

Juggling work and Family in the 21st Century- Mission Impossible?

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W O R K



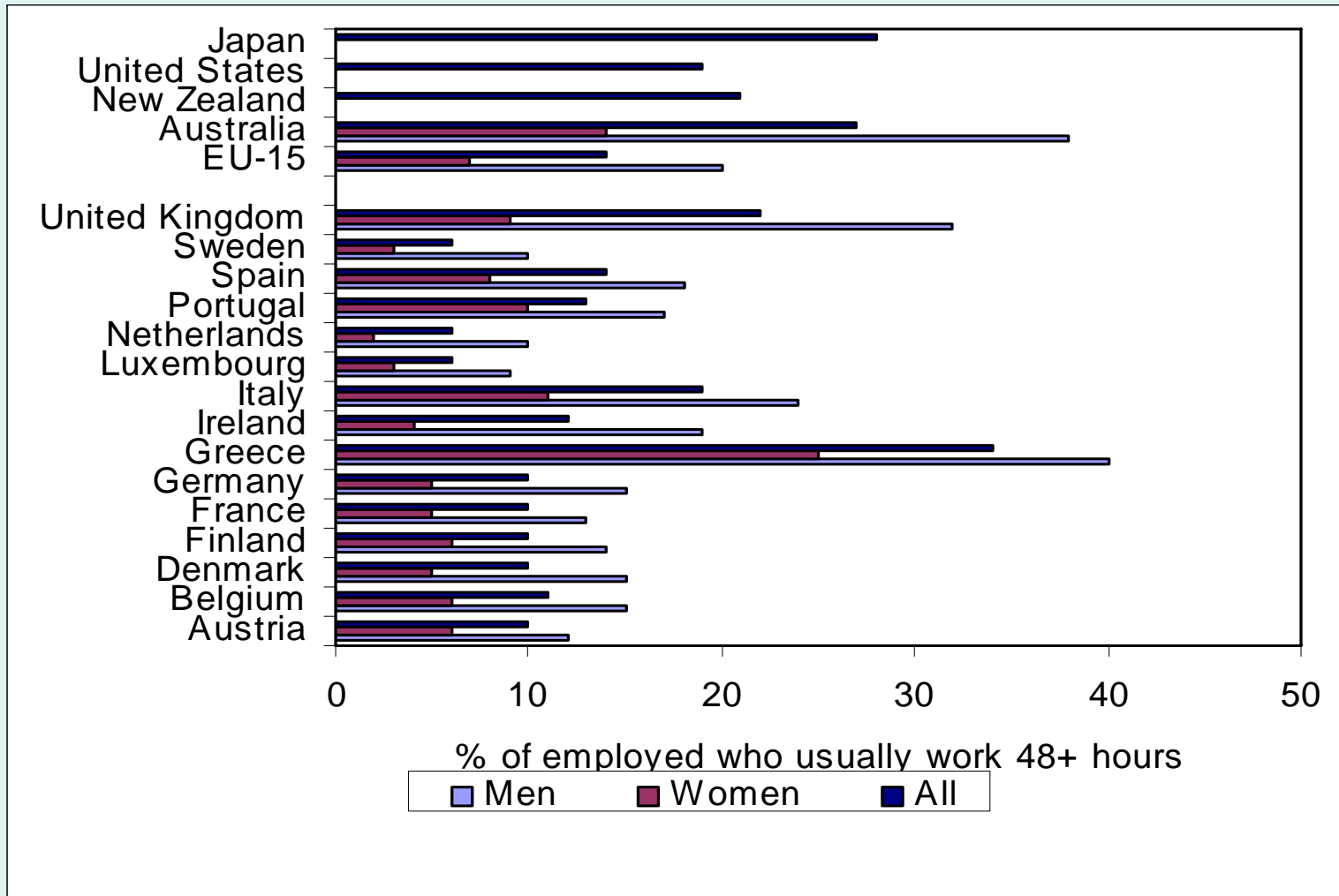
LIFE



How things have changed:

