

Getting a life

Following the publication of *Downshifting in Australia: A sea-change in the pursuit of happiness*, the Institute received many requests for further information. Christie Breakspear and Clive Hamilton decided to explore the phenomenon in greater depth to discover why people make this change, how it changes them, how others react and how they see the total experience.

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Since The Australia Institute published its discussion paper on downshifting in January 2003, there has been a significant increase in both media attention and the numbers of people expressing an interest in the phenomenon. Nowadays, there are even companies which, for the small sum of \$5000, will help you with your downshifting decision!

The only regret shared by downshifters was that they had not done it sooner.

Our most recent analysis of the issue, entitled *Getting a Life: Understanding the downshifting phenomenon in Australia* sets out where the original discussion paper left off. It provides the first in-depth analysis of the reasons why Australians choose to put quality of life ahead of the pursuit of money. The report draws on the findings of 20 one-on-one interviews and four focus groups.

The most startling finding is the fact that the only regret shared by the downshifters interviewed for the research was that they had not done it sooner. That is not to say that individuals did not face obstacles and fears, they did. But none of the downshifters said that they would rather go back to the lives they had given up.

People tend to downshift for four main reasons, the first being a desire for a more balanced life. While rapid economic

growth and ongoing reforms in the labour market have significantly improved the material living standards of most Australians, the pressures of juggling work, family, friends and personal development have become too much for many. As discussed in the June 2003 newsletter, nearly one in five Australians is relying on prescription or non-prescription drugs to help them cope with day to day life. Many downshifters are simply responding to those same pressures in a more sustainable manner.

The second major reason given for downshifting relates to the clash between people's personal values and beliefs and the values and culture of their workplaces. As one highly trained professional put it, 'I realised fairly early on this work was wrong for me, but I didn't know what was right for me. I thought if I carried on, something miraculous would work out for me. But it never did.'

The third reason is based around the search for a more fulfilling life. While careers and pay rises are supposed to deliver satisfaction and fulfilment, many downshifters find themselves questioning whether they really want to dedicate their lives to performing tasks that they see as increasingly banal. As a former high flyer in the finance industry said, 'Once when I was negotiating with my boss about work, I realised I didn't want more money to motivate me. I was looking for more challenges, more responsibility, a certain

type of work, and I was more than willing to sacrifice money for it.'

The final commonly cited reason is related to health. Stress, overwork, lack of sleep and bad eating habits all have very real impacts on an individual's health. Many struggle to cope with these pressures; downshiftners instead choose to remove them. For some, their change in lifestyle is the result of a specific event; for others, it is simply the realisation that if they don't act now they may not be alive to act later.

While downshiftners choose to change their lives for a variety of reasons, the



outcomes for those individuals interviewed for this report were surprisingly consistent. None of them regretted their decision and all of them reflected on the sense of 'freedom' and the number of 'choices' that they now had in their lives. As one of the interviewees said, 'People don't have time to chat anymore, and we used to be like that too. But our whole pace of life has slowed down. I even drive more slowly now.'

Downshiftners say that reactions from friends are not always positive.

While downshiftners report a high degree of satisfaction with their choices, they also report that the reactions they encounter from friends, family and colleagues are not always quite so positive. One interviewee who clashed with her parents said, 'They thought I was just running away from my problems ... Their attitude was: "Well you're not supposed to be happy. Work is work, and it pays the rent. You have all these nice things. What's wrong with you; what more do you want?"'

The new discussion paper explores reactions such as these and develops the notion of the 'Deferred Happiness Syndrome', described as a state in which people persist for years in a miserable and stressful job while constantly telling themselves they are preparing for a later time when they will be able to find a way of life that will make them contented and fulfilled. Unfortunately for many, such rewards never eventuate.

Although some are critical of those who downshift, describing them as selfish, the individuals interviewed for this research see themselves as independent. In fact, many people downshift in order to dedicate more of their time to helping their friends, families or communities.

It is difficult for parents to teach their children 'traditional family values' when one or both are working increasingly untraditional hours of work. In response to these pressures many Australians are opting to trade off increased time with families and friends for reductions in income and prestige. While some may seek to characterise such choices as selfish, the results of this research show that concern for others, in fact, ranks quite highly among downshiftners. ■

Clean Energy Futures

This month a report commissioned by a wide range of renewable energy and environment groups entitled A Clean Energy Future for Australia was released. The report, which was co-authored by Hugh Saddler (Australia Institute Board member), Richard Denniss (Australia Institute Senior Research Fellow) and Mark Diesendorf of the Sustainability Centre, considers the feasibility of Australia achieving significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from energy use.

In recent years the UK has set itself a target of a 60 per cent CO₂ reduction by 2050. Germany has committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 21 per cent by 2012 and flagged its willingness to commit to 40 per cent CO₂ reduction by 2020, if other nations also

commit to deeper targets. Denmark aims to make a 50 per cent cut in emissions by 2030.

