions and to work beyond agreed hours.

- For mid level Service provision agency employees, they are likely to work part-time to accommodate family responsibilities. They find it difficult to access family friendly working arrangements and are often bullied or harassed out of accessing entitlements.
- For low classification non-ongoing employees it was unlikely that these women would be entitled or able to access flexible working arrangements.

It is not just attendance at work that is important, but also ability to do the work.

APS agencies have identified three key challenges they face in building workforce capability, namely:

1. increasing the capacity to manage organisational change or changes to functions and workloads
2. improving the ability to attract and retain appropriately skilled employees
3. developing capable leaders, managing succession, and knowledge management¹⁶

- › These themes are consistent with the HRM research on challenges facing organisations and in the reasoning for adopting high performance workplace policies and practices.

¹⁶ State of the Service Report 2008-2009.

What are high-performance workplaces? Context and academic work on HPWS

They are often synonymous with high commitment workplaces and high involvement workplaces. The concept/theory has its origins in the US in the early 80s- following a period of intense competition from other countries, notably Japan. Attention turned to how organisations could manage better – and the seminal article by Dick Walton of the Harvard Business School in mid 80s advocated a move from management by control to management through employee commitment.

The term HPWS is now associated with workplaces which have implemented practices which engage employees, motivating them to work more productively and expend more discretionary effort - which therefore enable organisations to perform better.

They include a wide range of practices including high levels of autonomy in job performance (which typically requires differently designed jobs and work processes), flatter managerial structures and minimum status differentials, teamwork with high degrees of responsibility by the teams for their own work and different forms of flexibility including multitasking. They are backed up by targeted recruitment and selection, investment in training and development, good communication practices with employees, employee participation and performance contingent compensation systems , or what we would normally refer to as performance related pay.¹⁷

HPW practices can range from 9 to 22 HR practices ... and the idea is that the sum is better than the individual parts – thus the need to implement ‘bundles of

¹⁷ Wood S 1993 IJMR.

practices' systemically, as implementing a couple and without internal integration won't have the desired effect.¹⁸ Interestingly however, family friendly practices/gender ones were not included in the priority HPWS list of policies.

In summary, it is assumed that Organisational Performance is positively related to integrated HR strategies. Although this is the idea, evidence of success is mixed

There is also some discussion about the causal relationship between HPWS and organisational performance – that is, is there causal ambiguity. Do HPWS produce high performing organisations or is it that only successful organisations can afford to implement HPWS? As you can see, there is much for academics to work on and bury themselves in!

Since my PhD days when I studied the introduction of HCWS into Australian manufacturing sites, my interest has taken a somewhat different turn – and it is to the issues confronting women in the workforce and the changing pressures on organisations and gender relations at work and in the home that is now my main research interest.

Having said that, there is still a link between high-performance workplaces and women because as we have seen, female participation is increasing, and demands on them are high from 'greedy organisations' and time poor households. Thus organisations need to consider ways of attracting employees and enabling flexible work practices which enhance WLB & gender equity.

¹⁸ MacDuffie, J.P. (1995). 'Human Resource Bundles and Manufacturing Performance: Organizational Logic and Flexible Production Systems in the World Auto Industry', *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, vol. 48: 197–221; Orlitzky, M. and S.J. Frenkel (2005). 'Alternative pathways to high-performance workplaces', *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, vol. 8: 325-1348.

In a paper directly examining the relationship between HPWS¹⁹ and work-family balance in manufacturing plants in the US, Berg et al²⁰ argue that there is a spillover from work to family such that being able to participate in high-performance work systems will enable people to better balance their work and family lives. They suggest that this occurs for two reasons.

- First, participating in high-performance work systems gives people a greater sense of personal control and efficacy, and this has positive effects on their ability to manage the rest of their lives.
- Second, high-performance work systems are usually associated with more family-friendly practices. Because, it is argued, that high performance work organizations use family-friendly practices as part of an overall human resources strategy designed to elicit high levels of commitment from workers.

