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**Annual leave in Australia**  
**An analysis of entitlements, usage and**  
**preferences**

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## Summary

Paid annual holidays have been a standard feature of employment in Australia since 1941. While the amount of paid holidays grew steadily from one week a year in 1941 to four weeks in 1973, the proportion of employees in receipt of this benefit has been in steady decline since the 1980s. The main cause of this decline has been the increase in the number of employees employed on a casual or contractual basis. When compared to other industrialised countries, Australia's four weeks annual leave entitlement is relatively low, with the average in the European Union being over five weeks and German workers receiving nearly six weeks. In the case of public holidays, Australian workers are entitled to 10-11 days per year, around the European average.

In contrast to perceptions of work in Japan where there is a word for death from overwork, *karoshi*, Australians often believe that they live in the land of the long weekend. However, new data collected by Newspoll for The Australia Institute shows that only 39 per cent of full-time employees took all of their annual leave in 2002 (Table S1).

**Table S1 Whether respondents took all their annual leave in 2002 (%)**

	Total	Male	Female	25-34	35-49	50-59
Yes	39	38	41	37	36	50
No	57	60	53	59	60	48
Don't know	4	3	6	4	4	2

When asked why they did not take their leave, around two in five full-time employees said they were saving it up for later use. But an equal number (42 per cent) cited work-related reasons, including being too busy at work (29 per cent) and not being able to get time off that suited them (13 per cent).

High income earners (those earning over \$100,000 per year) were the most likely to specify work-related reasons for failing to take all their annual leave (67 per cent – see Table S2), although nearly all said it was because they were too busy. When the reasons for not taking time off are analysed by occupation, managers and administrators are the most likely to cite being too busy at work for failing to take their annual leave (55 per cent).

While much has been said about the desire of individuals to increase their incomes in order to increase consumption or save for their retirement, there is evidence that, for a portion of the community at least, other lifestyle factors are more important. Survey respondents were asked:

Bearing in mind that two weeks is about four per cent of a full year, if you had a choice between a four per cent pay rise or an additional two weeks of paid leave each year, which one would you prefer to have?

**Table S2 Reasons for not taking all paid leave entitlements, by income (%)**

	Total	Under \$25000	\$25000- \$39999	\$40000- \$54999	\$55000- \$69999	\$70000- \$99999	\$100000 or more
Saving them up for a future holiday	39	27	44	46	43	29	0
Work related difficulties	42	47	33	42	40	38	67
Enjoy work or money more	11	19	16	7	17	9	0
Other	20	8	29	12	21	26	34

Note: Some respondents gave more than one reason.

Despite the fact that the majority of full-time employees did not take all of their holidays in 2002, over half (52 per cent) would prefer to receive an additional two weeks paid leave instead of a four per cent increase in pay – see Table S3. Men have a slightly higher preference for more leave than women, and respondents aged 25-34 were more likely to express a preference for leave (57 per cent) than those aged 50-59 (48 per cent) even though their incomes are generally lower. This could reflect a generational preference for leisure over income or perhaps age-specific factors such as the higher likelihood that workers aged 25-34 have young families.

**Table S3 Preferences for a 4 per cent pay rise or an additional 2 weeks paid leave, by gender and age (%)**

	Total	Men	Women	25-34	35-49	50-59
4 per cent pay rise	45	45	44	40	47	49
Additional 2 weeks holiday leave	52	53	49	57	49	48

Holidays are an important mechanism for improving work-life balance. While much has been said about weekly hours of work, access to annual leave has been a neglected area of research. The new data reported in this paper point to two important labour market problems. First, a significant proportion of full-time employees are having difficulties using up their existing entitlement to four weeks holiday leave. Individual firms may encounter unforeseeable circumstances that inhibit the granting of holiday leave at times desired by employees but the fact that 42 per cent of employees have difficulties obtaining leave due to work pressure suggests that the problem is structural. This indicates that policy makers may need to consider mechanisms to ensure that all employees have reasonable access to their existing entitlements. It also points to the fact that leave purchasing schemes, where they exist, are either insufficiently widespread or inadequately promoted or administered.

The second problem relates to the failure of the labour market to match conditions of employment with employee preferences. More than half of full-time employees have expressed a desire for additional leave, yet this desire has not been translated into employment arrangements that provide improved work-life balance. Despite 15 years of labour market deregulation it is apparent that existing labour market outcomes do not match the preferences of employees.

The research in this paper reveals that those earning over \$100,000 per year are more likely to take fewer holidays, to cite being too busy as the reason, and to prefer more money to extra leave. It is therefore possible that to improve the work-life balance of the majority of full-time employees, senior decision makers may need education and counselling to ensure that their own work preferences are not imposed on their subordinates who desire a better balance for themselves.

Labour market deregulation in Australia has resulted in substantial changes to the operation of individual workplaces and claims that the flexibility of the labour market has been increased. However, it is apparent that the preferences of many workers are not reflected in the nature and duration of the jobs that are on offer. It appears that the majority of full-time employees would like the ability to take extra holiday leave but experience difficulties taking even present entitlements. If policy makers are sincere about improving the work-life balance of Australian workers they will need to consider new mechanisms to ensure that workers' preferences for work-life balance are recognized by employers.



## 1. Holiday leave in Australia

### 1.1 Holiday entitlements

Paid annual holidays have been a standard feature of employment in Australia since 1941 (ACTU 2003). While the amount of paid holidays grew steadily from one week per year in 1941 to four weeks in 1973, the percentage of employees in receipt of this benefit has been in steady decline since the 1980s. The main cause of this decline has been the increase in the proportion of people employed on a casual or contractual basis.

This paper is concerned with the amount of holidays taken by Australians, perceptions of the adequacy of these holidays, and the implications for both society and the economy of increasing the amount of paid holidays. It begins by considering the nature and extent of holiday leave in Australia through international and historical comparisons. Section 2 explores the attempts to increase labour market ‘flexibility’ in Australia and considers evidence on the compatibility between existing labour market outcomes and the preferences of employees. Section 3 discusses the existence of a tradeoff between increased leisure and increased income, and presents the results of a survey into the attitudes of employees to additional holiday leave. The last section draws some conclusions.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) defines holiday leave as the ‘entitlement of an employee to paid holiday, vacation or recreation leave’ (ABS 2003a, p. 67). The more general notion of ‘leave entitlements’ is defined as ‘the entitlement of employees to either paid holiday leave or paid sick leave’ (ABS 2003a, p. 67). Throughout this paper, holiday leave will refer to paid holiday leave, as defined by the ABS, unless stated otherwise.

Full-time employees in Australia are entitled to a minimum of four weeks annual leave, whether this be by arbitrated decision or employer agreement (CCH Australia, 2002). Australia’s four weeks annual leave is below average when compared to other industrialised countries. Table 1 provides data on paid holidays in the European Union as well as in the US and Japan. It shows that no European Union country has fewer paid annual holidays than Australia. While a number of countries share Australia’s 20 working day minimum for paid holidays, all European Union countries except Ireland have used collective agreements to increase the amount of paid holidays above this level. On average, full-time workers in the European Union have more than five weeks of annual leave per year, while those in Germany receive almost six weeks.

The USA, on the other hand, has no laws requiring firms to provide paid holidays. The figures presented in Table 1 are based on ‘paid vacation days’ in medium and large private sector firms. Paid vacation days in the US typically increase with years of service, an average employee with one year’s service receiving 9.6 days of leave increasing to 21.7, on average, for employees with 30 years’ service (International Labour Office, pers. comm.).

**Table 1 International comparison of the number of paid holidays**

Country	Collectively agreed entitlement for annual leave (working days, 2001)	Minimum of annual leave (working days, 2002)
Australia		20
Austria	25	25
Belgium	NA	20
Denmark	30	25
Finland	25	24
France	25	25
Germany	29.1	20
Greece	23	20
Ireland	20	20
Italy	28	20-30 <sup>1</sup>
Luxembourg	27	25
Netherlands	31.5	20
Portugal	24.5	22
Spain	NA	25
Sweden	25	25
UK	24.5	20
EU average	25.7	22
Japan	17.8 <sup>2</sup>	10-20 <sup>3</sup>
US	9.6-21.7 <sup>4</sup>	No binding law

Notes:

1. Holiday entitlement is linked to job grade and length of service.
2. 1999 figure.
3. The statutory minimum of annual leave increases from 10 days up to 20 days according to the length of service.
4. 1997 figure.

Sources: Adapted from a table compiled by ILO (pers. com.); EIRO 2000; EIRO 2001; US Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics 1997; Japan Ministry of Labour, 1999.

As with employees in Europe, Australians have access to collective bargaining to increase the holiday entitlements provided by law. Few employees, however, appear to have done so. While industries such as mining have historically provided longer than average holidays (Workplace Info 2003), according to an analysis of the ADAM database of enterprise agreements relatively few employees in Australia receive more than the legislated minimum level of annual leave (McGrath-Champ 2003).

It is also important to distinguish between the amount of leave provided and the amount of leave actually taken. According to the Japan Institute of Labour (2003), Japanese workers took only 48.4 per cent of their holiday entitlements in 2001. The JIL suggests that this may be due to the existence of ‘an atmosphere in the workplace which makes it difficult for workers to take holidays...’ (JIL 2003, p. 2). A failure to use holidays is not confined to Japan. While little research has been conducted into Australian workers’

utilisation of holidays, evidence is presented in Section 4 that suggests Australians may suffer similar difficulties.