With good policy and planning, Australians can live a life in the future similar to how we live today.

In line with this policy trend, the Clean Energy Future report considered the feasibility of Australia meeting a 50 per cent reduction in CO₂ emissions from the stationary sector by 2040, relative to the level of emissions in 2001. (The stationary energy sector comprises all uses of energy, including electricity generation, with the exception of transport). 2040

was chosen as the 'target' year because it is far enough into the future to allow an almost complete turnover of the present stock of energy supply and energy using equipment and infrastructure. This greatly reduces the cost of replacing existing equipment with more efficient, low emission alternatives.

The study finds that with good policy and planning, Australians can live a life in the future similar to how we live today. The sources of energy will be different, and efficiency will need to be much higher, but the uses to which energy is put need not change radically. Furthermore, the total cost of energy in 2040 need be no higher than it would be if Australia continued to rely as heavily as it does today on high emission fossil fuels such as coal.

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Announcement

The formation of an International Climate Change Taskforce

The Australia Institute has joined with the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) in London and the Center for American Progress (CAP) in Washington DC to establish a high-level International Taskforce on Climate Change. The Taskforce is made up of eminent scientists, business leaders, policy advisers and political leaders drawn from around the world. Its purpose is to recommend to all governments a framework for managing climate change responses that is truly global, provides long-term direction, and is genuinely responsive to the scale of the problem.

Members of the Taskforce have been chosen for their expertise, creativity and political influence. The geographic representation of the Taskforce reflects the need to:

- assist British Government policy in preparation for its presidencies of the G8 and EU;
- bring the US and Australia back into the multilateral process; and
- elicit engagement and support from major developing and continental European countries.

The Taskforce's recommendations will be delivered early in 2005 and will be aimed at all major governments involved in the international negotiations, with special emphasis on the United Kingdom (UK). As the UK will hold the Presidencies of the G8 and the European Union in 2005, it will be uniquely positioned to leverage support for multilateral action on climate change just when the next stage of negotiations is set to begin. Prime Minister Tony Blair has already pledged to make progress on climate change a top priority.

The Taskforce was launched at its first meeting which was held on the 22nd March 2004 near London. It is expected to hold two or three subsequent meetings before a final meeting in mid-November 2004 in Washington DC or Sydney, Australia. At this final meeting, Taskforce members will be expected to reach a consensus on a set of proposals. These will be set forth in a report, to be published in early 2005, which will be presented to Prime Minister Tony Blair and representatives of other governments worldwide.

The deliberations and decisions taken by Taskforce members will be informed throughout by extensive input from NGO, governmental, scientific and academic experts from developed and developing countries. This will take the form of briefing papers and seminars, and a substantial research programme which Taskforce members will debate and commission at their first meeting.

This project is an exciting development for The Australia Institute. The Institute has performed extensive research into the policy aspects of reducing greenhouse gas emissions over the last ten years. The development of the International Taskforce will provide a new opportunity to inform climate change policy debate at an international level.

Can't Buy Me Love? Young people, work and the future

Not long after The Australia's Institute's recent research into young people and their views about work was released, *Can't Buy Me Love? Young Australians' Views on Parental Work, Time, Guilt and their own Consumption* (February 2004, Discussion Paper 61), I received an email, amongst many others, from an old friend.

Young people are looking for more time with the parent who is working long hours away from them.

She had heard the opening sentences of a national radio report of the results driving into work. She had been unable to listen to the full report but, writing to me, she assumed it would add just a little more to the burden of maternal guilt that lay heaped around her desk. She assumed the report of young people's views about parental work would add something to the list of what she should be doing, should have done, or had got wrong in trying to be a mother with a job. Like others who contacted me, or called talkback, she was, happily, wrong.

In South Australia, readers of *The Advertiser* did not have to leap to mistaken assumptions about what

young people said through this research: they were led to them by the sub-editor who headed the half page report 'Children want less money, more Mummy'. This might sell newspapers, but it isn't true – at least not based on what we heard. With this level of enthusiasm for parental, especially maternal, guilt amongst some editors and readers, it is perhaps no wonder that guilt is at epidemic levels in Australia. It is largely misplaced. Our research suggests that Australian work/family policy talk has concentrated too much on mothers and not enough on two other very important factors: missing fathers, and the conditions of both mothers' and fathers' jobs.

Our conversations with 93 young people, aged 10-18 years, about the issues surrounding work, time and consumption call into question some long-held preconceptions. More importantly, they raise challenges to current policy settings.

These young people, who live in high and low socio-economic areas in Sydney, Adelaide and rural Australia, were not looking for more time with their mothers in particular. In fact, many already have a lot of time with their mothers (which they appreciate). What they are looking for rather more commonly is more time with the parent who is working long hours away from

them. More often than not, this is their father. Having a mother at home did not make up for an absent working dad in the minds of these young people.