However, Arlie Hochschild argues a contrary position, positing that a result of this greater commitment is that workers in high-performance workplaces will choose to spend more time at the workplace than in the family. She suggests that the supportive and participatory workplace has become a haven from the stresses and strains of family life such that “work becomes home and home becomes work”. As a consequence, she hypothesizes that working in high-

¹⁹ Whether workers will participate fully by exercising discretionary effort in the organization’s behalf depends to a large extent on their degree of commitment to the organization: Highly committed workers are willing to work hard in the organization’s behalf and are most likely to take advantage of opportunities to participate in decisions.

²⁰ Berg P., Kalleberg A. and E. Appelbaum (2003). ‘Balancing Work and Family: The Role of High-Commitment Environments’, *Industrial Relations* vol. 42 (2): 168-189.

commitment work organizations produces a time deficit in family life, making it more difficult for people to balance their work and family lives.

The Berg et al study found their results underscore the importance of job characteristics, workplace structures and supportive supervisors for workers' abilities to balance their work and family lives—the opportunity to participate in decisions, informal training, pay for performance, and good promotion opportunities—all had a positive effect on work-family balance.

Other Studies have also examined parts of the HCWS and association with positive outcomes. For example, Grover and Crooker²¹ using US data, examined how family-responsive policies concerning time and dependent care influence the relationship between employers and employees. They found that various family-responsive benefits had a positive effect on affective commitment and turnover intention. The availability of maternity leave with a guaranteed job on return and the availability of child care information significantly reduced the intent of employees to leave the organization

Yet, job demands such as long weekly hours, involuntary overtime, and conflict with co-workers all reduce workers' ability to balance work and family responsibilities – and these may also be part of the HPWP.

Galinsky and colleagues²² found that employees who felt they had greater autonomy in their jobs, more control over their work schedules, less hectic and demanding jobs, and/or more job security reported less conflict, less stress, and

²¹ Grover, S.L. and K.J. Crooker (1995). 'Who appreciates family-responsive human resource policies: the impact of family-friendly policies on the organisational attachment of parents and non-parents', *Personnel Psychology*, Vol. 48 (2): 271-288.

²² Galinsky, E., Bond, J. T., & D. E. Friedman (1996). 'The role of employers in addressing the needs of employed parents.' *The Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 52: 111-136.

better coping than other parents. In addition, parents who had more supportive supervisors, had more supportive workplace cultures, and believed their opportunities to advance were not impeded by their race or gender also reported somewhat less conflict, less stress, and better coping. The Galinsky study provides evidence of the direct effects of job characteristics and support mechanisms on work-family balance.

Three major recent policy initiatives (of the current federal government) are:

1. The Right to request up to an additional 12 more months unpaid parental leave; (24 in all)
2. Paid Parental Leave;
3. The Right to request changes to working arrangements

1. The new National Employment Standard for unpaid parental leave is for 12 months for each parent, or a right to request up to an additional 12 months unpaid leave if one parent does not use all their entitlement.

This potentially allows mothers to have up to 24 months extended unpaid parental leave. I do have some reservations about giving new parents more unpaid leave – in terms of embedding gender divisions of labour, gender pay gaps and employer resistance and return to work problems and we can elaborate in discussion if you like.

The important and often overlooked aspect of this policy is the job guarantee – one that needs to be backed up by enforcement and anti discrimination awareness. – but which does not match the eligibility criteria under the PPL legislation.

2. With regard to PPL, it is of course of historical note that the Whitlam government introduced 12 weeks paid parental leave for Australian public servants in 1993. The new federal government scheme begins on 1 Jan 2011 and provides 18 weeks at federal minimum wages – ie approximately \$570 per week²³ to the primary carer. It is funded by government and sorely needed as up to 50 per cent of the female workforce had no access to PML²⁴. The expectation is that union bargaining or employer prerogative will lead to ‘top-ups’ for those women who earn above the minimum wage, remembering, however, that for many women in casual and part-time, even full-time jobs, the federal minimum wage is equal to, or more than, their total wage.

3. The third new policy is our new right to request flexible work arrangements. Standard is likely to see more demand for flexible work in time and place. Already there is a useful body of practice and research on flexible work in Australia, and overseas, much of it focussed on improving the quality of part-time work and suggesting changes in organisations to facilitate better arrangements.