Annual holidays are an important component of total hours worked over the course of a year. Forgoing four weeks holiday leave is equivalent to working an additional three hours per week. While much has been said in recent years about the increase in average hours worked, discussion about growth in annual hours of work in Australia has been more muted. According to the Australian Council of Trade Unions (Campbell 2002), 31 per cent of Australia's full-time workforce works more than 48 hours per week, with one third of this number (300,000) working more than 60 hours per week. Such hours would be unlawful in Europe (ACTU 2003b). Of all OECD countries, Australia has the highest proportion of people working 50 hours or more (Campbell 2002). The issue of overwork and its relationship to labour market flexibility and access to holiday leave is discussed in detail in Section 2.

**Table 2 Public holidays in Australia, 2003-2004**

Holiday	Date	State
New Year's Day	Jan 1 2004	Australia-wide
Australia Day	Jan 26 2003	Australia-wide
Labour Day	Mar 3 2003	WA
Labour Day	Mar 10 2003	VIC
Eight Hour Day	Mar 10 2003	TAS
Canberra Day	Mar 17 2003	ACT
Good Friday	Apr 18 2003	Australia-wide
Easter Saturday	Apr 19 2003	Australia-wide
Easter Monday	Apr 21 2003	Australia-wide
Anzac Day	Apr 25 2003	Australia-wide
Labour Day	May 5 2003	QLD
May Day	May 5 2003	NT
Adelaide Cup Day	May 19 2003	SA
Foundation Day	Jun 2 2003	WA
Queen's Birthday	Jun 9 2003	All states except WA
Picnic Day	Aug 4 2003	NT
Royal National Show Day	Aug 13 2003	QLD (Brisbane metro only)
Queen's Birthday	Sep 29 2003	WA
Labour Day	Oct 6 2003	ACT/NSW/SA.
Melbourne Cup Day	Nov 4 2003	VIC (Melbourne metro only)
Christmas Day	Dec 25 2003	Australia-wide
Boxing Day	Dec 26 2003	All states except SA
Proclamation Day	Dec 26 2003	SA

In addition to holiday leave, the number of public holidays available to employees is another important dimension of annual working hours. While it is often assumed that

Australians have a large number of public holidays, international comparisons once again suggest otherwise. Table 2 lists Australia's public holidays. It shows that there are eight national public holidays in Australia (including Easter Saturday<sup>1</sup>) and a range of state based public holidays. All states and territories have 11 public holidays per year except the Northern Territory and NSW which have 10.

As shown in Table 3, Australian public holiday entitlements are around the European Union average but well below the number of public holidays enjoyed in Japan. Although many Australians believe that they are entitled to a relatively large number of public holidays, the data presented in Table 3 suggests that this is not the case. For example, the citizens of Spain, Portugal and Austria all have five weeks annual leave and amongst the highest number of public holidays. The lowest number of public holidays accrue to the citizens of the UK and the Netherlands. However, both of these countries provide a substantially greater amount of annual leave than Australia (24.5 and 25 days annual leave respectively).

**Table 3 Public holidays in selected industrialized countries, 2000**

Country	Number of public holidays
Australia	10-11
Austria	13
Belgium	10
Denmark	9.5
Finland	12
France	11
Germany	9-12
Greece	10-12
Ireland	9
Italy	12
Luxembourg	10
Netherlands	8
Portugal	12-14
Spain	12-14
Sweden	11
UK	8
EU average	10.8
Japan	15
US	10

Sources: Adapted from a table compiled by ILO (pers. com.); EIRO 2002; EIRO 2001; US Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics 1997; Japan Ministry of Labour 1999.

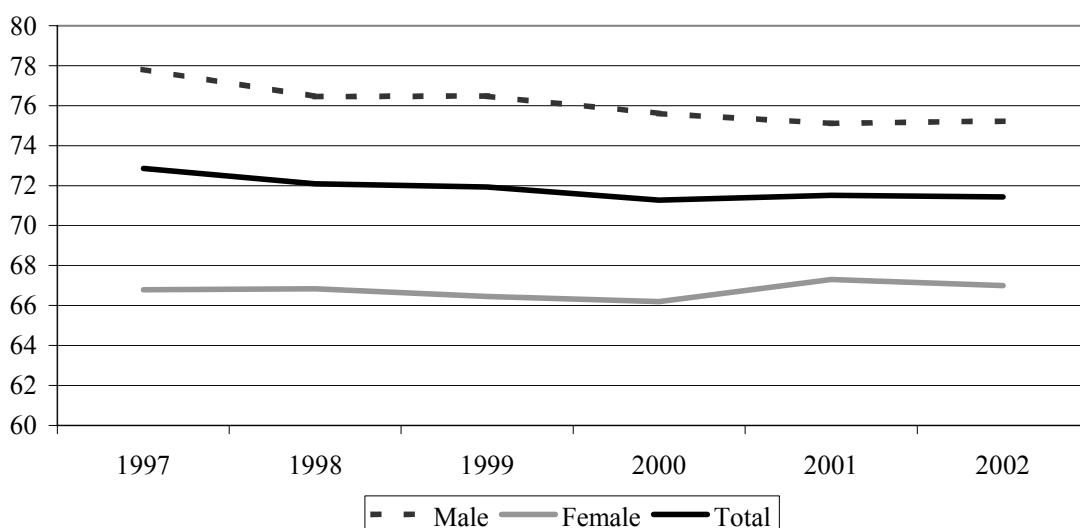
<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that Easter Saturday is not a work day for most full-time employees.



## 1.2 Access to holidays

Due to the absence of any systematic information, little is known about the actual number of holidays people take in Australia. However, Section 3 provides new data on this issue. The ABS, while providing no information on the uptake of holiday leave entitlements does release data on the provision, but not the usage, of holiday entitlements (ABS 2003a). Figure 1 illustrates the steady decline in the number of employees receiving holiday leave as an entitlement due to the growth of casual employment. This trend is most apparent in the male work force where 78 per cent was entitled to holiday leave in 1997, but only 75 per cent in 2002. Women's holiday leave, while exhibiting some volatility over the period 1997 to 2002, has remained relatively steady at 67 per cent. In total the number of employees with holiday leave as an entitlement has declined in the period from 1997 to 2003, dropping from 73 per cent in 1997 to 71 per cent in 2003. Comparable data is not available prior to 1997.

**Figure 1 Employees with holiday leave as an entitlement, 1997-2002 (%)**

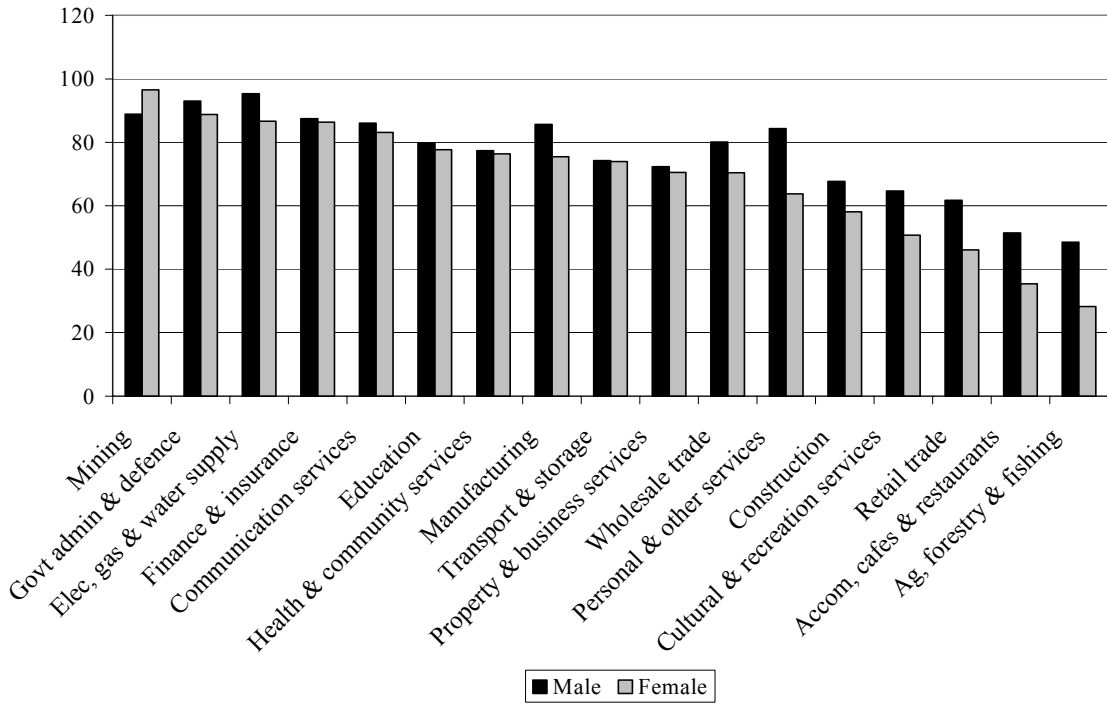


Source: ABS 2003a

Figure 2 illustrates the differences in the availability of holiday leave for men and women by industry. It shows that in most industries access to holiday leave is more or less equal for men and women, although in some industries significant differences do exist. For example in personal and other services, 84 per cent of men have holiday pay as an entitlement compared to 63 per cent of women. Mining is the only industry in which women have greater access to paid holiday leave than men.