More young people wanted time with their parents over more money from more parental work. This desire was not focussed upon mothers. And it varied by location and income: young people in Sydney, whether from higher or lower income households, wanted more money than those in Adelaide or the country. But preferences did not vary much between those in a sole-parent household, a dual parent/dual income household, or a traditional male breadwinner household.

Young people are not opposed to parental work itself.

While many young people value time with their parents, they are not opposed to parental work itself. Indeed, most young people feel that there are many positive outcomes from their parents' jobs beyond the obvious benefits of the pay packet. They can see that many parents enjoy their work, the workplace social life and their sense of contribution and skill. On the downside, young people can also see some negatives,

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FTA Price Hikes

Drug industry lobbying pays off!

The recent release of the text of the Free Trade Agreement between Australia and the US confirms that the intense lobbying effort of the pharmaceutical industry during the Australia-US Free Trade Agreement (FTA) has been rewarded. So much so that John Howard was reported to have received a 'hero's welcome' when he was guest of honour at a Medicines Australia (the Australian lobby group of the US drug companies) dinner at Parliament House.

Over the last two years the pharmaceutical industry has hired numerous former Liberal Party staffers to facilitate access to the Commonwealth Government.

Despite the Government's assurances that the FTA would not result in increases in the cost of pharmaceuticals, the details of the Agreement show that prices are likely to rise due to:

- the formation of a new appeals process;
- the creation of new barriers designed to lengthen the period of time that manufacturers of cheap generic pharmaceuticals are kept out of the market; and
- the formation of a new high level working group to consider further reforms to the PBS.

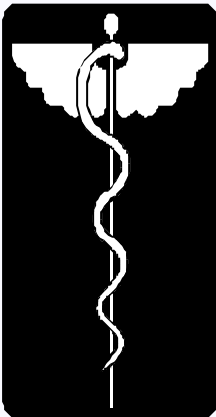
This significant win by the industry can, however, be better understood through a brief examination of the political influence the pharmaceutical industry has

purchased in recent years in both Australia and the US. For example, over the last two years the industry has hired numerous former Liberal Party staffers to facilitate access to the Commonwealth Government.

In the US the drug industry is reported to employ 675 Washington lobbyists.

In the lead up to the FTA, Medicines Australia hired the former chief adviser to Finance Minister Nick Minchin, Kieran Schneemann, as its CEO. Additionally, it was reported in January that a senior adviser to former Health

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Throughout the negotiation process of the Australia-US FTA, The Australia Institute expressed concern about the intentions of US pharmaceutical companies. While some Australian commentators attempted to dismiss these concerns as 'scaremongering', they were in fact shared by members of the US House of Representatives. As shown in the extract below, 18 Democratic Members of the US Congress wrote to the US Trade Ambassador to highlight the same concerns raised by the Institute. In fact, the \$1 billion figure referred to below is based on an Australia Institute estimate published in a recent web paper.

"While we support balanced trade agreements that strengthen relationships with our trading partners like Australia, we are deeply opposed to the trade office being used by the U.S. pharmaceutical industry to achieve its strategic objective of raising worldwide drug prices to the level now paid by U.S. consumers. It is our understanding that your office is pressing Australia to loosen the system under which their government negotiates the prices it pays for prescription drugs. The reports state that you are attempting to change Australia's Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and patent laws, which could delay the entry of generic drugs into the market and increase the price of medicines by at least \$1 billion over the next four years."

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Minister Kay Patterson, Paul Cross, was advising the US drug industry as it attempted to force changes to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) as part of a free trade agreement with Australia.

Kay Patterson's previous senior adviser on the PBS left only last year to take a position with Merck Sharp and Dohme, a large pharmaceutical company. This continues a trend which began under former Health Minister Michael Wooldridge whose key adviser, Rachel David, and staffer, Ken Smith, both left Government to work as consultants for the pharmaceutical firm Pfizer.

In the US the drug industry is reported to employ 675 Washington lobbyists. During the 1999-2000 election cycle in the US, and with billions at stake in a heated debate over prescription drug prices at home, and a growing number of patent disputes abroad, the industry gave disproportionate support to George W. Bush. In that election nearly 70 per cent of the industry's unprecedented US\$24.4 million campaign contributions was spent on George W. Bush and other Republicans.

Since coming to office President Bush has appointed several advisers with close ties to the pharmaceutical industry. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has previously served as Chief Executive Officer, President, and then Chairman of G.D. Searle & Co., a worldwide pharmaceutical company. Until being sworn in as the 21st Secretary of Defense, Mr. Rumsfeld served as Chairman of the Board of Gilead Sciences Inc., another pharmaceutical company.

Mitch Daniels, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, was previously the senior vice president of the Indianapolis-based pharmaceuticals firm Eli Lilly and Company. The Office of Management and Budget is responsible for preparing the President's budget proposals to Congress.