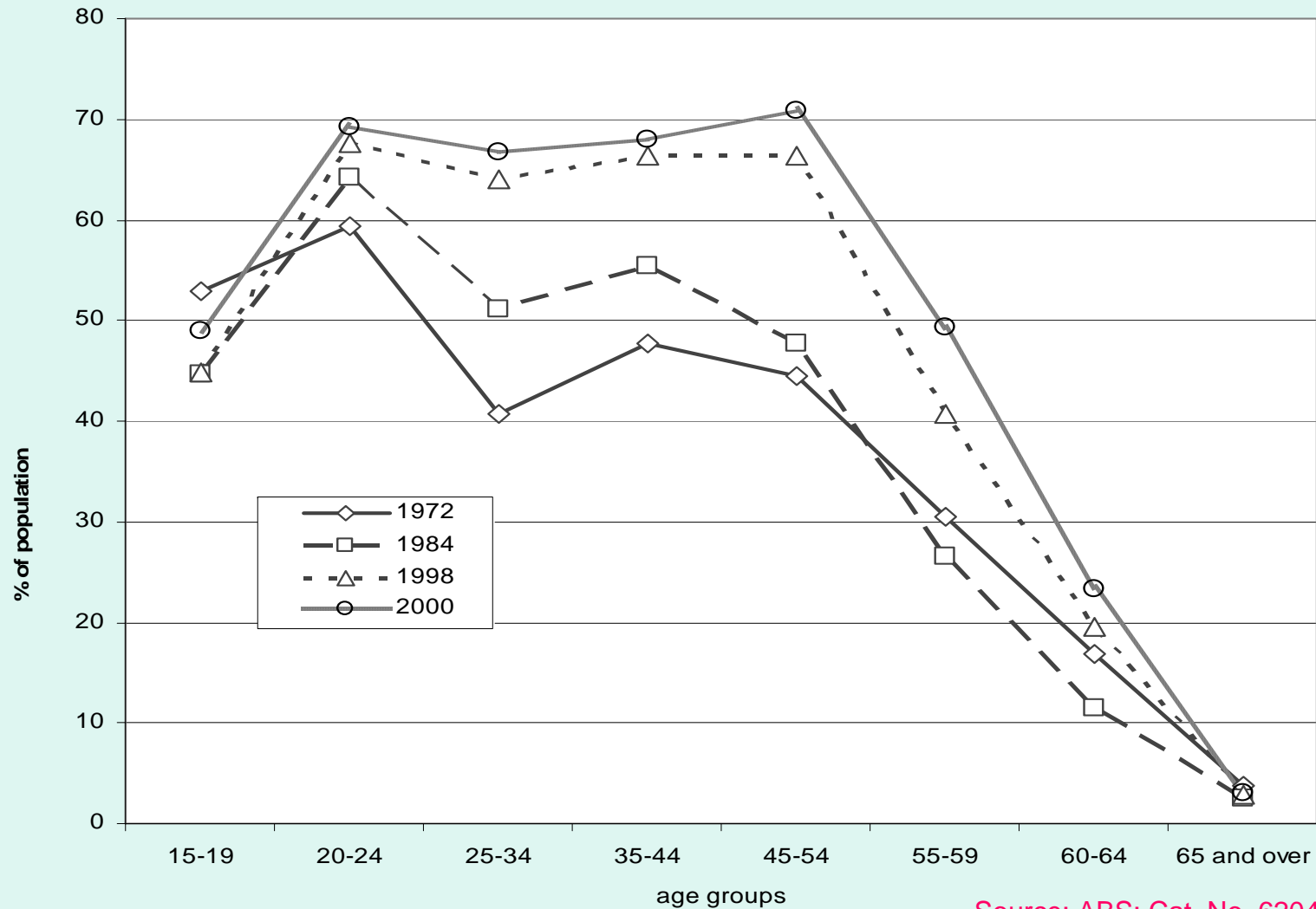
- The 'leisure culture' never really materialised.
- Rise of the 'long hours' culture.
- Intensification of work – and the rise of the 'lean' organisation.
- Increasing participation of women; decline of the Harvester couple and rise of the dual career couple as the norm.
- Significant demographic changes.
- Globalisation, technology, changing aspirations...