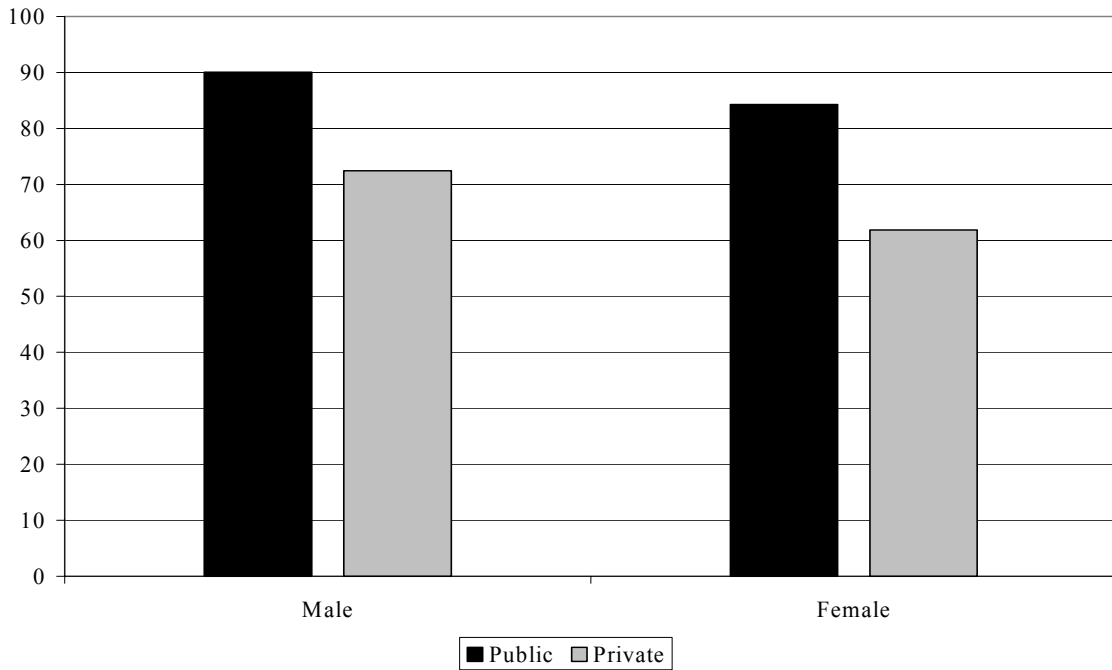
Figure 2 also shows that the lowest rates of holiday leave prevail in industries where casual work is predominant, such as in the accommodation, cafe and restaurant industry where only 51 per cent of men and 35 per cent of women are entitled to paid holiday leave. A significant difference also exists between industries. For example, women in agriculture, forestry and fishing and in accommodation, cafes and restaurants are half as likely to have access to holiday leave as women working in the mining industry.

**Figure 2 Holiday leave by industry and gender, 2002 (%)**



Source: ABS 2003a

**Figure 3 Holiday leave in the public and private sectors, by gender, 2002 (%)**



Source: ABS 2003

Men have significantly greater access to holiday leave than women in both the private and public sectors. Figure 2 demonstrates that, in 15 of the 17 industries considered, a higher proportion of males than females are entitled to holiday leave. Figure 3 shows that employees in the public sector are much more likely to have holiday leave entitlements than their counterparts in the private sector, with 87 per cent of employees in the public sector receiving holiday leave compared to 68 per cent in the private sector.

### 1.3 Why holidays are important

The effect of overwork on the health and well-being of individuals has been well-documented. Most of the literature has focused on the impact of working long hours and the effects of shift work on ill health. A recent study commissioned by the Department of Industrial Relations (Dawson *et al.* 2001) explored the effect of extended working hours or overwork on employees. The report finds that there is no specific disease that is related to longer working hours but that long hours have been linked to lifestyle illnesses including obesity, alcoholism and cardiovascular disease. The most obvious consequence of extended working hours is their effect on the amount and quality of sleep and the associated reduction in alertness and increased fatigue. The report shows that errors relating to fatigue now occur well before a worker is on the verge of falling asleep and that the effects of a reduction in sleep can occur once an employee exceeds 48 hours of work per week (Dawson *et al.* 2001, p. 14).

A study involving Japanese employees who had died from cardiovascular attacks (Uehata 1991) states that over two thirds of them had worked in excess of 60 hours a week, 50 overtime hours a month, or more than half of their fixed holidays before the attack. The Japanese even have a word for death from overwork, *karoshi*.

The effects of overwork are psychological as well as physical. Bent (1998) addressed this issue by exploring the psychological effects of working overtime, extended hours and shift work and found links between certain mental disorders and long hours of work. These included a greater prevalence of substance abuse and a tendency to anxiety and depression, headaches and sleep disturbances resulting from both the long hours of work and the substance abuse (Bent 1998, p.26).

A meta-analysis of 17 studies by Sparks, Cooper, Fried and Shirom (1997) found that overwork can be linked to lifestyle diseases and subsequent outcomes such as cardiovascular and liver disease. As a result Bent states that ‘significant associations could be identified between hours of work and both physical and psychological health symptoms’ (Bent 1998, p. 29). He concludes that current research is significant enough to find a potential link between ill health and working extended hours especially when these hours are in excess of 50 per week.

Bent (1998) and Dawson *et al.* (2001) discuss the effects on pregnancy and miscarriage of extended working hours. The findings of both of these studies indicate an increased risk of preterm births for women engaged in shift work or hours of work beyond 40 hours per week (Bent 1998, p. 28). Dawson *et al.* (2001) draw on US research by Hatch *et al.* (1997) showing that long work hours reduce foetal growth and result in low birth weight babies. Case study evidence for the effects of overwork on employees comes

from the ‘Fifty Families’ study carried out for the ACTU (Pocock *et al.* 2001). The study found that the culture of long hours in Australian workplaces had taken hold in the 12 industry sectors researched. Many interviewees felt that they had little choice in the hours they worked.

While the studies outlined above deal primarily with weekly hours worked it is likely that the effects of overwork observed in these studies are exacerbated if employees do not have access to adequate holiday leave. The Japanese study of *karoshi* does point specifically to the detrimental impact that failure to take holiday leave has on an individual’s health.

Finally, it is important to note that in some workplaces, holiday leave is being converted into maternity, paternity and carers’ leave. This is only necessary in the absence of such leave provisions in their own right. The erosion of actual holiday leave available for leisure, rather than for the performance of non-market work, is a significant concern, especially for female employees.

As discussed above, all Australians who are employed full-time are entitled to four weeks holiday leave. There is little existing data on individuals’ attitudes towards the amount of holidays in Australia or the use to which people put their holidays but some information on why people go away on holidays has been collected for the tourism industry. Table 4 reports data collected for See Australia (a tourism promotion organisation) and details the reasons given for taking a short break<sup>2</sup> from work (Woolcott Research 2002). The data show that 75 per cent of people gave reasons associated with spending time with family or friends, rejuvenating or getting away from it all. Table 5 shows that the most frequent reason given for not taking leave by those who had not used any of their leave in the previous 12 months was that they were too busy at work to have a break

**Table 4 Reasons given by those who took a short break in the last 12 months, 2002**

Activity	%
To visit/spend time with family/friends/social event	35
To get away from work/get away from it all	20
Re-generate/rejuvenate/pamper themselves	20
Just for fun/enjoyment	8
Physical/cultural/wine tasting etc.	3
Work related trip	2
Get back in touch with nature/out of city	4
Other	4

Source: Woolcott Research 2002

<sup>2</sup> Defined as time spent away from home.

As we have seen, the effects of unreasonable work hours have been linked to an increase in alcohol consumption, more smoking, greater caffeine consumption, unhealthy weight gain, disrupted eating and sleeping patterns, gastrointestinal disorders, cardiovascular problems, fertility problems, psychological disorders and relationship breakdown (Dawson *et al.* 2001). It is unlikely that those respondents who cite being too busy at work to take holidays are immune from such illnesses.

Holidays are an important mechanism for increasing the well-being of individuals. While there is a widespread view that increased income and economic growth are essential to enhancing the well-being of the population, a range of empirical evidence suggests that higher incomes and more economic growth are not correlated with increases in subjective assessments of well-being (for a discussion see Hamilton 2003). Similarly, at the individual level a large number of Australians have made explicit decisions which reduced their income in order to increase their quality of life. This phenomenon, known as ‘downshifting’, is discussed in Hamilton and Mail (2003). Hamilton and Mail found that, using a narrow definition of downshifting, 23 per cent of Australians aged 30-59 had made a decision that placed lifestyle ahead of money in the 10 years preceding the survey. People take holidays because they provide physical and psychological health benefits, but they also take them because holidays are an end in themselves. All other things being equal, a society that has fewer holidays is less well off than a society that has more.

**Table 5 Reasons for not taking a holiday or short break<sup>1</sup> in 2002**

	(%)
I am too busy at work/work commitments	24
Can't afford it/need money for something else	14
Self employed so can't take time off	8
Been too busy to take leave	8
Have children/family commitments preventing me from going away	4
Just changed jobs/have a new job so no leave accrued	3
Casual employee so don't get leave	4
Don't have any leave	3
Other	36
No reason	2

Note: 1. Defined as time spent away from home in what respondents considered to be a holiday or short break.

Source: Woolcott Research 2002

#### **1.4 In summary**

Australians work longer hours, have less holiday leave and fewer public holidays than their counterparts in most other industrialized countries. While Australians may still see themselves as living in the land of the long weekend, enjoying ‘sickies’ and taking well-earned holidays, the reality experienced by most employees is quite different.

For over 15 years, governments of both political persuasions in Australia have talked about the need to make the Australian labour market more flexible. The corollary of this flexibility was, we were told, that Australian employees would have more choice. Hours and conditions would reflect the preferences of both employees and employers. If this is true then long hours and short holidays would appear to be the preferred outcome of Australian employees. Yet evidence is presented below which contradicts such an interpretation. The following section considers the nature and extent of labour market ‘flexibility’ in Australia with particular reference to the possible asymmetry in bargaining power in relation to holiday preferences.