The pharmaceutical industry has used this influence to maintain prices and

profitability in the US and internationally. As a result, the US drug industry has been the most profitable industry in the US for over ten years and, in 2001, was five times more profitable than the average Fortune 500 company.

But being the most profitable industry has not stopped the drug companies from crying poor. Nor has it stopped them from arguing that the prices they receive in Australia are preventing them from doing research into life saving new drugs. Not only has the Australian Government provided hundreds of millions of dollars in corporate welfare to the US drug companies, the companies themselves continue to spend more money on advertising and marketing than they do on new research.

The PBS is recognised as the world's best drug pricing scheme. While the US drug companies have failed, for the time being, in their objective to remove the price control elements built into the PBS, as the Prime Minister's warm reception shows, they have still achieved some significant gains. Having set up, as part of the FTA, a new Australia-US round table to discuss future reform of the PBS, it is unlikely that it will take long for the next threat to the PBS to emerge. If the PBS is allowed to die the death of a thousand cuts, the costs to the sick and elderly in Australia will be counted in the billions of dollars. ■

Buddhima Lokuge
Co-author of a number of Institute papers on the Free Trade Agreement

Auditor General's Review of Government Greenhouse Spending

In January 2003 the Institute published Discussion Paper number 51, by Paul Pollard, entitled *Missing the Target - An analysis of Australian Government greenhouse spending*. This report discussed greenhouse spending by the Howard Government and concluded, among other things, that:

- the claim to have spent \$1 billion on greenhouse was misleading;
- much of this spending was ineffective so far as the Kyoto target was concerned; and
- spending could be much better directed to meet Australia's long term greenhouse challenge.

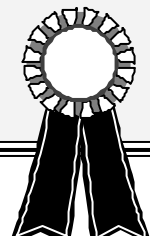
It also compared levels of spending on sustainable energy and measures being adopted to meet Kyoto targets among a number of developed countries including Australia. A copy of the report was sent to the Auditor-General's office.

The Auditor-General has now published a review of the spending programs of the Australian Greenhouse Office (AGO). Despite the restrained language it amounts to 'official' endorsement of the conclusions reached in the first sections of the Institute's discussion paper. It finds, for instance that, far from having met its commitment to spend almost \$1 billion by June 2004, at June 2003 only

23.4 per cent of the funding assigned to the seven programs that make up the bulk of the \$1 billion, had been spent. If current firm commitments are taken into account, only 71 per cent of outlays on the main programs was due to be spent during the period ending sometime between 2009 and 2013. These conclusions are almost identical to the earlier findings detailed in the Institute's report.

The Auditor is, in effect, highly critical of the effectiveness of many programs as was the Institute's discussion paper. For instance, on page 83, referring to the amounts contributed to meeting the Kyoto emission reduction target, it says 'Currently, while the Minister has indicated that measures will eventually produce 67 Mt CO₂-e of abatement annually, the annual report (of the AGO) provides no basis to demonstrate progress towards this target from the programs being funded'.

The time is clearly overdue for the Howard Government to drop its misleading claim about spending \$1 billion on greenhouse and to redirect funding towards much more effective areas such as those advocated in the Institute paper.



Greenhouse gas emissions

Over the past ten years or so, the evidence supporting the existence of a human-induced greenhouse effect has accumulated steadily and is now overwhelming. Yet in Australia the Government, despite its protestations, is in a state of denial with no recognition of the extraordinary threat posed by climate change. Clive Hamilton comments.

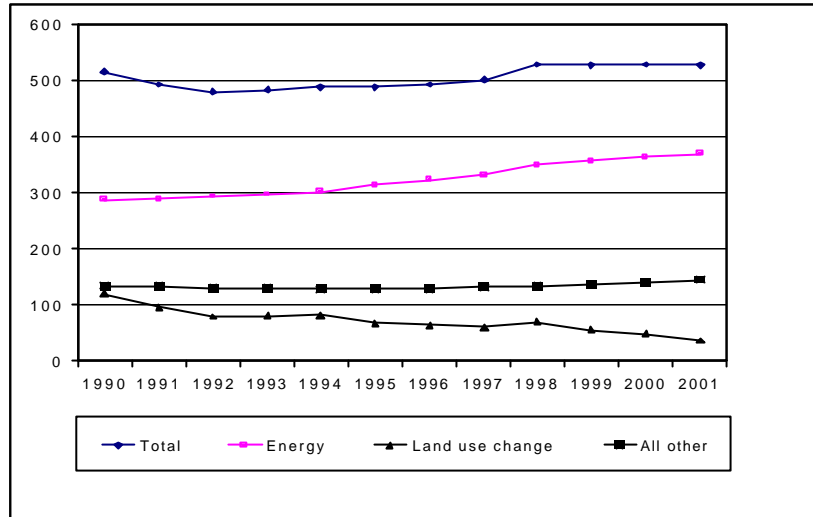
The Australian Government officially accepts the science of climate change, but every now and then a Government minister will let slip a comment that suggests that really they have not accepted it at all. The Prime Minister, for instance, has said the jury is still out on sea-level rise. In fact, several scientific juries have delivered their unequivocal verdicts and all appeals have been lost.