OECD comparison long working hours



Source: Fagan 2004

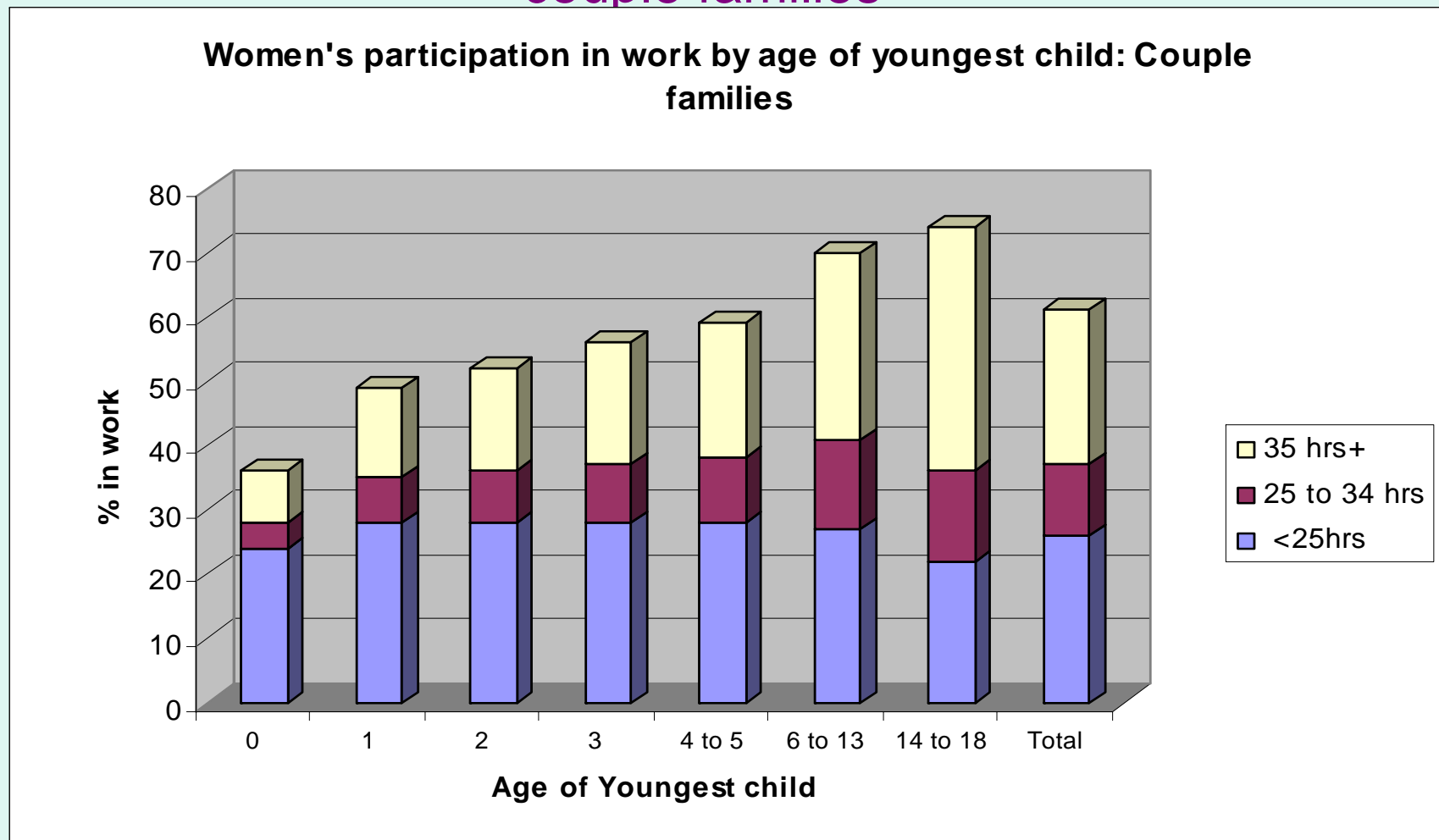
A rising proportion of women are in paid work...