## 2. Labour market flexibility

### 2.1 Deregulation of the Australian labour market

The process of ‘deregulating’ the Australian labour market has been underway for over 15 years. According to Macdonald *et al.* (2001, p. 1), despite the constant change to the Australian industrial relations system which has been occurring since the time of Federation, ‘the changes in the most recent period seem to be the most systematic and far reaching’. Proponents of deregulation often promote the virtues of increased ‘flexibility’ in the labour market. Employment Minister Tony Abbot has stated that ‘in a flexible economy... wages and employment can both rise – and under this Government unemployment has fallen to an eight year low’ (Abbott 1999). More recently he said ‘[g]reater workplace flexibility permits employers and employees to agree to conditions that add to the efficiency of business and foster employment’ (Abbott 2002).

However, it is this same flexibility that has drawn the most criticism from others. Some authors argue that ‘flexibility’ in the labour market refers predominantly to increasing the capacity of employers to achieve changes that are in their interests (Campbell 1993; Buchanan and Callus 1993). Advocates of deregulation often highlight the need to effect change on employers’ terms in order to achieve broader macroeconomic objectives such as lower unemployment or increased international ‘competitiveness’. Alternatively, they focus on the benefits to employees of a more flexible labour market such as increased access to part-time and casual work or the ability to operate as a contractor rather than as an employee.

The benefits highlighted by one group are the very problems identified by another group. A large body of literature discusses the increase in ‘precarious’ employment conditions (Burgess 1994; Burgess and Campbell 1998; Weller and Webber 2001). This literature is largely concerned with the adverse social and economic consequences of greater reliance on less secure forms of employment. Particular concerns include the absence of career paths, lack of training, low and volatile wages, exploitation of vulnerable groups in the community and adverse macroeconomic outcomes.

Whether or not labour market deregulation has increased or decreased the well-being of employees is an empirical question. There is no doubt that some individuals have benefited and some have been disadvantaged. Instead of attempting to determine the individual winners and losers, much attention has been focused on the macroeconomic impact of deregulation such as its impact on productivity, unemployment and economic growth (see for example Lansbury and Westcott 2000; Stegman and Stegman 2001; McDonald and Lye 2002). However, the major difficulty associated with any macroeconomic attempt to determine the impact of a change in policy is the absence of a reliable benchmark against which the reformed economy can be compared.

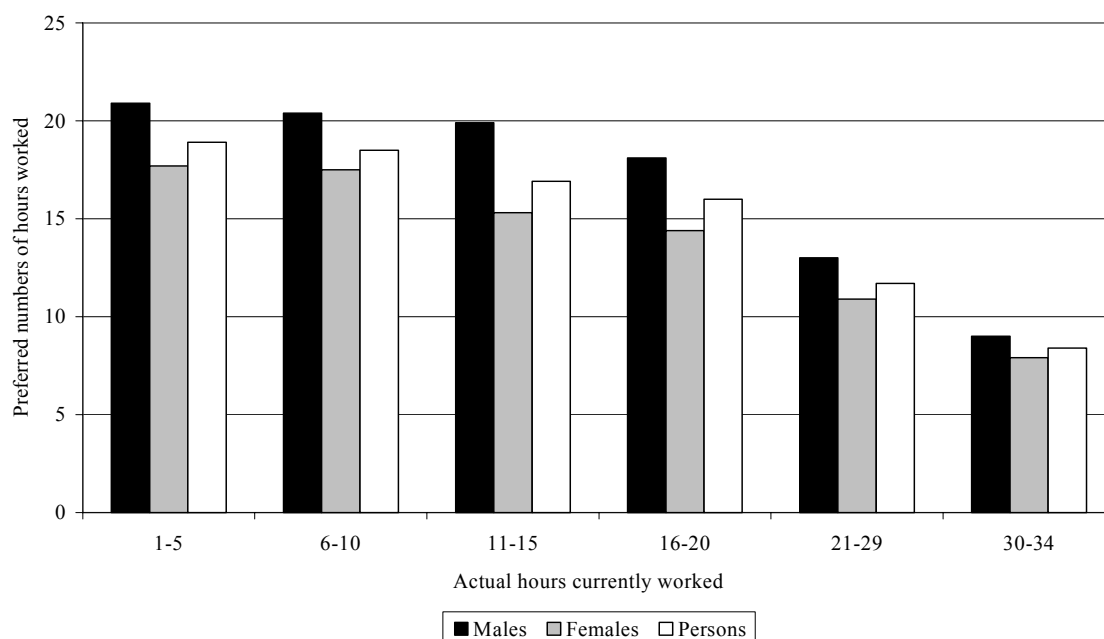
At the individual level, the process of determining whether the flexibility flowing from labour market deregulation has generated costs or benefits should be easier to determine. However, despite the large amount of data on labour market outcomes, there remain difficulties in determining the desirability of change. The absence of systematic

data on the labour market outcomes desired by individuals is a major cause of this problem (Denniss 2001).

## 2.2 Actual *versus* desired hours of work

An important quantitative element of the performance of a flexible labour market is its ability to match the hours of work desired by employees with the hours of work desired by employers. While there is extensive data on actual hours worked (see for example ABS 2003c), data on desired hours is much less comprehensive, particularly for full-time employees. Figure 4 provides information on the number of additional hours desired by part-time workers who have expressed dissatisfaction with their working hours. Of the 28 per cent of the workforce that works part-time, 22 per cent ( i.e. four in five) would prefer to work additional hours (ABS 2003b, p. 17). According to the ABS (2003b) underemployed people want to work on average an extra 15 hours per week. Men want to work an additional 17 hours compared to women who want to work 14 hours more per week. Of men who were underemployed, 73 per cent want to work full-time and 49 per cent of underemployed women desire full-time work.

**Figure 4 Average preferred hours of extra work desired by underemployed part-time workers**

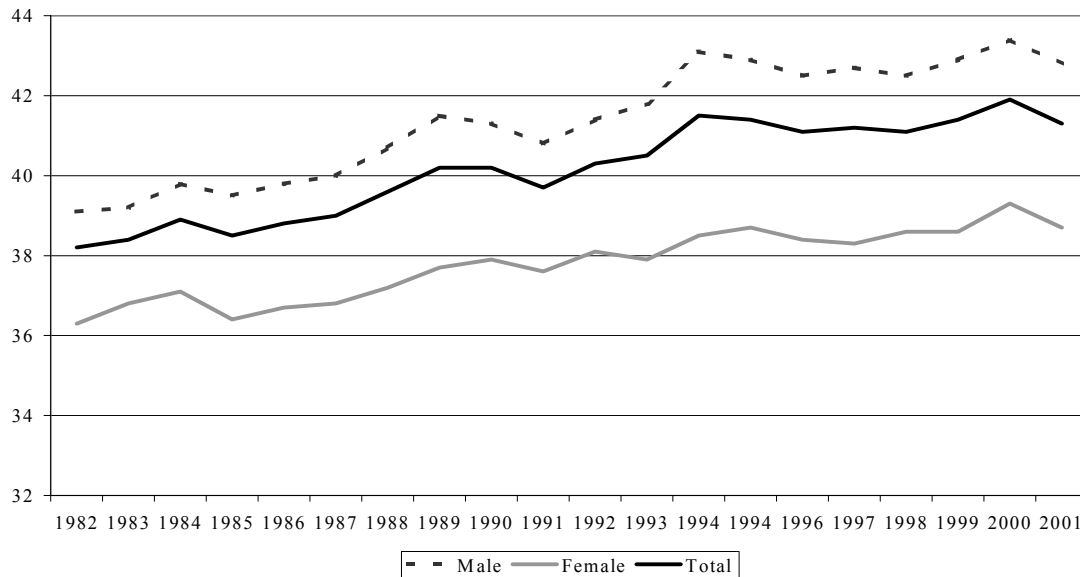


Source: ABS 2003b

Over the same period that underemployment has grown for part-time workers, the average working week has lengthened for full-time employees. Figure 5 shows that the trend towards working longer hours has been persistent over the period 1982-2001 with the reductions in 1985 and 1991 broadly coinciding with lower rates of economic growth in those years. The figure shows that for men employed full-time the average number of hours worked is 43 per week. The downturn in average hours in 2001 appears to be due to a decline in the number of people working more than 60 hours per week (see Figure 6).



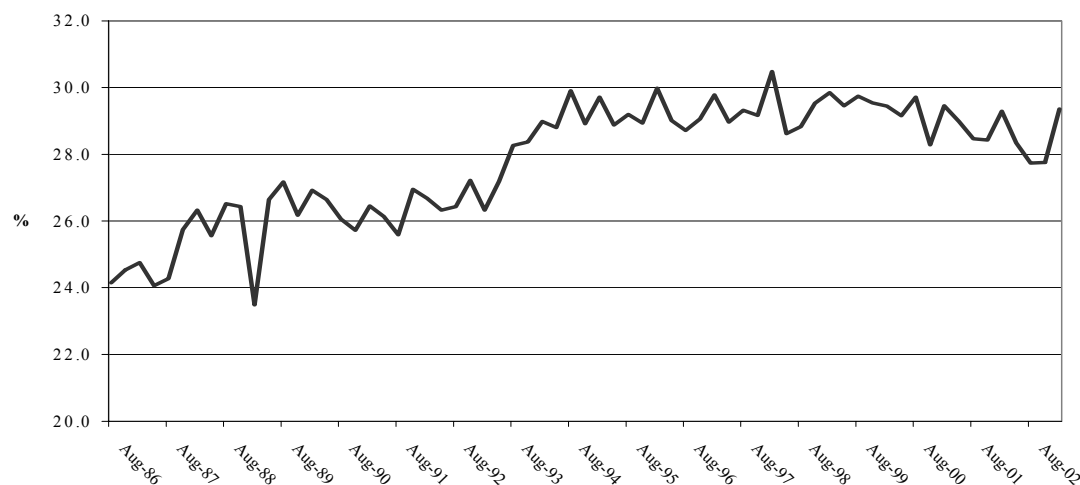
**Figure 5 Average weekly hours for full-time employees, by gender, 1982- 2001**



Note: This graph was constructed using unpublished data from the ABS Labour Force Survey, as the published data on hours worked in the survey is for all employed persons rather than employees only. Source: ABS Labour Force, Catalogue number 6203.0, month of August, unpublished data, cited in Commonwealth Submission to The Reasonable Hours Case 2001-2002.