While the Howard Government has declared that Australia is on track to meet its Kyoto target, the fact remains that emissions from the most important sectors, 'transport and stationary energy', continue to grow rapidly. It is possible for the Government to claim that Australia is on track only because we have been playing our get-out-of-jail free card, the famous or notorious 'Australia clause' inserted into the Kyoto Protocol literally in the last minutes of the negotiations at 2 am on Thursday 11th December 1997.

A month before the Kyoto Conference the Government was publishing greenhouse gas emission figures that excluded land clearing emissions in order to emphasise how rapidly Australia's emissions were growing. It did this so it could argue to the rest of the world that cutting emissions would be especially costly for Australia. The trick worked at Kyoto and Australia was given special concessions.

Emissions from the most important sectors — transport and stationary energy — continue to grow rapidly.

The decline in emissions from land clearing since 1990 has masked the rapid and relentless increase in emissions from all other sources, and especially the electricity and transport sectors. At current trends, in the next 3-4 years we will have played our hand fully and it



will no longer be possible to conceal the real problem of our escalating emissions. The Government's manifest failure to control the rate of emissions growth will be plain for all the world to see.

Ending land clearing

Now that the Beattie Government has decided finally to abandon its attempt to secure the Federal Government's co-operation to end land clearing in Queensland and to introduce legislation to stop the practice, we can expect land clearing emissions to decline even more quickly and for the underlying trends to become starkly apparent in the next year or two.

The chart shows Australia's emissions between 1990 and 2001, the latest year for which official data are available. Over the 11 year period emissions from energy have increased by 83 million tonnes of CO₂-e. In the same period, emissions from land use change have fallen by the same amount (in fact, by slightly more), thus completely offsetting the growth in energy emissions.

So while energy emissions will continue to grow at around two per cent per annum for years to come, in a couple

of years time the fall in emissions from land use change will stop. We will have exploited the Australia clause to the full.

This state of affairs has been well understood by independent observers from the outset. For example, on 11 December 1997, the day after the Kyoto deal was struck, The Australia Institute issued a news release headed 'Borbidge Holds the Key to Meeting Australia's Greenhouse Target'. Mr Borbidge was Queensland premier at the time.

It pointed out that the effect of our special deal 'would be to require Australia to do almost nothing to reduce its emissions from the energy sector'.

Failed programs

Despite the repeated claims from the Federal Government about all of its efforts to tackle Australia's emissions, the fact is that very little of any consequence has been achieved, and that is why underlying emissions continue to grow unchecked.

Early last year The Australia Institute published a detailed analysis of Commonwealth spending on greenhouse programs (Discussion Paper No. 51). The Government has

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Changes to Australia's greenhouse gas emissions, 1990-2001 (Mt CO₂-e)

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Growth
Total	515.8	493.5	479.0	482.7	488.4	487.4	493.1	501.3	529.5	527.6	528.7	528.1	2.4%
Energy	286.2	288.1	294.1	297.0	300.9	313.4	323.1	331.6	349.7	356.8	364.0	369.0	28.9%
Land use change and forestry 5A+5B	95.8	71.2	54.5	56.1	58.4	45.6	41.5	38.4	46.2	33.3	24.0	14.3	-85.1%
Forests 5A	-24.6	-24.1	-24.5	-24.2	-23.2	-22.4	-22.4	-22.5	-22.7	-23.3	-23.3	-22.7	-7.7%
Land use change 5B	120.4	95.3	79.0	80.3	81.6	68.0	63.9	60.9	68.9	56.6	47.3	37.0	-69.3%
All other	133.8	134.2	130.4	129.6	129.1	128.4	128.5	131.3	133.6	137.5	140.7	144.8	8.2%

Source: National Greenhouse Gas Inventory (2001) CRF Table 10, sheet 6 (p. B-79).



consistently underspent the allocated funds. In fact, at the rate allocated funds are currently being spent, it will be 2008 before the rubbery \$1 billion is used up.

That seems even less likely with the winding back of the Australian Greenhouse Office, once the jewel in the crown of the Government's greenhouse policy. The world-beating initiative that has launched a thousand forays into the international debate looks increasingly like a joke.

Moreover, even those programs that did get up have, for the most part proved singularly ineffective, especially the much-touted Greenhouse Challenge Program which, in the end, was little

more than a tax-payer funded PR exercise for Australia's biggest polluting company.