Source: ABS: Cat. No. 6204.0

Including women with young children...

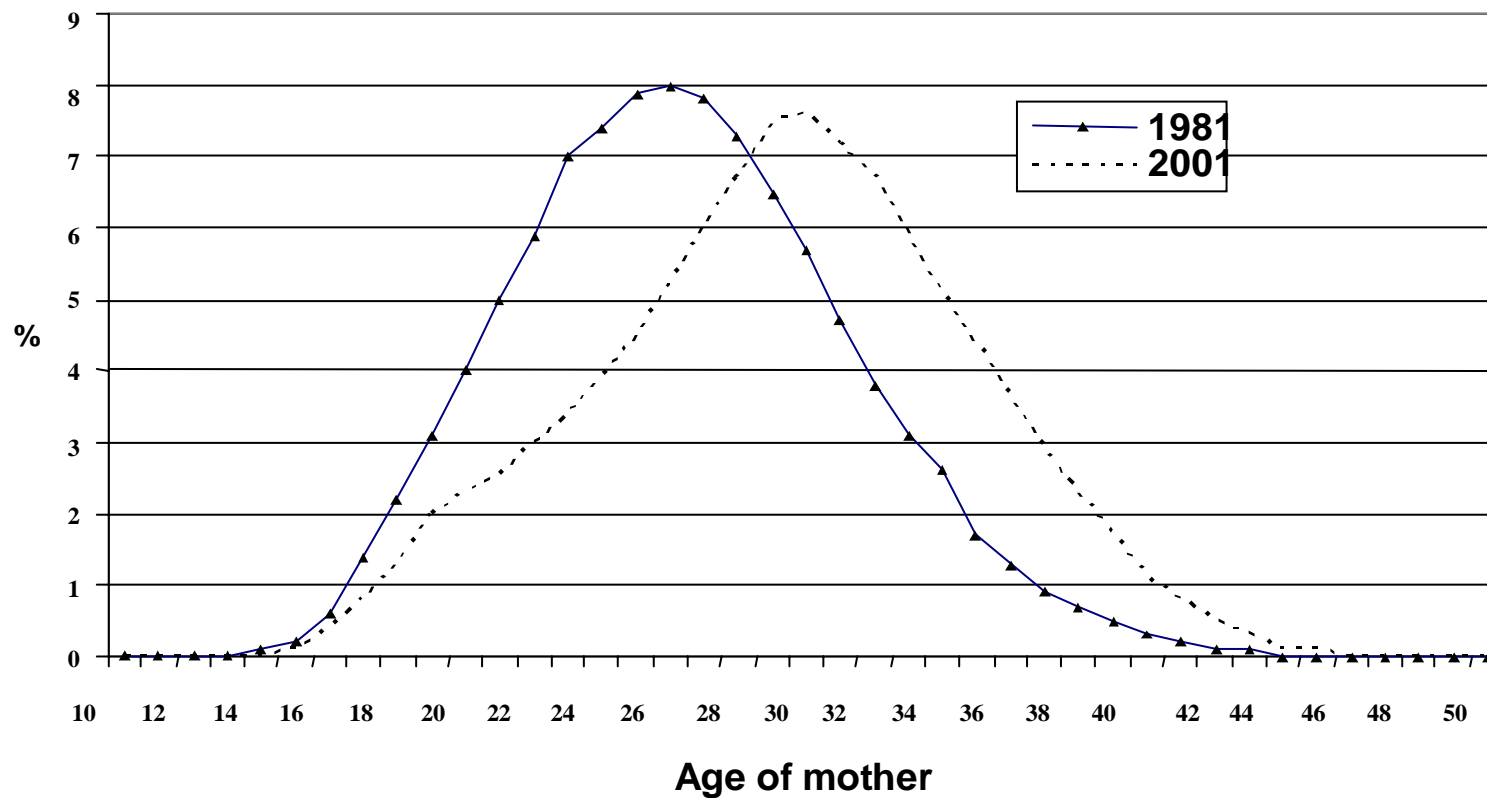
Women's work participation grows with age of child in couple families



Source: ABS data in Pocock (2003) *The Work/Life Collision*

Women are having fewer babies and having them later...