While good data on the desire for additional hours of work by part-time workers is available, the ABS collects no systematic data on the desired hours of full-time workers. It is therefore unclear whether the increase in hours worked by full-time employees reflects the preferences of employers, employees or both. However, a large body of qualitative data suggests that long work hours do not reflect the desires of employees. On the contrary, long hours are seen as a defensive mechanism by workers who feel increasingly uncertain of and insecure about their place in the deregulated labour market (Pocock *et al.* 2001; Pocock 2003)

**Figure 6 Proportion of full-time employees working over 45 hours per week (%)**

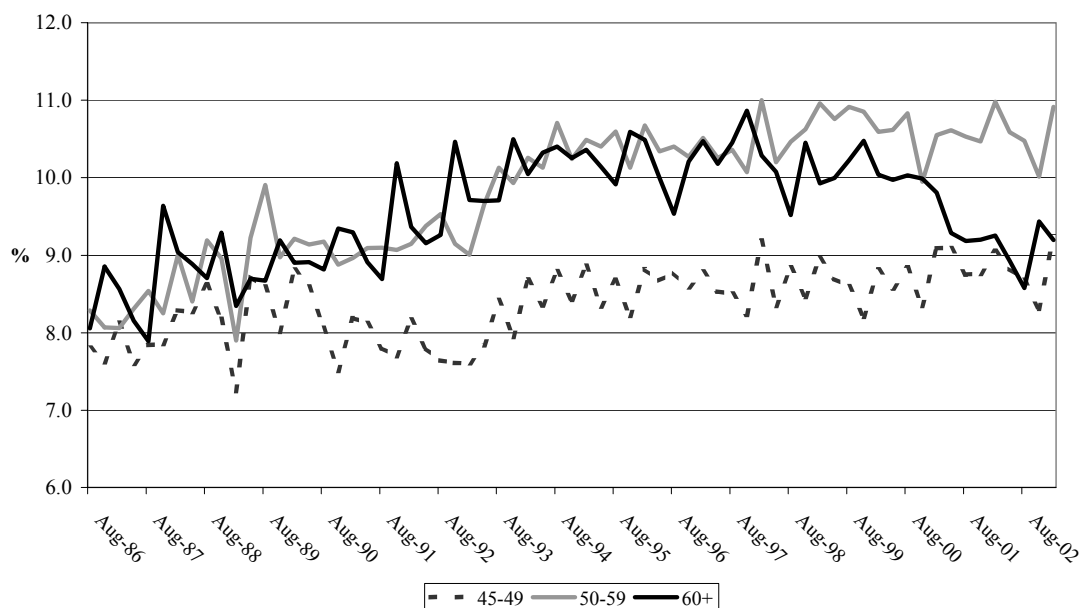


Source: ABS 2003d, Tables 12 and 12a

The increase in the average number of hours worked is driven to a large extent by the increase in the number of people working very long hours. As shown in Figure 6, since the mid-1980s there has been a substantial increase in the number of people working more than 45 hours per week. Figure 7 shows that the number of people working in excess of 60 hours per week increased substantially between 1986 and 1997 but has declined somewhat since then. Despite this decline, the percentage of people working these hours is still higher than in 1986. On the other hand, the figure shows that the number of employees working 50-59 hours per week, having grown steadily from 1986 to 1997, has now stabilised. The number of people working 45-49 hours per week has climbed steadily from 1986 to 2002.

In February 2003, 26.7 per cent of full-time employees in Australia worked 49 hours or more per week, compared to 16.4 per cent in 1996 (ABS 2003d). While it is possible that labour market deregulation has removed the constraints that prevented large numbers of employees from working an average of 10 hours per day, it is also possible that these long hours reflect the preferences of the employer rather than the employee.

**Figure 7 Percentage of full-time employees working very long hours**



Source: ABS 2003d, Tables 12 and 12a.

As discussed above, while some ABS data on desired hours of workers do exist, the focus of data collection has been on the underemployment of part-time employees rather than on the overwork of full-time employees. The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey, on the other hand, does provide some data on the desired hours of work. According to Wooden (2002) the survey shows

a high degree of mismatch between preferred hours of work and usual hours of work among persons working long hours. Indeed, just over half (54%) of those persons reporting work in excess of 48 hours per week also indicated that they would prefer fewer hours. It is thus entirely possible that industrial relations reforms during the

1990s have contributed to growing dissatisfaction with working hours. (Wooden 2002, p. 9).

Denniss (2001) proposed basic changes in the way that labour force data were collected and presented. Rather than categorising individuals into a small range of predefined subsets of the labour force – such as full-time employee, part-time employee, and unemployed – it was suggested that all ABS survey respondents should be asked to state their preferred hours of work. Researchers and policy makers would then be able to describe accurately the quantitative aspects of labour market efficiency. The extent of overwork and underemployment would be highlighted, and changes in the ability of the labour market to match the desires of employers and employees tracked over time. In the absence of such systematic data, however, the debate as to whether flexibility delivers costs or benefits to the majority of the labour market is likely to remain unresolved.

While there is no doubt that labour market deregulation has delivered insufficient hours of work and more precarious employment to a significant number of employees (Burgess 1994; Burgess and Campbell 1998), there also appears to be no doubt that the increased availability of part-time and casual work has been of benefit to those individuals, particularly women and students, who desire paid employment but who do not wish to work full-time.

### **2.3 In summary**

Increased flexibility in the labour market has, by design, resulted in fundamental changes to the way in which employers and employees interact. It is unclear whether these changes have delivered benefits that are evenly distributed between employers and employees or whether they have been captured instead by small groups of employers or employees. There is no doubt that extended labour market flexibility has resulted in a substantial increase in the polarisation of working hours with substantial growth in the number of workers working very long hours and an increase in the number of underemployed workers. The labour market does not appear to be effective in matching jobs to the preferences of employees.

While discussion of overwork has centred on the average number of hours worked each week, it is apparent that reduced access to holiday leave is also a significant cause of overwork for many Australians. It is important to note, however, that both access to leave and the adequacy of existing leave provisions do not appear to have been given high priority on the enterprise bargaining agenda. This may be because unions are unaware of members' interests or it may be due to a failure of either employers or the bargaining system more generally to deal with innovative workplace reforms. The following section provides data on the desire of many individuals to purchase additional leave as a means of using increased labour market flexibility to achieve improved work-life balance.

### 3. The labour-leisure tradeoff: New evidence

#### 3.1 What is the labour-leisure tradeoff?

In a deregulated labour market the possibilities for workers to tailor their employment conditions, including their hours of work, amount of leave, and the flexibility of their work hours, should be enhanced. Given that there are no legal barriers to the pursuit of employment conditions that better suit the income-leisure preferences of employees, it must be concluded that either employees are happy with the *status quo* or that their preferred outcomes are inhibited by employer attitudes.

Standard neoclassical economic analyses of an individual's decision to supply labour to the labour market are based on the notion of a tradeoff between work-time and leisure-time (see for example Norris 2000; Eisenhauer 1999; Saving 1999; Erosa and Gervais 2002). Leisure time is assumed to provide an individual with 'utility', while work time delivers 'disutility'. Individuals are assumed to choose the number of hours they supply to the labour market with reference to the relative utility of leisure, the disutility of work and the hourly wage rate that is achievable.

Such a simplistic notion of the operation of the labour market is the foundation for much of the 'common sense' used to determine the impact of policy changes on the labour market. More formally, such a view explicitly underpins the operation of the labour market in macroeconomic models used to forecast the impact of wage rises on unemployment. In practice, one of the biggest problems with the assumption of a tradeoff between time spent at work and time spent enjoying leisure is the degree of rigidity in the design of jobs. That is, many employers have preferences for working hours that are independent of the preferences of employees or potential employees. When unemployment exists and firms conceive of jobs as a 'take it or leave it' combination of employment conditions, actual labour market outcomes are unlikely to be determined through the bargaining of equal parties.

#### 3.2 Do employees take their leave?

While there is a large body of literature on the theory and measurement of the labour-leisure tradeoff, following standard economic practice there have been very few attempts to determine the rate of tradeoff based on actual empirical analysis of what people say they would prefer. While economists are often skeptical of people's ability to state their actual preferences, such methodological concerns must be considered in context. That is, while legitimate questions may exist about the disparity between what people say they want and what they actually want, such concerns have replaced any consideration of whether or not individuals actually have discretion over the number of hours they supply to the market.

In order to investigate the attitudes of full-time employees to holidays, The Australia Institute commissioned Newspoll to conduct a national survey of full-time employees. The survey was carried out over 13-16 June, 2003. Respondents were contacted by randomly selected telephone numbers. To ensure that the sample included those people who spend a lot of time away from home, a system of call backs and appointments was

used. In order to reflect the population distribution, the survey results were weighted by ABS data on age, level of schooling completed, sex and age. The survey identified 422 full-time workers aged between 25 and 59. Those who described themselves as self-employed were excluded from further questioning as they are not entitled to four weeks annual leave. This left a sample of 345 respondents.

The objective of the survey was to determine the proportion of full-time employees who do not take advantage of their holiday entitlements, the reasons for this, and the proportion who would be willing to forgo a small pay rise in order to gain an extra two weeks holiday leave.