We know from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that Australia, along with the rest of the world, must cut its emissions by at least 60 per cent if we are to stabilise climate change. In the face of this enormous, unavoidable but achievable goal, the Australian Government has for seven years prevaricated, spun and, ultimately, failed to act. It is difficult to think of a policy area where there has been a more egregious failure to protect the interests of this country than the refusal to ratify the Kyoto Protocol.

Can't buy me love from page 4

especially for parents who are physically hurt or exhausted by their jobs (more often in lower income areas), and for those parents who work long or unsocial hours.

It is not whether mothers work or don't work that makes a difference to children, but the state in which they come home.

These conversations confirm international findings about mothers and work: it is not whether mothers work or not that makes a difference to children, but the state in which they come home. This finding extends to mothers who do domestic work, whose children can see positive and negative

consequences for their mothers: where children feel that mothers are exhausted by their jobs at home, or are isolated or depressed, children are concerned. However, where mothers are seen as enjoying their work at home, and are happy doing it, then children see many positives from their work. The key factor in children's perceptions is the fit between parental preferences and outcomes, and the physical and emotional state that their work leaves them in. Where parents are happy in their jobs, young people notice and are positive about their parents' jobs. When parents are not happy, outcomes are not so good.

A lively national debate is underway about Australia's children and their parents. Unfortunately, the voices of young people themselves are generally missing from this conversation. This is



not for want of opinion, as anyone who has recently talked with a teenager knows.

This first report will be followed up later this year with a further discussion paper, based on conversations with this group of young people, about their experiences of childcare and their own plan for work, care and households.

Barbara Pocock
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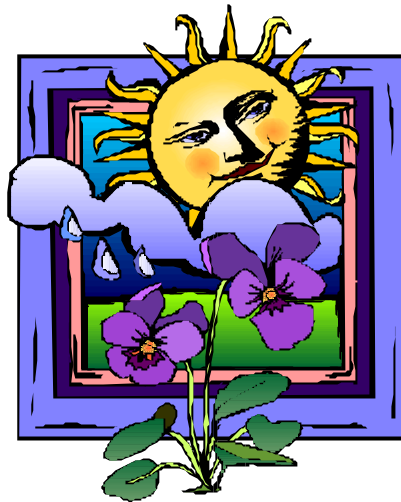
The report is based on assumptions in line with those used in the Commonwealth's Intergenerational Report of 2002. It is assumed that the economy will grow strongly, so that in 2040 Australia will have a population that is 29 per cent higher than in 2001 and a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per person more than 80 per cent higher in real terms than in 2001. Moreover, production of exports of such commodities as coal, LNG, steel and non-ferrous metals will be higher in 2040 than they are today.

How then will such strong economic growth be reconciled with the need to achieve significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions? The report finds that there are two important components to delivering large emission reductions – significant increases in energy use efficiency and a switch away from high emission sources of energy such as brown coal.

The energy efficiency improvements discussed in the report include:

- improvements in the efficiency of all types of industrial equipment, including boilers, kilns, furnaces and electric motors;
- improvements in the overall efficiency of integrated systems in which these types of equipment are components;
- improved building design and construction, to reduce or eliminate the need for heating and air conditioning; and
- improvements in the efficiency of electrical and gas appliances and equipment.

While there are significant benefits to be achieved from increased energy efficiency for both the economy and the environment, it will still be necessary to switch from high emission sources of energy to low emission sources in order to achieve a 50 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in Australia. The *Clean Energy Futures* report used the available data, coupled with expert interdisciplinary and industry knowledge and research about potential improvements in technologies, to determine the resource base and



capabilities of the different technologies in supplying energy to meet the demand.

The technologies included in the 2040 energy supply mix include:

- solar water heating in the residential and commercial sectors and solar pre-heating of boiler feed water in manufacturing;
- replacing coal used as boiler and furnace fuel in the manufacturing sector with natural gas;
- cogeneration of steam and electricity at a wide variety of industrial and commercial sites, using both natural gas and biomass fuels;
- use of biomass fuels, from agricultural and crop processing wastes and energy crops, to generate electricity;
- extensive use of wind generation and some increase in hydro generation of electricity;
- direct generation of electricity from solar energy using photovoltaic and solar thermal systems;
- modest continuing use of coal for electricity generation and in steel making;
- extensive use of natural gas, both as a direct source of heat and for electricity generation; and
- continuing use of petroleum fuels for equipment used in agriculture and mining.

These are all commercially proven technologies that are already in widespread use today. Currently they are more expensive than coal, however, particularly for electricity generation when the environmental costs imposed

by burning coal are ignored. The study makes a point of using only technologies that are already well proven, in both energy efficiency and energy supply, and is thus technologically conservative. Other renewable technologies such as wave power, tidal power, solar chimneys and hot dry rock systems are considered to be too immature at present to be counted into the 2040 supply mix based on existing technologies, though in fact they may well be commercially established by then. Capture and geosequestration of CO₂ from the use of coal is in the same category of possible, but commercially unproven technologies, and so is not included.

