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2009 has been a significant year for Australian working women. Importantly, it saw the announcement by the Federal Government that a paid parental leave scheme would be implemented from 2011. This followed the release of the Productivity Commission Inquiry Report ‘Paid Parental Leave: Support for Parents with Newborn Children’ (May 2009) whose recommendation of 18 weeks government funded paid parental leave at the minimum wage has been adopted by the Government. This is a significant step. Nevertheless it is disappointing that the report’s recommendations for two weeks paid paternity/partner leave and for employers to be required to pay some superannuation contributions during paid parental leave, were not adopted.

The Fair Work Act 2009 introduced a new industrial relations regime from the middle of the year. The Act also introduced the National Employment Standards (in force from January 2010) including a right to request flexible working arrangements for those with a child under school age or a child under 18 who has a disability. The Fair Work Act will potentially affect many working women’s lives profoundly.

The review of the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act and Agency was launched in the middle of the year. It is being conducted by the Australian Office for Women, with consultations managed by KPMG. The review will continue into 2010. In late 2009, the House of Representatives’ Inquiry into pay equity and associated issues related to increasing female participation in the workforce, was published with a series of wide-ranging recommendations. The government response to these is expected in 2010.

The WWRG through its events and activities (see below) including preparing submissions, has participated actively in promoting awareness of and debates around these issues during 2009.

This year the WWRG welcomed two new members: Dr Anja Kirsch (Work & Organisational Studies, Faculty of Economics and Business) and Dr Melissa Gregg (Gender & Cultural Studies, Faculty of Arts).

The WWRG has also expanded to include two new members of staff: Alexandra Heron has taken on the role of Research Associate for the WWRG. Alexandra is a lawyer and has worked in various capacities in the NGO, public and private sectors in Australia, the UK and France, with an emphasis on gender and employment issues.
Karen Reeves, a doctoral candidate in Work & Organisational Studies has also taken on the role of Coordinator for the WWRG. Alison Page left WWRG early in 2009 and we would like to extend our thanks to her for all the work she did for the Group during 2008-09.

During the year members of the WWRG were involved in a range of activities. Highlights included:

- Producing ‘Taking Care: Mature age workers with elder care responsibilities’, a report for NSW Industrial Relations, exploring research on working mature-aged carers and the challenges they face.
- Hosting international visitors including Professor Lonnie Golden from the University of Pennsylvania State Abington.
- Organising a workshop on Pay Equity: where to now, to enable specialist scholars in the field to provide and exchange information about developments in pay equity and to provide a forum for discussion.

The WWRG appreciates the Faculty’s support and the funds have enabled the WWRG to broaden its reach and activities, which are reported in this, our second Annual Report, for the year January - December 2009. The WWRG also has a website which has full details of all its activities, at: http://sydney.edu.au/business/research/wwrg

Marian Baird | Director
Women and Work Research Group
University of Sydney
The aims of the Women and Work Research Group:

- To provide a scholarly environment in which a community of inquiry on all aspects of women, work, employment, family and community is created.

- To provide a bridge between academic work and policy work and to provide research for the development of evidence based policy in matters pertaining to women, work and family.

- To provide a focal point for collaboration with established and emerging scholars in the field, and with research centres with similar interests in the Asia-Pacific region, the USA, the UK and elsewhere.
One of the WWRG’s key aims is to conduct events on women and work that link practitioners, policy makers and researchers. WWRG events this year included:

In January, Doris Eikhof, of Stirling Management School, University of Stirling presented a seminar on ‘Women doing their own thing: Our picture of modern women at work?’

In March, with the Faculty’s external relations team, Marian Baird chaired the Faculty’s town and gown event to mark International Women’s Day and to launch the Lucy Mentoring program for 2009.

In May, a seminar entitled ‘Rights, requests and great expectations: the right to request flexible work in the UK’ was presented by Alexandra Heron. From January 2010, the right to request flexible working arrangements will be a new right for many Australian employees and lessons from the UK experience are therefore of significance to Australian employers and policy makers. About 60 people attended from leading consulting firms, law firms, public sector agencies and universities.

In August, the WWRG held a cross-disciplinary seminar on Women’s Health at Work. Presenters included Claire Portors, Senior Project Officer, Woman’s Health at Work, Diversity Health Institute, Sydney West Area Health Service; Ludo McFerran, Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, UNSW; Professor Trudy Rudge, Associate Professor Sandra West, Dr Virginia Mapedzahama and Dr Amelie Perron of the University of Sydney’s Society and Work in Nursing Research Group (SWIN-RG).