Table 6 shows the annual and weekly after-tax cost, for a range of different incomes, of purchasing an additional two weeks holiday leave. For an individual earning \$30,000 per year, the weekly cost of purchasing an additional two weeks holiday leave would be \$16.47. Similarly, for someone earning \$100,000 per year, the weekly cost of an additional two weeks holiday leave would be \$41.26. According to the ABS Survey of Household Expenditure (ABS 2000), people earning more than \$100,000 per year spend more than \$40 per week on alcoholic beverages (\$40.43), clothing and footwear (\$63.94), household furnishings and equipment (\$73.83), household services and operation (\$60.63).

**Table 6 Annual and weekly after-tax cost of purchasing an additional two weeks holiday leave (\$)**

Gross annual income	Annual cost of purchasing an additional 2 weeks off (after tax)	Weekly cost of purchasing an additional 2 weeks off (after tax)
30,000	856	16.47
35,000	999	19.21
40,000	1142	21.95
45,000	1284	24.70
50,000	1427	27.45
55,000	1295	24.90
60,000	1413	27.16
65,000	1395	26.83
70,000	1502	28.88
75,000	1609	30.95
80,000	1717	33.02
85,000	1824	35.07
90,000	1931	37.14
95,000	2039	39.21
100,000	2146	41.26

Source: Author's estimates derived from ATO tax calculator.

The Newspoll survey first asked full-time employees about their usage of existing leave entitlements. They were asked: ‘Thinking now about the paid leave that you were entitled to during 2002, did you take all the paid leave you were entitled to during 2002?’. The responses are shown in Table 7.

**Table 7 Whether respondents took all annual leave in 2002 (%)**

	Total	Male	Female	25-34	35-49	50-59
Yes	39	38	41	37	36	50
No	58	60	53	59	60	48
Don’t know	4	3	6	4	4	2

Source: Newspoll. Figures may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Table 7 shows that only 39 per cent of full-time employees used their four weeks entitlement to holiday leave in 2002, with 58 per cent using less than their entitlement. Failure to take four weeks leave was higher amongst men (60 per cent) than women (53 per cent) and higher amongst respondents aged 35-49 (60 per cent) compared to respondents aged 50-59 (48 per cent).

Table 8 shows that the uptake of leave was highest among those with middle incomes, \$40,000 to \$54,999 (45 per cent). The relationship between uptake of holidays and income is shown in Figure 8. Employees on higher or lower incomes were less likely to use up all of their leave.

**Table 8 Whether or not respondents took all their leave in 2002, by income (%)**

	Total	Under \$25000	\$25000-\$39999	\$40000-\$54999	\$55000-\$69999	\$70000-\$99999	\$100000 or more
Yes	39	23	37	45	35	40	35
No	57	72	56	53	61	59	65
Don’t know	4	5	7	2	4	1	-

Source: Newspoll. Figures may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

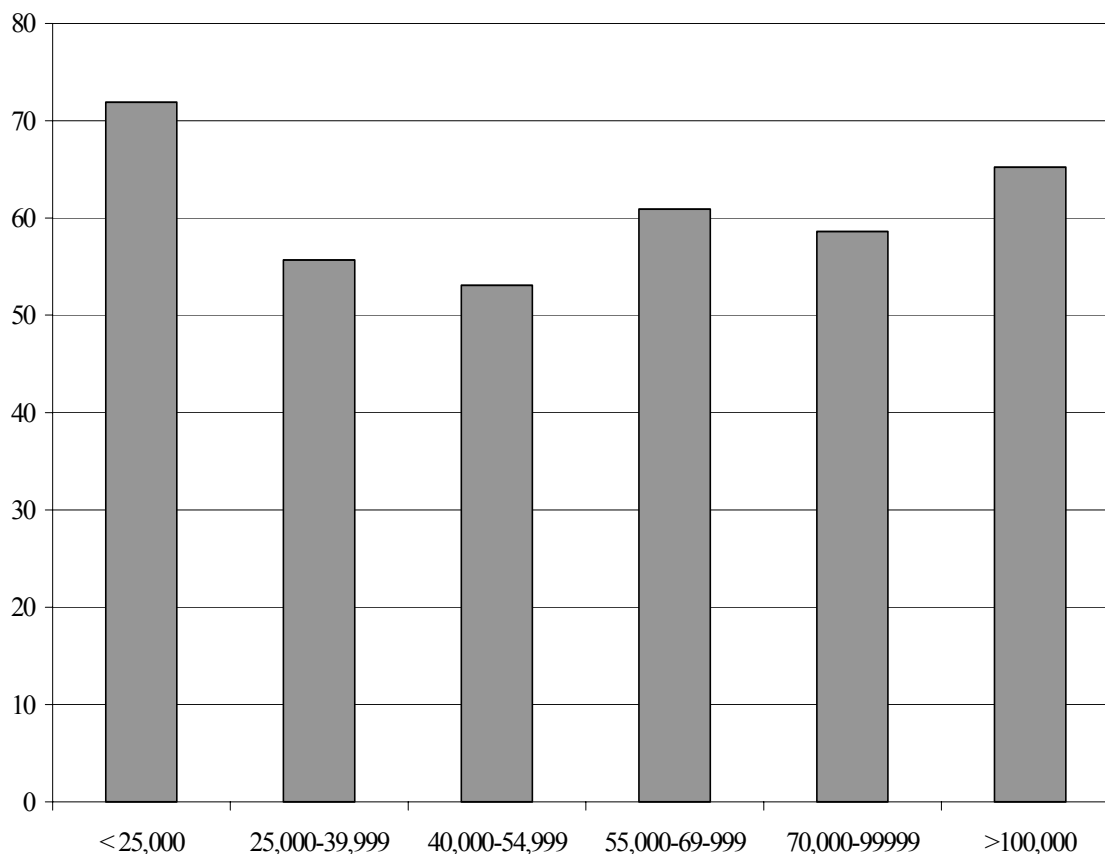
The fact that 58 per cent of full-time employees did not take all the leave to which they were entitled in 2002 is not evidence, in itself, that a problem exists. Employees may, for example, be choosing to accumulate their leave for use in the future. Respondents were asked: ‘Which one of the following statements best describes why you did not take all your paid leave entitlements in 2002? Was it because...

1. You are saving them up for a future holiday.
2. You couldn’t get time off that suited you.
3. You were too busy at work.
4. You’d rather have the money than the extra holidays. You preferred to work rather than taking more holidays.
5. Your leave was paid out when you changed jobs.

6. Or, for some other reason, please specify.

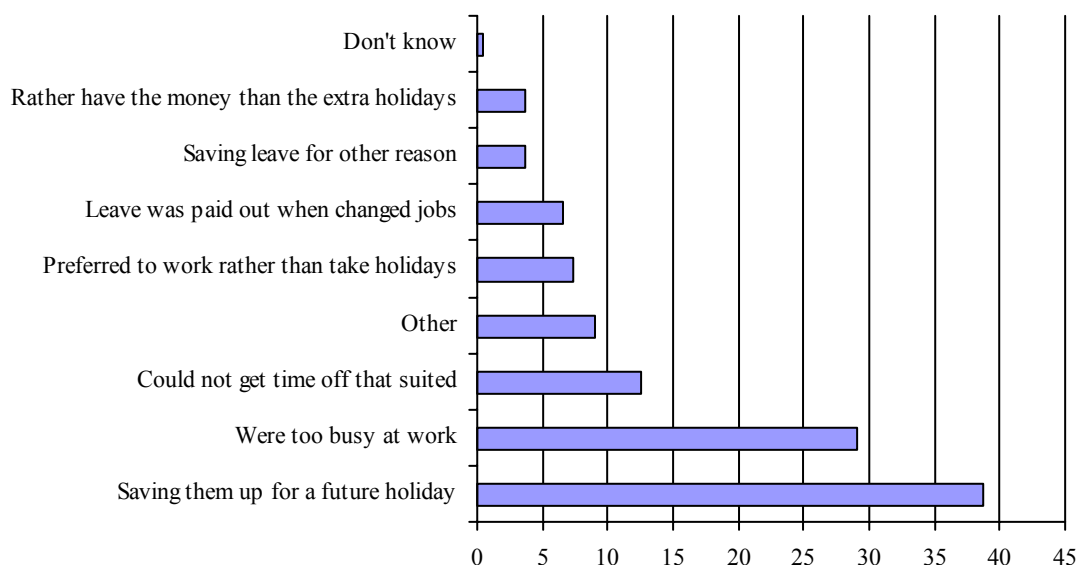
7. Don't know.

**Figure 8 Proportions of full-time employees who did not take all their leave, by income group, 2002 (%)**



Source: Newspoll

Figure 9 shows that, among those who did not take all their leave, 38 per cent were saving for a future holiday. Another 29 per cent reported being too busy at work while a further 13 per cent cited the inability to get time off that suited them. The reasons given for failing to take leave are broken down by income in Table 9. Some of the reasons have been combined. The disaggregated reasons by income are provided in the Appendix.

**Figure 9 Reason for failing to take leave, 2002 (%)**

Source: Newspoll. Although respondents were asked for the one reason that best described why they did not take all their leave some respondents did provide more than one reason. The responses reported above do not, therefore, add to 100%.

**Table 9 Reasons for not taking all paid leave entitlements, by income, 2002 (%)**

	Total	Under \$25000	\$25000-\$39999	\$40000-\$54999	\$55000-\$69999	\$70000-\$99999	\$100000 or more
Saving them up for a future holiday	39	27	44	46	43	29	0
Work related difficulties	42	47	33	42	40	38	67
Enjoy work or money more	11	19	16	7	17	9	0
Other	20	8	29	12	21	26	34

Source: Newspoll. Although respondents were asked for the one reason that best described why they did not take all their leave some respondents did provide more than one reason. The responses reported above do not, therefore, add to 100%.