While this new report shows that it is both possible and feasible to achieve a 50 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, such reductions will not occur without a substantial shift in Australian energy policy. Strong, mutually reinforcing policies and strategies including economic instruments; regulations and standards; institutional/organisational change; direct funding; and education will be required if large reductions are to be achieved.

■
Hugh Saddler
Board Member
The Australia Institute

The Australia Institute

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Can the arts be democratic?

The Institute recently published Democratising Excellence? Chamber music and arts policy in Australia (Discussion Paper Number 60) by Pauline Griffiths. Here she outlines the argument.

Instead of widespread access, the audience for the traditional arts, or high arts as they are sometimes called, consists of a select, homogeneous group who access these via a kind of social habitat of particular experiences. It is this habitat that facilitates understanding and appreciation of the arts, and less than ten per cent of us have access to it.

Arts ministers and cultural policy-makers never refer to this habitat as an essential pathway to desiring and using the arts. Instead, they repeatedly claim that the arts are for *all* Australians, as if it is just a matter of choosing to head off to Federation Square in the same way as heading for a shopping mall.

Habitat facilitates understanding and appreciation of the arts, and less than ten per cent of us have access to it.

It is simply not true that all Australians have access to the arts, and the opportunities for participation and pleasure they afford.

For policymakers it has become commonplace to describe the arts in democratic terms. Conceptions of what actually constitutes 'art' have widened and opportunities for production and consumption expanded. In this environment, policy-making is less carried out by arts-based institutions, and more by other agents.



For these reasons the arts are more and more described as 'business enterprises', as vital links in large economic regional, national, and international formations. In all of this, an essential fact about the audience has been ignored: appreciation of the arts requires a particular type of education, which is simply not given to most people.

Chamber music

Take the case of chamber music. For many Australians this term is unfamiliar. Possibly the most esoteric of all music, it is small ensemble music performed by elite players in intimate concert settings. It is an art form that shows not just the lack of democratic audience participation, but that certain social conditions are necessary for access.

A recent survey of the Melbourne chamber music audience produced startling findings. Eighty-three per cent of this audience possess either tertiary or postgraduate qualifications. (Contrast this with the fact just 14 per cent of Victorians have tertiary or postgraduate qualifications.)

The chamber music audience is a group with high levels of special music education. For instance, 61 per cent have had access to private instrumental tuition outside of school and more than half reported studying classroom music at school. Not surprisingly, nearly two thirds reported a capacity to read music.

What is really interesting about the profile of the chamber music audience is that half claimed to have been introduced to concert life by a parent or family member and almost a quarter by a teacher. Clearly access to chamber music is cultivated during childhood and adolescence.

In musically minded families, parents encourage children to learn an instrument. This involves a commitment of time, organisation, funds, tolerance, patience, discipline and,

above all, a valuing of music as an essential expression of what it means to be human.

It is simply not true that all Australians have access to the arts, and the opportunities for participation and pleasure they afford.

Musically minded families access private music teachers who become mentors, often for the whole family. Furthermore, musically minded families cultivate peer groups for their children when they support extra curricular activities such as youth orchestras, bands, choirs, student concerts, music camps, musical theatre and even music exams.

Secret pleasures

With chamber music off-limits to most Australians, its pleasures are a secret. For those who attend, concerts are deeply valued. Attendees talk of exhilaration, ecstasy and fulfilment. Concert pleasures are intellectual, they satisfy a thirst for discovery, fill social needs and provide emotional gratification.

They are wondrous sites of pleasure, of concentrated consciousness, offering emancipation from the ongoing controls in a social system that exploits our energies for the purposes of consumerism. A chamber music concert restores and redeems the world to a place of beauty.

Thus, the social habitat is fundamental to understanding how and why we desire the arts. Policy makers must embrace research reporting that access, participation and pleasure is *only* possible when children and teenagers are raised in families that specify art as an object of desire. The blasphemous truth is that these conditions are not available to most Australians. ■

Family Men

Michael Flood examines the family policies of the Coalition Government and concludes that they could be friendlier.

If recent efforts by the major parties are anything to go by, then being a good family man is now an essential qualification for today's male politician. Key politicians have been stressing their own parenting credentials, as well as their parties' policy commitments to families. One of Mark Latham's first public statements on becoming Labor Leader was his pledge to make his two boys proud of him, Treasurer Peter Costello emphasised his family-man status in a January conference, while Prime Minister John Howard sat cross-legged among school-children before announcing initiatives in schools funding.

The most important obstacle to fathers' parenting after separation is fathers' absence of parenting before separation.

To what extent is this new rhetoric of families and fatherhood being translated into substantial policy initiatives? Most policy attention thus far has centered on family law because of the prominent inquiry into child custody that took place in the last half of 2003.

The House of Representatives inquiry, launched in June 2003, focused on whether to introduce a rebuttable presumption of joint custody – a presumption that after separation, physical residence of children would be awarded to mothers and fathers on a half-half basis, rather than being determined primarily on the basis of the best interests of the child.

