

Help us shape Australia's future

The Living in Australia study newsletter – 2003



Remember the study you took part in last year?

THANK YOU

We have now completed the second year of the **Living in Australia** study. With your support and co-operation the study has already been a great success, with approximately 7,200 households and 13,000 people taking part. The information you give is invaluable and will assist researchers in understanding the many economic and social changes that affect the way Australians live.

LIVING IN AUSTRALIA IN THE NEWS

Towards the end of last year you may have seen articles or heard radio interviews regarding the **Living in Australia** study. You may not have recognised it straight away as the researchers using the information refer to the study as the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia study (HILDA).

The main topics covered in the articles published so far have been about time stress, the ever decreasing rates of childbirth in Australia and single parent households. Some of these articles can be viewed on our website www.livinginaustralia.org, or ask your interviewer for a look at the copy they carry with them. Of course, there's much more work to be done with the information you have provided and over time we're sure you'll continue to see the study increasingly used.

YOUR INVOLVEMENT THIS YEAR

In 2003, we are returning to every household that has previously participated in the study. We will be seeking another interview with all eligible members of these households. For most households, an ACNielsen interviewer will visit you within the next two months. A small number of households will be contacted by phone, particularly those who have moved a long way from one of the interviewers.

Each year we ask some of the questions we have asked in previous years as well as some that are different. One person in the household will again be asked some questions about your household structure, child care and housing. The interviewer will then ask everyone in your household aged 15 years and older to answer some questions. This should take about 30 minutes each. This year we have made some changes to the interview. The questions will still cover topics such as education, employment, income and how you feel about various aspects of your life. However, we will be asking for much less information about your financial situation, and for people aged 45 years and over there will be some questions about retirement and plans for retirement.

If your interviewer calls at a time that is not convenient for you, he or she will be happy to make an appointment to conduct the interview at a time that suits you better.

In appreciation of your household's help with the **Living in Australia** study this year, we will send a cheque to thank you for your participation. A cheque for \$50 will be sent to households where all eligible members participate in the study. A cheque for \$20 will be sent to households where only some of the eligible members take part.

We will continue to keep you up-to-date with the outcomes of the study as it progresses.

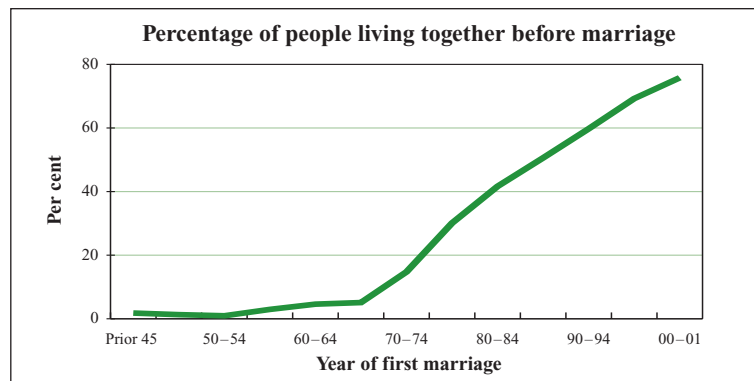
Some results from last year

MARRIAGE: IT'S TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

Although marriage today is not as popular as it used to be, most Australians will marry at some stage during their lifetime. What has changed dramatically over the past 50 or so years is the way that people enter into marriage.

Traditionally, a couple might enter into a lengthy engagement but almost definitely would not consider living together prior to marriage. Today things are very different - a couple is in the minority by choosing not to live together before marriage.

- Prior to the 1960s very few couples lived together before marriage.
- During the 1960s the proportion rose to about 5 per cent.
- The figure then shot up to 30 per cent by the end of the 1970s.
- By the end of the 1980s this figure was at 50 per cent.
- As we enter the 21st century the vast majority of marriages - over 70 per cent - are now preceded by a period of living together.



JOB SATISFACTION: IS A CHANGE AS GOOD AS A HOLIDAY?

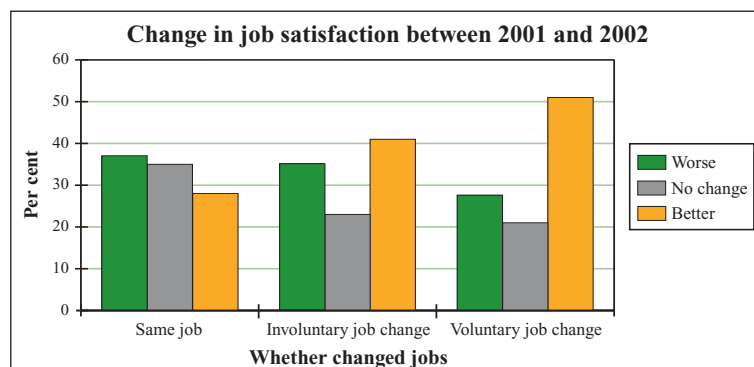
This year there was a slight tendency for **Living in Australia** study members to describe their job more negatively than a year earlier. Of everyone employed at the time of both interviews, 36 per cent reported their job satisfaction was lower than a year ago, while 31 per cent reported an increase.

However, the chart below shows that this depended on whether a person changed their job or not, and how the change came about.

People who made their own decision about leaving their job were much more likely to report an increase in job satisfaction than people who remained in the same job. In other words, when people quit they tended to find jobs they liked better.

Interestingly, more people who were retrenched or fired reported that their next job (provided they had one) was a better job rather than a worse job.