It is interesting to note that those earning over \$100,000 per year are much more likely to cite work related difficulties as the reason for not taking leave. As shown in the Appendix, 61 per cent of those earning over \$100,000 per year who did not use all their leave referred to being too busy at work. However, only six per cent blamed difficulties in getting time off that suited.

While a high proportion of respondents cited the desire to accumulate holidays in order to take a longer holiday in the future as the reason for not taking all their leave, a larger



percentage of respondents cited workplace restrictions. In particular, 29 per cent said that they were too busy at work to take all their holidays and 13 per cent said that they could not get time off that suited their holiday plans. Taken together, these figures suggest that 42 per cent of people who did not take their full leave entitlement in 2002 believe that their employers were, at least in part, a barrier to achieving work-life balance. The fact that more than two in five full-time employees experienced difficulties in taking their holiday leave and did so because of the direct or implied pressures placed on them at work should be of serious concern to policy makers. The failure to take holiday leave, combined with the adverse impact of working long hours, is likely to result in adverse physical and psychological health outcomes for individuals as well as placing additional stress on families and communities.

### 3.3 Trading higher incomes for more leave

While much has been said about the desire of individuals to increase their incomes in order to fund consumption or save for their retirements, there is evidence that, for a portion of the community at least, other lifestyle factors are more important (Hamilton and Mail 2003). Survey respondents were asked: ‘Bearing in mind that two weeks is about four per cent of a full year, if you had a choice between a four percent pay rise or an additional two weeks of paid leave each year, which one would you prefer to have?’. The responses are reported in Table 10.

**Table 10 Preferences for a four per cent pay rise or an additional two weeks paid leave, by gender and age (%)**

	Total	Men	Women	25-34	35-49	50-59
4 per cent pay rise	45	45	44	40	47	49
Additional 2 weeks holiday leave	52	53	49	57	49	48

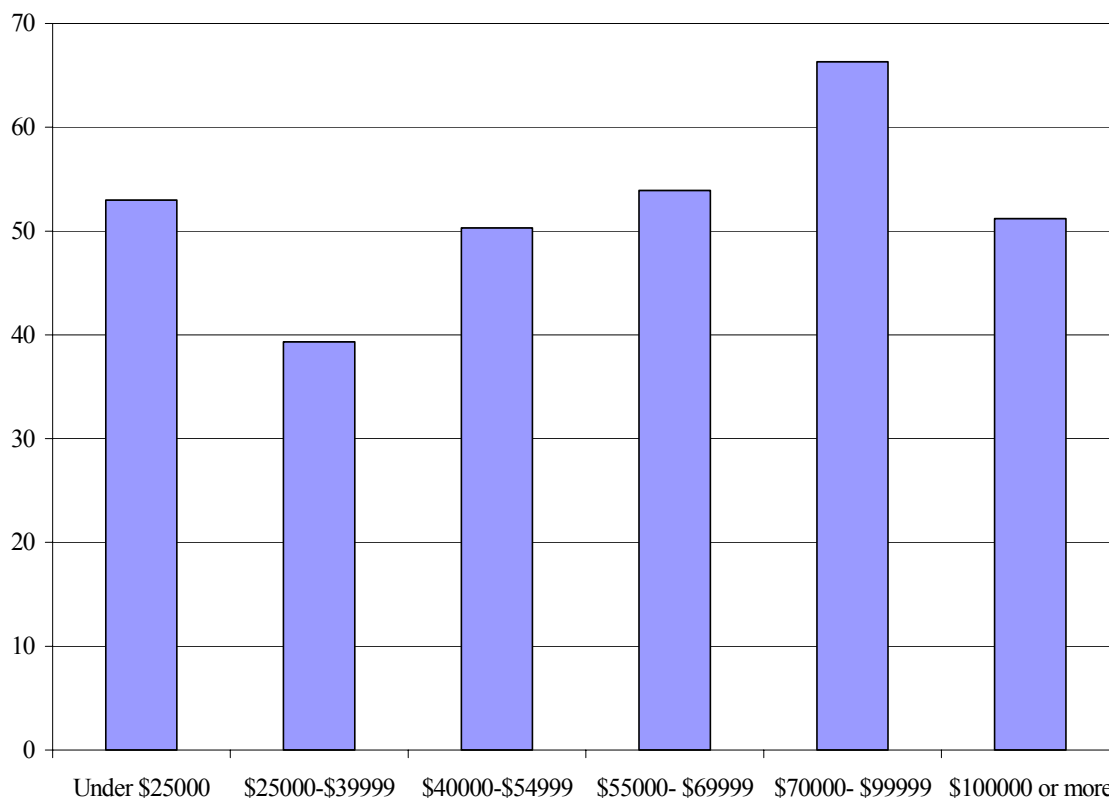
Source: Newspoll

Despite the fact that the majority of full-time employees did not take all of their holidays in 2002, the majority of respondents expressed a desire for additional holiday leave and a willingness to forgo four per cent of their income to achieve such an increase. That is, more than half (52 per cent) of full-time employees would prefer to receive an additional two weeks paid leave than a four per cent increase in pay. Men have a slightly higher preference for more leave than women, and respondents aged 25-34 were more likely to express a preference for leave (57 per cent) than those aged 50-59 (48 per cent).

Among full-time employees, the fact that younger people expressed a higher preference for additional leave than older people is interesting given that average income rises with age. This could reflect either a generational preference for leisure over income or age specific factors such as the higher likelihood that respondents aged 25-34 have young families.

Figure 10 shows that the preference for additional leave over more pay is high across all income groups with a peak of 66 per cent for those earning between \$70,000 and \$99,000. It is important to note that the preference for additional leave was higher among those who had used their entire leave entitlement in 2002 (61 per cent) than for those who had not or were unsure (46 per cent). This result provides a useful consistency check for the data.

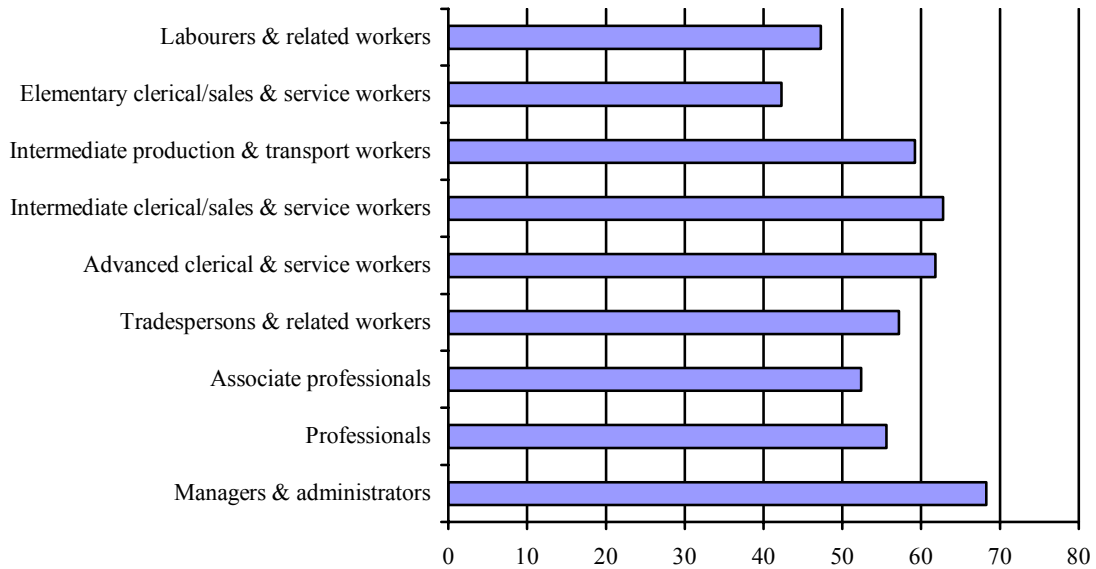
**Figure 10 Preference for additional paid holidays, by income (%)**



Source: Newspann

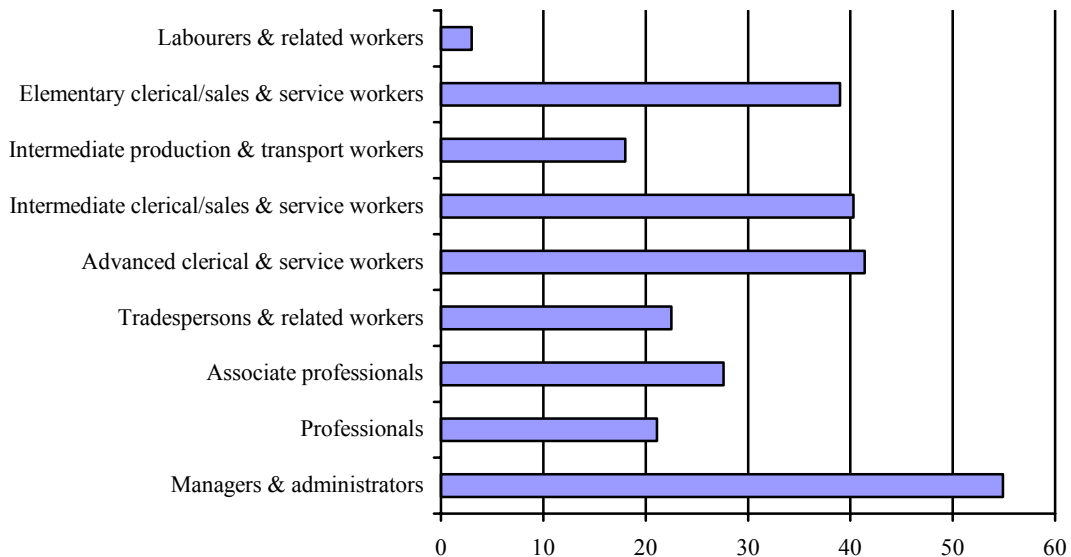
It is also worth noting that respondents earning less than \$25,000 per annum are more likely to prefer additional leave to more income than those earning between \$25,000 and \$54,999. This may be because respondents who have a preference for time over money have already 'downshifted' (Hamilton and Mail 2003) or because they provide a second family income. Respondents employed as managers and administrators were the most likely to have failed to take all of their leave in 2002 (68 per cent) while elementary clerical/sales and service workers were the least likely (42 per cent). Figure 11 provides data on failure to take leave by occupation. Managers and administrators were also the most likely to report being too busy at work as the reason for failing to take their leave (55 per cent), with labourers the least likely to blame being too busy at work (3 per cent). Data for all occupations is reported in Figure 12.