Also in August a Roundtable discussion on the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act and Agency was held. This followed the Federal Government’s announcement of a review (conducted by the Australian Office for Women) of the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act and Agency. The WWRG ran the Roundtable to bring together members of the business community and policy agencies.

Over 70 attendees contributed to discussions at the Roundtable. Key presenters were:

- **Mairi Steele**, Acting Director of the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency
- **Sally Moyle** Director of the Australian Government’s Office for Women
- **Sue Williamson**, doctoral candidate at the University of Sydney.
- **Dr. Sara Charlesworth**, Senior Research Fellow at RMIT
- **Prof Glenda Strachan**, Professor of Management at Griffith Business School, Griffith University.

KPMG, who are conducting consultations for the Review, also attended and later in the year launched an Employee Survey, which was made available on the WWRG website.

Associate Professor Marian Baird was appointed to the Federal Government’s Review Project Reference Group and she and Alexandra Heron were both interviewed by KPMG for their input to the Review.

In September, the WWRG hosted a very successful seminar presented by Professor Lonnie Golden on ‘Work
Events and activities in 2009 cont’d

Hours and Inflexibility: The Costs to Work-Life’. Professor Golden is Professor of Economics and Labor Studies and Employment Relations at the University of Pennsylvania State Abington. His visit was co-sponsored by the WWRG and the Discipline of Work and Organisational Studies, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Sydney (WOS). Professor Golden also provided advice and consultation to our PhD students studying in the field of women, work and family.

In September, the WWRG also facilitated the organisation of the Equal Pay Day with the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency. Along with others, Associate Professor John Shields of WOS, the WOSOC (the University of Sydney Society for WOS students) and the WWRG Director spoke at the event.

In October, a report commissioned by the NSW Government and written by the WWRG was released. Called ‘Taking Care: Mature age workers with elder care responsibilities’, the report is available at:


In October too, the WWRG wrote a detailed submission to the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act and Agency Review for the Australian Women’s Coalition, one of the four national alliances of women’s peak representative organisations. The WWRG also wrote its own submission as did one of the group’s members, Associate Professor Susan McGrath-Champ.

These submissions are available at:


In November, a special seminar on Women, the Global Financial Crisis and Paths to Recovery was held. This was co-hosted by the WWRG with the NSW Office for Women’s Policy, the NSW Premier’s Council for Women and supported by the national women’s alliances: WomenSpeak, Australian Women’s Coalition, the National Rural Women’s Coalition, and Security for Women. The seminar was chaired by WWRG member, Dr Rae Cooper and speakers included:

- The NSW Minister for Women, the Hon Linda Burney MP
- David Richardson, The Australia Institute
- Marie Coleman, National Foundation of Australian Women
- Jo Schofield, Catalyst Australia
- Sue Bellino, Australian Nursing Federation
- Alison Peters, NCOSS

This seminar and workshop enabled the over 60 participants to feed into a report to the Federal Government prepared by the National Foundation for Australian Women on behalf of the four national women’s alliances, as a part of a national consultation process on this issue.

In November, a special issue of the Australia Bulletin of Labour was published of the papers presented at the 2008 special International Women’s Day symposium hosted by the WWRG.
This provided an opportunity for academics from different disciplines and early career academics to have their work published in a peer reviewed journal.

In December, a workshop Pay Equity – where to now?, was held to enable specialist scholars in the field to provide and exchange information about developments in pay equity and to provide a forum for discussion. Presentations were made by

- **Associate Professor Anne Junor**, UNSW,
- **Professor Gillian Whitehouse** of UQ,
- **Dr Meg Smith** of UWS,
- Miranda Pointon and Joelle Leggett of *Fair Work Australia*,
- **Dr Sara Charlesworth**, Senior Research Fellow, RMIT,
- Philippa Hall, former Director, Pay and Employment Equity Unit, NZ Department of Labour,
- **Dr Tricia Rooney** of UQ,
- **Linda White**, Assistant National Secretary, Australian Services Union.

All of WWRG’s events this year were well attended by a broad cross section of people, including policy makers, academics, students, union officials and business representatives with several events attracting from 40 to 70 people. This network continues to enhance the reputation and profile of the Faculty and the University.