Overall, these results suggest that despite widespread fear of change, people who change jobs are much more likely to report improvements in job satisfaction than people who remain in the same job.

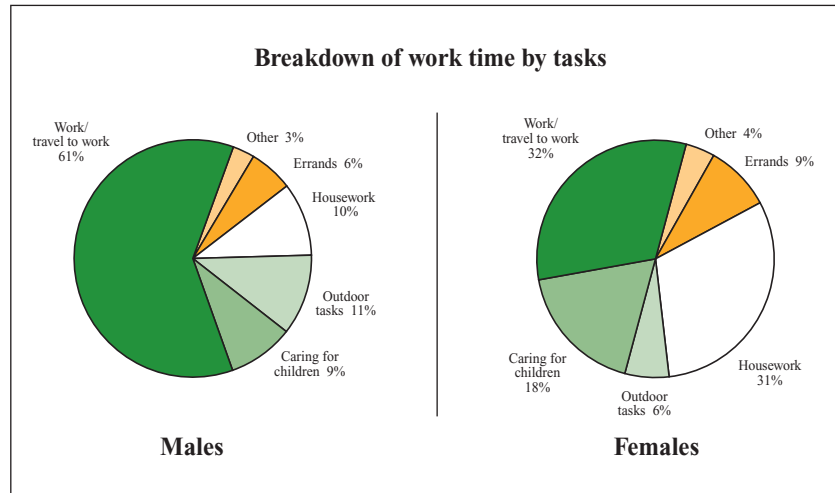


WHO WORKS MORE – MEN OR WOMEN?

A common assumption is that since men are more likely to hold full-time jobs in the paid workforce, men will also work longer hours than women. If we take a broader view of work and also include housework, caring, charity work and commuting time, then it is women who work longer, but only just.

Information from the **Living in Australia** study reveals that among couples,

- Men work 63 hours per week on average.
- Women work 64 hours per week on average.
- Men spend the largest fraction of their time in paid work (or travelling to and from work).
- Women spend a much larger fraction of their time than men on housework (31 per cent) and child care (18 per cent).



WORKING FOR AN EDUCATION

Almost 12 per cent of people are studying for a post-school qualification. Most of these people are also in paid employment.

Of the students studying for a post-school qualification,

- 44 per cent also have a full-time job, and
- 30 per cent have a part-time job.

The **Living in Australia** data indicates that:

- Full-time workers tend to study part-time and part-time workers tend to study full-time.
- The average full-time student who also has a job works about 22 hours per week, is in their mid-twenties and typically has a casual job or a contract for a fixed term.
- The average part-time student who also has a job is in their mid-thirties, works a 40 hour week and is typically employed on an ongoing or permanent basis.

Per cent of students enrolled in post-school education that work

<i>Employment status</i>	<i>Studying full-time</i>	<i>Studying part-time</i>	<i>All students</i>
Employed part-time	18.1	12.2	30.3
Employed full-time	6.4	37.7	44.1
Not employed	17.4	8.2	25.6
<i>All students</i>	41.9	58.1	100.0

Frequently asked questions

IS MY
INVOLVEMENT
IN THIS STUDY
IMPORTANT?

Participation in the **Living in Australia** study is voluntary, however, to make the most of the information you have already provided we seek your continuing support. Indeed, the success of the study depends upon it, as every individual and family provides unique information that no-one else can give!

HOW IS MY
PRIVACY
PROTECTED?

All the information you give is treated in strict confidence. ACNielsen removes all personal details (such as name, address and phone number) and any identifying information given during your interview, before passing your answers to the research team at the University of Melbourne. Researchers will not know who has participated.

WHAT HAPPENS
TO THE RESULTS
OF THE STUDY?

If you would like to know more about how your identity is protected, or would like further information concerning your privacy and the information you provide, please contact ACNielsen on **1800 656 670**.

The results of the study will, in the first instance, be used by the Government. In particular, they will find the data collected of great benefit in planning the future provision of services in the areas of income support, health, education and housing. The data will also be used by university researchers to help them understand and explain what is currently happening in Australian society.

WHAT IF I
MOVE?

As the **Living in Australia** study is ongoing, it is important that we keep your address details up to date. If you are moving, or planning to move, please take the time to forward your new address and telephone contact details to ACNielsen using the reply-paid post card enclosed with this letter. Alternatively, you can call **1800 656 670** to register your new address or email these details to livinginaustralia@acnielsen.com.au. Your help is much appreciated.

Our experience in the last two years has shown that even if you don't think you will move, there is still some chance that you will. Of the people that said they were unlikely to move or were unsure if they would move, 9 per cent had actually moved when we returned to them the following year. People move for many reasons that are not predictable - the property is no longer available, relationships break down, or to follow a job, to name a few. You can't always be sure that you will be living at the same address in a year's time. It is for this reason that we collect information about who might know where you are if you move. Your ongoing participation in this study is very important and we do not want to lose touch with you.

WHO IS
CARRYING OUT
THIS STUDY?

This study is being run by the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research at the University of Melbourne and is funded by the Commonwealth Government. ACNielsen has been contracted to carry out the interviews.

HOW DO I
GET MORE
INFORMATION?

If you have any questions, need more information or want to get a message to your interviewer please telephone **1800 656 670** or visit our website www.livinginaustralia.org. When your interviewer arrives they will also be able to help with any queries you may have.

Thank you for your continued support of this important study.

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