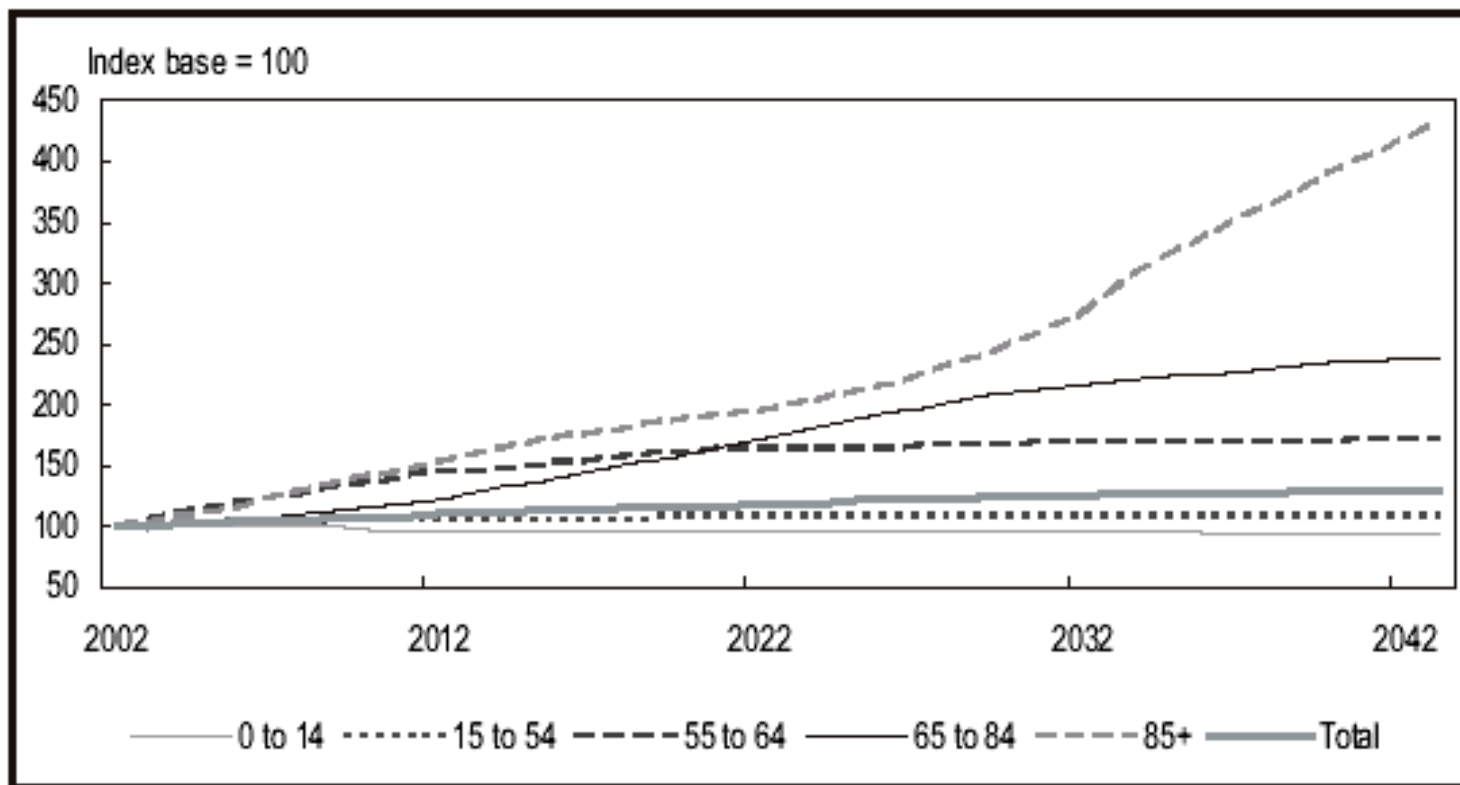
Age distribution of women having babies 1981, 2001



Source ABS Births Australia Cat No 3330.1.0

And the population is ageing...