**Figure 11 Proportions of full-time employees who did not take all their annual leave, by occupation (%)**



Source: Newspoll

**Figure 12 Proportions of full-time employees who were 'too busy at work' to take all their leave, by occupation (%)**



Source: Newspoll

## 4. Conclusions

Despite 15 years of labour market deregulation, it is apparent from the data presented in this paper that existing labour market outcomes do not reflect the preferences of employees. Section 2 provides ABS and HILDA data which suggest that average hours of work do not match those preferred by employees. The new prevailing information on the uptake of existing leave provisions and the preferences of employees for additional leave over additional pay provides further evidence of the mismatch between the desires of employees and the terms and conditions offered by employers.

The new analysis raises two separate but related problems. First, a significant percentage of employees are having difficulties accessing their existing entitlement to four weeks holiday leave. While individual firms may encounter unforeseeable circumstances which inhibit the granting of holiday leave at times desired by employees, the fact that 41 per cent of employees had difficulties obtaining leave due to work pressure suggests the problem is systemic rather than caused by unexpected circumstances.

Policy makers may need to consider mechanisms to ensure that all employees have reasonable access to their existing entitlements. In order to increase compliance with the law, it may be desirable to collect on a regular basis a much wider range of information from both employers and employees. In the first instance, employers could be required to provide detailed information on the accrued leave entitlements of their employees as part of their published financial accounts. Such disclosure would assist not only regulators but also creditors and employees in monitoring a firm's compliance with laws governing the provision of leave. If firms continue to inhibit employee access to holiday leave then financial penalties, such as loadings for leave not taken within two years, may be necessary to help ensure compliance.

The second problem highlighted by the new analysis relates to the lack of flexibility in the labour market with regard to the matching of conditions of employment with employee preferences. More than half of full-time employees have expressed a desire for additional leave, yet this desire has not been translated into employment arrangements that provide improved work-life balance. There are a range of possible explanations for this situation.

First, despite the existence of 'leave purchasing arrangements' in a large number of organisations, particularly in the public sector, these schemes may not be widely known and understood. However if, after 15 years of government attempts to increase labour market flexibility, employees are still not aware that their preferences should feature strongly in any negotiated workplace outcomes, then perhaps the underlying objective of reform is unrelated to employee preferences.

Secondly, there may be workplace or social barriers that inhibit employees pursuing increased leave. Employees may believe that the choice to purchase additional leave will be interpreted negatively by their employers or their colleagues and that this sentiment may either inhibit promotion or reduce social acceptance in the workplace. However, given that more than half of full-time workers have expressed a similar

preference it is unlikely that pressure from fellow workers is strong. Pressure from managers, on the other hand, may be an important factor.

Finally, employers may directly or indirectly discourage the purchasing of additional leave. In view of the difficulties that more than 40 per cent of full-time employees have had in accessing their existing leave entitlements it is likely that some employers perceive holiday leave as an inconvenience to be avoided rather than a necessary aspect of their employees' work-life balance. This hypothesis is strengthened by the fact that those earning over \$100,000 per year were:

- somewhat less likely to have taken all of their own leave entitlements in 2002 (65 per cent compared to an average of 58 per cent);
- more than twice as likely to blame being too busy at work for their failure to take all their holidays (61 per cent compared to an average of 29 per cent); and
- a little more likely to prefer a pay rise to additional leave for themselves (49 per cent compared to an average of 45 per cent).

That is, those earning over \$100,000 per year appear less concerned with work-life balance than those on lower incomes although the differences are not great. As more than half of those earning over \$100,000 per year stated their occupation to be managers or administrators, it is likely that they are in a position to influence both the workplace culture and the access of individuals to their annual leave.

It therefore appears that some of those filling the most senior positions in the workplace may have different attitudes to work-family balance in their own lives than the rest of the full-time workforce. In order to address this problem it may be necessary to implement an education campaign for senior decision makers aimed at ensuring that the work-life preferences held by executives are not imposed on their subordinates. It is interesting to note that while the greatest preference for a four per cent pay rise was found among respondents earning over \$100,000 per year (49 per cent) the lowest preference for a pay rise was in the group earning \$70,000 to \$99,999 (34 per cent).

The choice of additional leave rather than more income would have an important impact on the economy and society. The pursuit of increased personal incomes at the expense of reductions in leisure time has had significant effects on the amount of time available for individuals to spend with family and friends and engaged in community activities. If a large number of Australians were to opt for a 50 per cent extension to holiday leave this would provide a considerable expansion in the amount of time available to be invested in other activities.

Given the data presented in Section 2, it is also likely that an increase in the amount of annual leave taken would lead to improvements in both the physical and psychological health of working Australians. While improved health outcomes do not have a direct impact on the measured economy, they have a significant impact on overall well-being.

#### 4.1 In summary

Australian workers are working longer hours and reporting higher levels of workplace stress than in the past. At the same time, despite their entitlement to four weeks holiday leave, more than 40 per cent of full-time employees did not take their entire leave entitlement in 2002 and reported being too busy at work or having difficulties getting leave at convenient times as the reason for their failure to do so. By international standards Australian workers do not receive over generous holiday entitlements, with some European countries providing up to six weeks annual leave. Public holidays in Australia are comparable with those provided in other developed countries; however, some countries have significantly more public holidays and significantly longer holiday leave.

Labour market deregulation in Australia has resulted in substantial changes to the operation of individual workplaces, the structure of families and the overall functioning of the Australian labour market. Despite repeated claims that deregulation is designed to increase the 'flexibility' of the labour market, it is apparent that the preferences of many workers are not reflected in the nature and duration of the jobs that are on offer.

In recent years increasing attention has been given to the lengthening of the average work week and the proportion of workers working very long hours. It is now widely accepted that such work patterns place stress on both the physical and psychological health of employees as well as causing damage to families and communities. Calls for greater 'work-life balance' are now common and reflect concerns about employment conditions ranging from weekly hours worked to the provision of paid maternity leave. An important, but overlooked, dimension of the work-life balance problem is the existence and availability of holiday leave. As the proportion of workers employed as casuals or on contracts grows, the proportion of the Australian workforce with holiday leave entitlements declines. Of equal importance is the capacity for those with holiday leave entitlements to access them at a time that suits their personal and family needs.

In 2002, only 39 per cent of full-time employees aged 25-59 took their full entitlement to holiday leave. Of those who did not take all their holiday leave, 29 per cent said that this was because they were too busy at work and a further 13 per cent said that they could not get time off for their holidays that suited them. Overall, more than 40 per cent of those who did not take their full holiday leave entitlement responded that it was their work that had stood in the way of their holidays. In spite of, or perhaps due to, the difficulties experienced in accessing holiday pay half of full-time employees expressed a preference for an additional two weeks of annual leave rather than a four per cent pay rise. Men and women had the same preference for additional leisure time ahead of additional income. However, younger people were more likely to opt for increased leisure than older people suggesting a generational change in attitude to the tradeoff between high incomes and more leisure.

These results raise significant issues for policy makers. They provide a direct counter to the argument that maximizing output is the most important objective for policy makers by suggesting that community well-being could be significantly enhanced not by producing more, but by allowing the preference for more leisure to be realised.

Despite 15 years of deregulation, the labour market is not adjusting rapidly to the preferences of employees. In addition to the well documented problems of unemployment and underemployment, it is now clear that the labour market is not providing terms and conditions which best suit the preferences of employees. The difficulties faced by employees in accessing their holiday leave are also a cause for concern. In addition to the potential to reduce the health and welfare of employees and their families, difficulties accessing holiday leave have the potential to exacerbate the financial consequences of firms facing bankruptcy. Policies designed to better monitor the holiday leave liabilities of firms are needed.

In light of the new data presented in this report, it is likely that some in senior decision making positions, both in companies and in government, may not share the widespread desire for additional leisure. That is, those earning over \$100,000 per year are more likely to take fewer holidays, blame this on being too busy at work, and prefer a pay rise to additional holidays. If this is in fact the case, then it is possible that some senior decision makers may themselves need education and counselling to ensure that their own preferences about work do not obstruct their subordinates' desire to achieve a better balance for themselves.

<b>Appendix</b>
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**Table A1 Reasons for not taking all leave, by income (%)**

	Total	Under \$25000	\$25000- \$39999	\$40000- \$54999	\$55000- \$69999	\$70000- \$99999	\$100000 or more
Saving leave for other reason	39	27	44	46	43	29	
Could not get time off that suited	12	16	14	15	6	10	6
Were too busy at work	21	31	19	27	34	28	61
Rather have the money than the extra holidays		16	7	2	3		
Preferred to work rather than take holidays	7		10	5	15	9	
Leave was paid out when changed jobs	7		8	5	15	3	4
Saving leave for other reason	4		10	3	3		
Other	9	8	11	4	3	23	24
Don't know	1						6



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