**WWRG website**

The WWRG, with the expert help of Web Services, redesigned its website in 2009.

It contains contact details for the group, and information about members including their profiles at [http://sydney.edu.au/business/research/wwrg](http://sydney.edu.au/business/research/wwrg)

Its homepage highlights upcoming events and provides materials relating to previous ones.

The website also contains WWRG research and publications as well as topical materials and links relating to women and work. Currently these are on paid parental leave, the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act and Agency Review, pay equity and childcare.

The website is regularly updated and provides a public face for the WWRG as well as a resource for researchers.

**New WWRG staff members:**
Alexandra Heron (left) and Karen Reeves (right)
Membership of the Women and Work Research Group continues to grow steadily.

The WWRG had 26 active members in 2009 including its Director, Coordinator and Research Associate. Members’ research profiles are on:

http://sydney.edu.au/business/research/wwrg/members

This page also contains links to numbers’ homepages with up-to-date publications lists

Members of the WWRG are:

- **Professor Marian Baird (Director)** - Work and Organisational Studies, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Sydney
- **Dr Susan Ainsworth** – Work and Organisational Studies, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Sydney
- **Dr Rae Cooper** – Work and Organisational Studies, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Sydney
- **Dr Leanne Cutcher** – Work and Organisational Studies, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Sydney
- **Associate Professor Bradon Ellem** – Work and Organisational Studies, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Sydney
- **Dr Melissa Gregg** – Gender and Cultural Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Sydney
- **Dr Dimitria Groutsis** – Work and Organisational Studies, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Sydney
- **Ms Alexandra Heron** (Research Associate) – Work and Organisational Studies, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Sydney
- **Dr Elizabeth Hill** – Faculty of Arts, University of Sydney
- **Ms Sarah Kaine** (PhD candidate) – Work and Organisational Studies, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Sydney
- **Dr Anja Kirsch** – Work and Organisational Studies, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Sydney
- **Professor Russell Lansbury** – Work and Organisational Studies, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Sydney
- **Associate Professor Suzanne Jamieson** – Work and Organisational Studies, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Sydney
- **Associate Professor Susan McGrath-Champ** – Work and Organisational Studies, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Sydney
International Members are:

- **Professor Lotte Bailyn**, MIT, USA
- **Associate Professor Peter Berg**, Michigan State University, USA
- **Professor Sue Lewis**, Middlesex University, UK
- **Professor Ruth Milkman**, UCLA, USA
- **Professor Lonnie Golden**, Pennsylvania State, Abington
- **Ms Lisa Dancaster** (PhD candidate) – Work and Organisational Studies, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Sydney and lecturer, University of Kwa Zulu Natal, South Africa

This year the WWRG also continued to strengthen its international ties, especially with Michigan State University and UCLA.
External links and collaboration

The WWRG has continued its role as a research cluster during 2009. Its events and activities during the year have built on its established external reputation as a key contributor to debates about issues involving women and work.

The WWRG has maintained its external links with many agencies, including the Australian Human Rights Commission; the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA); The National Foundation for Australian Women; the Women’s Electoral Lobby (WEL); the Australian Women’s Coalition; the Work and Family Policy Roundtable; the Women’s Equity Bureau in NSW Industrial Relations; the Office for Women’s Policy, Department of Premier and Cabinet, NSW; and the Office for Women in the Federal Government.

The WWRG also has strong relationships with senior managers in corporate Australia, representatives of employer’s associations and union officials. It collaborated with Chief Executive Women in the development of their submission to the EOWA Review.

This year the WWRG successfully continued to build on the relationships underpinning its external links. Key outcomes included:

- Professor Marian Baird gave the 2009 Clare Burton Memorial Lecture. The Lectures are held annually around Australia by the Australian Technology Universities Network to commemorate Dr Clare Burton, a leading researcher, public sector administrator, academic, consultant and writer on employment equity. Professor Baird’s lecture was ‘A Slow Revolution: maternity leave, women and work’.
- Producing ‘Taking Care: Mature age workers with elder care responsibilities’, a report for NSW Industrial Relations.
- Co-hosting roundtables and consultations, as described above.
- A number of articles in the press as well as TV and radio appearances addressing women and work issues with a particular focus this year on paid parental leave and pay equity.