This work has drawn on an understanding of the need to integrate structural support for part-time work (e.g. *creating part-time jobs with reduced workloads*) with cultural support (e.g., *exemplified by changed attitudes by colleagues, supervisors and senior managers as well as improved resourcing*).²⁵

²³ The federal minimum wage is currently \$15.00 per hour or \$569.90 per 38 hour week (before tax). Ref – Fair Work Online Fact Sheet, accessed on 18 August 2010 at:

<http://www.fairwork.gov.au/Fact-sheets-tools/Pages/FWO-fact-sheet-Minimum-wages.aspx?role=employees>

²⁴ Productivity Commission 2009, *Paid Parental Leave: Support for Parents with Newborn*

Children, Report no. 47, Canberra, Appendix E says: ‘Given Australia’s current fertility rate and population, around 145 000 (or nearly 85 per cent) of the 173 000 women in a job around the time of birth would be eligible for the Commission’s proposed scheme’.

²⁵ This is seen as also assisting integrating such initiatives into the organisational mainstream failing which worklife initiatives (such as reduced hours) ‘risk remaining being viewed as privileged accommodations for those who take up entitlements with stigmatization for doing

This interest has informed the ‘dual agenda’ approach to organisational research into quality part-time work which I and a colleague (Prof Sara Charlesworth) have undertaken. ‘[t]he underlying assumption of the dual agenda concept is that making changes in work practices to increase gender equity and work/life integration can also increase workplace performance and organisational effectiveness’.²⁶

It involves challenging the idea embedded in the organization that the ‘ideal worker’ is one who can commit unconstrained hours to work, free of external (usually caring) commitments.²⁷ This approach consigns those who cannot work in this way – usually women – to lesser roles in the workplace, inevitably failing to make the best use of their skills and capabilities as well as hindering their opportunities to progress at work.

**In seeking to broaden the appeal of part-time (read all flexible) work*

We examined a manufacturing and a utility company which were seeking to introduce worklife balance policies as well as pursue increased business efficiency. We identified ‘men as well as women who could or did not want to comply with company expectations of limitless time commitments’ – boundaryless jobs. Identifying gender issues as encompassing men as well as women can broaden the appeal and potential impact of worklife balance and quality part-time work initiatives beyond women with caring responsibilities.²⁸

so’ (Kossek et al., 2005: 5). See also Kossek, E., Lewis, S. and L. Hammer (2010). ‘Work-life initiatives and organizational change: Overcoming mixed messages to move from the margin to the mainstream’, *Human Relations*, vol. 63(3): 3-19.

²⁶ Rapoport, R., Bailyn, L., Fletcher, J. and Pruitt, B. (2002). *Beyond Work-Family Balance: Advancing Gender Equity and Workplace Performance*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.

²⁷ Williams, J. (2000). *Unbending Gender: Why Family and Work Conflict and What To Do About It*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

²⁸ Charlesworth S. and M. Baird (2007). ‘Getting Gender on the Agenda: The Tale of Two Organisations’, *Women in Management Review*, vol.22:5, pp. 391-404

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One aspect of a dual agenda approach is to provide ‘small wins’ in the organization, rather than wholesale organizational change.²⁹ In one of our case study organisations, this was the development of a formal part-time policy, available to all employees - not just women. Its introduction was driven by business requirements to improve recruitment, retention, job satisfaction and productivity. The policy developed included training managers about reorganizing work, designing jobs and managing part-timers. This built on the understanding gained by developing a definition of good quality part-time work and also of the need to broaden the appeal of part-time work. But it is not easy to embed such changes in organisations – where the ideal worker construct is so strong and dominant –one comment exemplified this: ‘real men don’t work part-time’.

On organisational culture

Other research looked at women’s experience in two similar male dominated manufacturing organizations.³⁰ At one company, woman’s experience of work was positive and at the other very negative. The positive characteristics were described in the following terms: women ‘were consulted, were provided with opportunities for training and career advancement and were given choices about working arrangements. This situation permeated all levels of the organization and was carried out by line managers. Good jobs were constructive within the organization through an array of managerial initiatives and cultural practices.....women were committed and felt valued. They felt that they had good jobs.’