Most submissions, including The Australia Institute's own, argued that adopting the 'rebuttable presumption' would not enhance shared parenting. Instead, it would undermine the flexibility families need in order to develop parenting arrangements which best fit the needs of their children. Few



separating parents whose cases reach the Family Court are in a position to set up 50:50 shared care of children. And the legal change could also expose women, children and men to higher levels of conflict and violence.

The Institute's discussion paper argued that shared parenting after separation is a desirable goal, but that the most important obstacle to fathers' parenting after separation is not the Family Court. Instead, it is many fathers' absence from parenting *before* separation. Workplace relations, policy barriers, practical disincentives, and social obstacles limit men's involvement in parenting, both before and after separation and divorce. Addressing this situation will make the most difference to fathers' involvement.

The good news is that the House of Representatives report, released on December 29th, recommended against the adoption of a rebuttable presumption of joint custody. The report, titled *Every picture tells a story*, emphasises that parents share responsibility for children after, and before, separation. This simply reaffirms a principle already enshrined in the Family Law Act. But its inclusion signals a greater desire to create cultural change in family law processes, such that there is greater incentive among separating parents and other participants in family law to establish shared parenting arrangements.

Another plus of the report is that it recommends a presumption against

shared parental responsibility in cases where there is entrenched conflict, violence, or substance abuse. This may help to reverse the recent rise in court orders for unsupervised contact with the non-residential parent or for joint residence in cases where there have been allegations of domestic violence or child abuse.

The most controversial proposal in the report is the call for a Families Tribunal, a body based on non-adversarial procedures that would complement the Family Court. Responses to this proposal have raised several concerns. Will this add another layer of decision-making that will merely complicate the family law process? Will it take resources away from existing family law processes, with no clear benefits, rather than putting more money into the mediation and counselling services offered by the Family Court? In any case, Prime Minister John Howard has signalled that he is likely to reject the plan.

The broader issue is how best to support families, encourage positive parenting and foster fathers' involvement.

The report makes further recommendations in relation to community education, penalties for breaches of contact orders, children's contact with grandparents, levels of child support, and powers to collect child support monies.

One recommendation echoes that made in The Australia Institute discussion paper, *Fatherhood and fatherlessness*, Discussion Paper 59, December 2003, and would facilitate separated parents sharing care of children. This is that non-resident parents who care for children more than ten percent of the year (37 nights or more per year) should receive a parenting payment. However, the

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Institute notes

New Publications

C. Hamilton, *Consumer capitalism: Is this as good as it gets?* The 15th Maurice Blackburn Oration, February 2004

C. Breakspear and C. Hamilton, *Getting a life: Understanding the downshifting phenomenon in Australia*, Discussion Paper No. 62, February 2004

B. Pocock and J. Clarke, *Can't Buy Me Love? Young Australians views on parental work, time, guilt and their own consumption*, Discussion Paper No. 61, February 2004

R. Denniss, *Buying an education: Where are the returns highest?* Web Paper, January 2004

P Griffiths, *Democratising Excellence? Chamber music and arts policy in Australia*, Discussion Paper 60, December 2003.

Forthcoming Publications

The benefits of an ageing society

Complexity and policy

Private schools and the public purpose

The impact of HECS debts on fertility

Border tax adjustments for greenhouse taxes

Geosequestration: The answer to climate change?

Staff Notes

Clive Hamilton has returned to the UK for a month to participate in the launch of his book *Growth Fetish* which is to be published in London during March. Clive will return to Australia at the end of March.

Liz Mail, who has worked at The Australia Institute for over 18 months as a junior researcher, is to leave us to begin a job as a new graduate with ATSI in Sydney. Liz worked on the overconsumption and downshifting research, in addition to other areas, and will be very much missed. We all wish her the best of luck in her new position.

Family men from page 11

Coalition Government has already said that this is unlikely to be implemented. While political wrangling over family law is likely to continue, there remains the broader issue of how best to support families, encourage positive parenting, and foster fathers' involvement. Changing family law will not make a widespread difference here, as it does not address the obstacles to shared parenting faced by many parents: increasingly demanding and inflexible workplaces, policy discouragements to shared care, and neglect of fathers in parenting and family services.

In 2002, Prime Minister Howard famously described work-family issues

as a 'barbeque stopper'. But having stopped the barbecue by putting this issue on the table, the Prime Minister has nothing further to say. The Coalition Government has offered few substantive policy proposals, and its commitment to addressing parents' need for child care, maternity leave, and a fair system of family payments is being questioned. Labor and the Democrats have been quick to occupy this policy vacuum, proposing a system of 14 weeks of paid maternity leave and the expansion of child care places. But whether the current Government or the Opposition will make a real and positive difference to family life will depend on their political will. ■



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