Figure 2: Population growth by age group (Commonwealth of Australia, 2004)



Source: Baker 2004

Growing Body of Research

- The 'second shift' and the 'time bind' (Hoshchild, 1989, 1997)
- Work-Life Collision (Pocock, 2003)
- 'ideal worker' vs 'ideal workplace' - and the new norm: p/t work after the baby (Baird et al; 2007)
- Family-friendly vs family-hostile workplaces (Charlesworth)
- Work and Well-being (Strazdins et al, 2007)

Including research on Universities

‘Academic staff reported feeling highly stressed because of increased teaching loads and student/staff ratios, pressure to attract external funds, and lack of recognition and reward... at the same time as general staff have struggled with diminished resources and changing work processes.’

(Winefield et al 2002)

Compared with other workplaces...

‘University employees are significantly more negative toward their workplace’s family-friendly climate than corporate employees...because academic roles are ‘less subject to psychological boundaries in comparison to many managerial roles that are likely to be more structured.’

(Anderson et al 2002)

And US Universities

- ‘the use of work/family policies does not immediately flow from their existence on paper (Drago et al, 2001)
- ‘despite formal policies and programs designed to help employees balance work and family, unsupportive work cultures may undermine their use and effectiveness.’ (Thompson et al, 1999)
- ‘perceived subtle resistance from management eroded accessibility and use’ of policies. (Raabe, 1977)

Go8: Demographics*

- Median age 44.2- 45.2
- 35% Academic staff >50
- 30.3% General staff > 50

*Acknowledge Rhonda Hawkins, UWS/Graham Hugo

‘Colin and Cheryl’

(Coates et al, 2008)

- Born 1960
 - Married (not to an academic)
 - 50% chance has a full-time working partner
 - 2 children
 - No major career breaks
 - Worked 14 years
 - Full-time – 7% chance being p/t
 - Level D or E
- Born 1960
 - Married (not to an academic)
 - 30% chance has a full-time working partner
 - 2 children
 - Number of career breaks – 4 years
 - Worked 11 years
 - 20% chance working part-time
 - Level B or C

'Colin and Cheryl'*

- Work av. 50 hrs per week.
 - Prefer research.
 - Satisfied with academic life.
 - Feel working conditions have deteriorated, but in terms of support staff (secretarial, teaching, research) than physical conditions.
 - Do not recommend the career to young people.
 - Have influence at dept. level, not at institutional level - top-down mgt; cumbersome admin procedures; strong performance orientation.
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Policies

Universities have very good policies – and opportunities for flexibility - compared with many other workplaces and companies.

- So - Is it really 'Mission Impossible'?
- Is there even a problem?

Australian Study

What discourages academics and general staff from accessing work-family policies?

1. Poor communication of policies
2. High workloads
3. Career repercussions
4. Management attitudes
5. Influence of peers
6. Administrative processes

In short:

- We're not alone.
- Increasing pressures in and on Australian universities.
- Academic role expectations influence expectations of general staff roles.
- Management and supervisory attitude important determinant of use of policies.
- University culture influences use of policies.

Barriers to Use of Family-Friendly Policies in Other Companies

Complex interactions between:

- **Supervisors**
- **Interaction with other policies** – e.g. pay structures; staffing policies; accounting methods.
- **Employee agency** – security; union representation; gender; autonomy; position etc.
- **Organisational Norms** – the ‘ideal worker’ and resilience of traditional male model

(Baird, 2006)

How to make it 'Mission Possible'

- Use available policies – overtime; on-call; time-in-lieu, annual leave.
- Set time boundaries – at work and at home.
- Provide leadership and support – commend and reinforce through performance system.
- Act together.
- Change culture.
- Other suggestions?