²⁹ Charlesworth S. and S. Cartwright (2007). ‘Part-time Work: Policy, Practice and Resistance in a Manufacturing Organisation’ in Fastenau, M, Douglas, K and Branigan, E (eds) *Women and Work: Current RMIT University Research 2006* RMIT Publishing, Informit E-library..

³⁰ Burgess, J., Henderson, L. and G. Strachan (2005). ‘Women Workers in Male Dominated Industrial Manufacturing Organisations: Contrasting Workplace Case Studies from Australia’, *Management Revue*, vol. 16 (4): 458-474.

Managerial skills in managing part-time work comes through in the research as a significant determiner of the success of flexible work policies -

Managerial resistance to part-time work is often increased by the administrative complexities surrounding it and the lack of formal policies and procedures for implementing it. For example, in another study, one senior sergeant in the Victoria police commented to the researchers ‘we got thrown a part-timer and never got thrown a book to go with it’³¹

These researchers also noted the way in which supervisors of part-timers, even where their own experience of providing such supervision was favourable, would engage in the discussion of the *problem of part-time workers* – with ‘the constant ‘telling’ of this problem providing evidence of its existence’³² Thus the language around part-time work needs to change.

Overall, the Australian research concludes that in relation to flexible work ‘Much is left to the discretion of the HR practices of the organizations and the individual line manager’.³³

Support and resources for HR and middle managers is needed if flexible work policies are to work without delivering further divisions and discrimination in the organisations... one suggestion would be *to make the utilisation of policies part of the reward system*³⁴ – *eg performance related pay: individual managerial performance targets to include measures of successfully enabling? flexible work.*

³¹ Charlesworth, S., Keen, M. and K. Whittenbury (2009). ‘Integrating Part-time Work in Policing Services: Policy, Practice and Potential’, *Police Practice and Research: an International Journal* vol. 10(1) 31-47.

³² Chan, J. (1996) ‘Changing Police Culture’, *British Journal of Criminology* 36(1): 109–34.at 114 quoted in Charlesworth, S and Whittenbury K. (2007) ‘Part-time and Part committed? The Cultural Challenges of Part-time Work in Policing’ *Journal of Industrial Relations* 49(1), 31-47.

³³ Burgess J., L. Henderson and G Strachan (2007). ‘Work and family balance through equal employment opportunity programs and agreement making in Australia’, *Employee Relations*, (29/4) 2007, pp415-430.

³⁴ Lewis, S. (2000). ‘Restructuring workplace cultures: the ultimate work-family challenge?’, *Women in Management Review*, vol. 16(1) : 21-29.

In the UK there is interesting research³⁵ which refers to the drivers for employer introduction of flexible work options as being employee interest in work/life balance, the need to be competitive and the introduction of Right to Request laws.

A very recent article³⁶ reports results from a wide study examining flexible work practices' in a number of private sector organisations in the UK, a qualitative study investigating the lived experiences of flexible workers and they found enhanced satisfaction, greater commitment and reduced stress – but also evidence of work intensification

Remote workers in particular reported enabled intensification of work because they could exert higher levels of intensive effort when they were away from the distractions of the workplace despite potential distractions at home. E.g. time saved by not commuting was sometimes used for work not nonwork activities. Some part-time workers said they had more energy to bring to work as a result of not being full-time. Also they felt the need to reciprocate the benefit of flexible working afforded them - resulting in the expenditure of extra effort. But not much evidence of negative outcomes normally associated with work intensification. The authors raise the question about the viability of these ways of working in the long-term - and raises the need for organisations to be aware of and anticipated outcomes of change initiatives.

³⁵ Croucher, R. and C. Kelliher (2005). 'The right to request flexible working in Britain: the law and organizational realities', *The International Journal of Comparative Labour Law and Industrial Relations*, vol. 21 (3): 503-20; Croucher and Kelliher (2005) and Kelliher, C. and D. Anderson (2010). Doing more with less? Flexible working practices and the intensification of work, *Human Relations*, 63(1) 83-106.

³⁶ Kelliher, C. and D. Anderson (2010). 'Doing more with less? Flexible working practices and the intensification of work', *Human Relations*, vol.63: 83-106.