Professor Marian Baird was the invited keynote speaker in 2009 at:

- The inaugural South African Work and Family Conference – University of Cape Town - December
- The Council of the Humanities and Social Sciences, Social Inclusion in Education, Canberra - October
- The International Labour Law Conference – September
- The Independent Education Union – Annual Women’s Conference – August
- The University of South Australia and Hawke Institute for Sustainability – March
- Bartier-Perry Law Firm – Women and Industrial Relations – February
- The National Foundation of Australian Women – Review of the Tax System - February
- NSW Government’s Office for Women’s Policy – Delights and Dilemmas of Part-Time Work - February

In 2009, the WWRG continued to develop its external contacts database. There are now over 250 people on this database who are regularly updated about, and invited to, WWRG’s initiatives.
Members of the WWRG publish widely, in both Australian and international journals in relation to matters concerning work and family. As described above, the website lists members research interests and has links to their own pages containing their up-to-date publication lists.

Highlights from members’ 2009 publications and research relating to women and work include:


- Cutcher L and Davis T 2009 ‘Discursive formation of the indigenous female Australian subject: Bad mothers, cheapworkers and (white) postwar prosperity’, 2nd New Zealand Discourse Conference 2009 - ‘Tilts and Shifts – Applying a Discourse Analysis Lens’, AUT University, New Zealand, 20th November 2009


- Elizabeth Hill was based in New Delhi, India in 2009 where she is researching work and care chains in the Indian economy. The project analyses work/care regimes operating across the public, private and informal sectors of the economy, the emerging work/care chains and implications for public policy. There is very little research on this aspect of economic development in India although interest is growing. The project will continue into 2010. In 2009 Elizabeth also contributed to research and policy workshops on work and care hosted by UNICEF and the ILO.
PhD Students

The WWRG is strongly committed to research and doctoral training. Many PhD students within the Faculty have attended WWRG events this year. There are currently seven PhD students within the Faculty who are members of the WWRG or are being supervised by members of the Group:

- Dr. John Murray: Great expectations: Individuals, Work and Family

  Congratulations to John on being awarded his Ph.D. in 2009

- Steven Clibborn: The transfer of employment practices in multinational companies

- Lisa Dancaster: Predictors of work and family policies in South African companies

- Helena Liu: Leadership through Crisis: A Media Discourse Analysis of Banking CEOs

- Karen Reeves: The rise of the female breadwinner

- Sue Williamson: Testing the existence of equality bargaining in Australia

- Jeaney Yip: Branded Religion: the Discursive Construction of a Mega-Church’s Corporate Identity through Artefacts and Performance

- Shamika Almeida: Barriers to the recruitment and selection of IT and computer professionals

In addition to undertaking research on topics related to the expertise of members of the Group, our PhD students have also benefited from attending a number of conferences, workshops and sessions under the hospices of the WWRG.
Future Plans

In addition to our regular seminars and consultancy, plans for 2010 are already well underway. Some early highlights include:

- The WWRG is preparing a policy briefing research paper on carer’s leave for NSW Industrial Relations during the first half of 2010.
- The Group received a faculty research grant for 2010 to undertake a small organizational research project into employer and employee responses to eldercare responsibilities and the effect on carers’ workforce participation.
- The Group is also undertaking a targeted research project for the Australian Office for Women on job redesign in the context of the global economic downturn and the recovery during the first half of 2010.
- In February 2010, the WWRG will host an ASSA workshop with Professor Michael Bittman from the UNE on ‘Children of the Recession’. This will bring together an eminent group of health, gender, sociology and economics researchers.
- Dr Melissa Gregg, from the Gender and Cultural Studies, Arts Faculty, University of Sydney, and Dr Kristine Dery will give a seminar to mark 2010 International Women’s Day on the impact of technology on worklife balance.
- Dr Ian Roper from Middlesex University, UK will visit the WWRG to undertake a comparative study of UK and Australian employer responses to paid parental leave.
- The WWRG will host the book launch of ‘Among the Chosen: the life story of Pat Giles’ by Lekkie Hopkins and Lyn Roarty.
- Rae Cooper is undertaking research on:
  ~ women and bargaining under the Fair Work Act
  ~ low-wage work and bargaining (and other) regulation
  ~ women and union leadership in Australia
  ~ the impact of the Global Economic Downturn on jobs in Australia, especially the impact on women’s jobs (in collaboration with others).