Nevertheless, flexible working for *all* employees has been advocated by the EOC³⁷ and the EHRC³⁸ since 2005 and most recently in Working Better (EHRC 2009b). CBI reported two thirds of employers surveyed offer flexible work to all employees.³⁹ The debate now appears rather to relate to how to move towards this goal and whether it should be done by regulation or not

Leadership

Leadership is our final issue- it is obvious from the studies referred to so far that the squeeze is on middle level managers and supervisors to deliver flexibility – but what do men and women want in terms of leadership? A recent US study provides some interesting results:⁴⁰

Perhaps not surprisingly to you, they found that men and women as they progress through management ranks have very different ‘motivation sets’

Drawing on the results of employee opinion surveys, the findings reveal the issues that engage male leaders and female leaders are not identical

Senior-Level Execs

The top-occurring issue of? was leadership – for women (23.8 per cent) and men (26 per cent), but after this the results diverge considerably.

For female senior leaders, three of the next six issues by importance are a collection of topics that together reflect a leader’s ability to succeed at business execution. These topics include (1) the quality of working relationships in work

³⁷ The former UK Equal Opportunities Commission (dealing with sex discrimination only).

³⁸ The UK Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), which has absorbed the EOC and covers all discrimination strands.

³⁹ EHRC (2009). ‘Working Better: a Managers’ Guide to Flexible Working’, EHRC, London.

⁴⁰ How Does Gender Fit Into Engagement Strategy, accessed on 18 August 2010 at: <http://www.enterpriseengagement.org/articles/content/500184/how-does-gender-fit-into-engagement-strategy/>

teams (14.3 per cent) and (2) customer quality focus and (3) communication (9.5 per cent each).⁴¹

These findings suggest that women at the senior level are more engaged when they work in an environment designed for success, meaning they have in place the strong employee relations, procedures, policies and alignment with goals needed for high performance. Female senior leaders are focused on the ability of their teams to grow and succeed, and they likely assume team success will mean individual success for them as emerging members of the senior leadership cadre.

The key themes differ for male senior leaders. Beyond the common issue of leadership, engagement among male senior leaders is driven by career development opportunities (19.4 per cent), supervision (12.9 per cent) and rewards (9.7 per cent). Men are more engaged when they work in a company that provides them with growth potential, puts a premium on promoting long-term employees, pays them fairly compared with colleagues and communicates clear corporate strategy.

Work-life balance, which was among the top issues for women at the junior level, is noticeably absent as a key issue among female senior leaders. However, work-life balance did emerge with moderate frequency (6.5 per cent) among male senior leaders. These patterns suggest women at the junior level might take the steps necessary to resolve work-life concerns at this key developmental phase of their careers, whereas this issue only begins to gain relevance for men at the most senior levels.

⁴¹ The remaining three issues are consistent with the key topics for female junior leaders – namely, empowerment, supervision and career development (all at 9.5%).

In conclusion – much more could be said, but some key points to finish with --

As Henry Ford is quoted as saying – ‘why is it when I hire a pair of hands I get a human being as well?’⁴²

The reality is that workplaces do hire people -- men and women – with family and life demands and responsibilities.

- And the demographic and the policy landscapes are changing significantly. This new context will impact on workplaces – and managers.
- The demand for more flexibility at work is likely to increase as men take on more caring responsibilities – for elder care and for child care – and as more women return to the workplace.
- Flexible work practices are not incompatible with HPWS –and may be associated with improved outcomes for the business. But they need to consider:
 - design of jobs;
 - flexible options at the point of recruitment;
 - training for and support to managers;
 - monitoring and evaluating the use of flexible work
- The APS has a high proportion of female workers but a low proportion of senior female leaders – nevertheless, they may be expected to role model new flexible work practices and provide support for middle managers.
- HP workplaces embody integrated sets of HR policies and practices and these require resourcing - cost cutting and labour shedding will

⁴² Henry Ford 1863-1947, insert reference.

exacerbate internal tensions and diminish the environments for high performance and work-life balance to flourish.

- I hope this is not the future that awaits you – but rather a future of flexible high performing agencies in the APS

Thank you for your time this morning.

