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# Negotiating the Life Course

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED INVOLVEMENT IN A PIONEERING STUDY OF AUSTRALIAN'S LIVES**



You are receiving this newsletter because you are a participant in one of Australia's most exciting social survey projects. The project surveys people over time to see how life in Australia is changing.

We first contacted you in 1997 and again in 2000, and you may have recently participated in the third wave of the survey in late 2003.

This newsletter provides participants with some information on how the project is progressing. Further information is

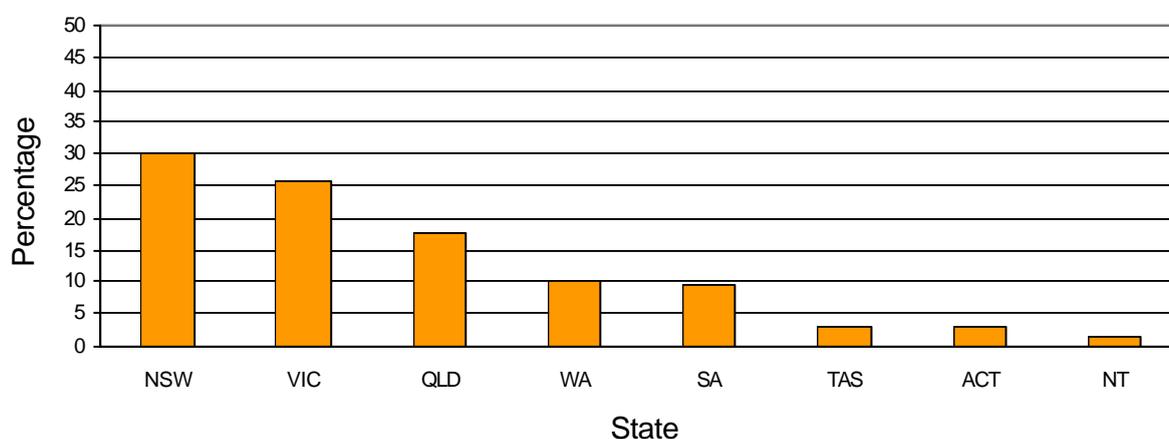
## WHO IS CONDUCTING THE PROJECT?

This project is conducted by a group of Australian researchers from The Australian National University and the University of Queensland. See the back of this newsletter for the project leaders contact information.

Users of the survey information are from a range of universities and government research units. Results from this survey are never used for market research.

## WHO HAS PARTICIPATED IN THE PROJECT?

In the first wave of the Negotiating the Life Course project 2231 people took part. Participants of the Negotiating the Life Course project come from all around Australia. Of course, the larger states have a larger number of people participating in the survey.

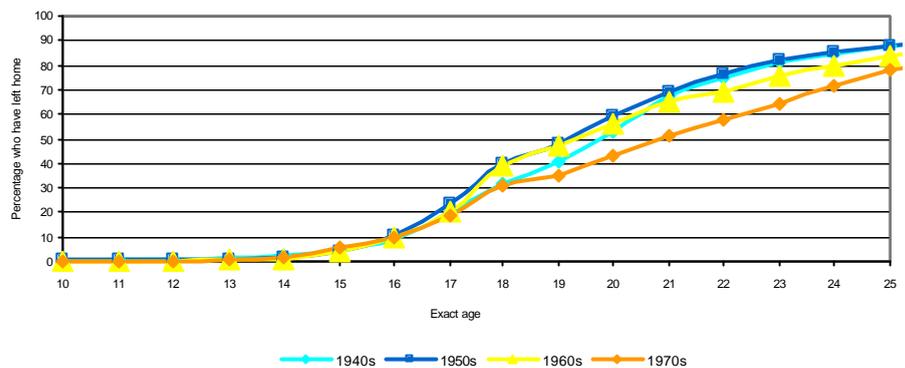


# SOME PROJECT FINDINGS

## AUSTRALIANS ARE LEAVING HOME AT LATER AGES

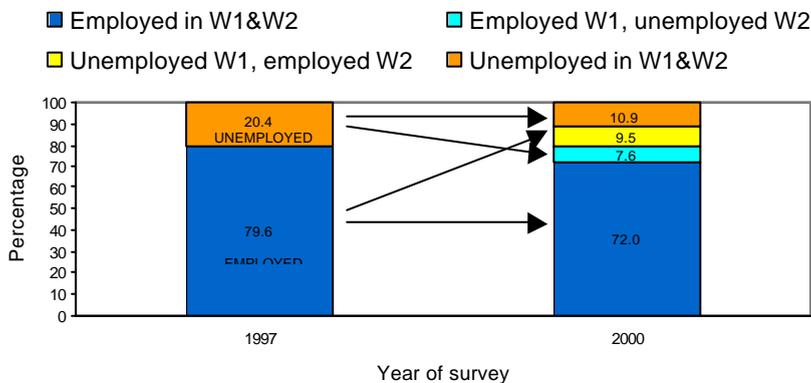
Research shows that young people are delaying many of the milestone changes that take place during life.

The NLC project data confirms this research with the finding that Australians are leaving home at later ages. At age 21, just over 50 per cent of those born in the 1970s had left home. For previous generations (those born in the 1940s to 60s), 65 to 70 per cent of people had left home by the age of 21.



## DO PEOPLE STAY OUT OF EMPLOYMENT?

At first glance, results from the NLC project suggest that the proportion of Australians not in employment was fairly stable between 1997 to 2000.

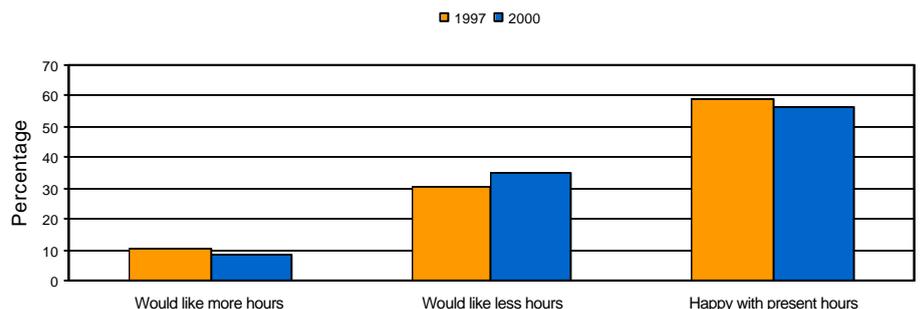


A closer look at the data reveals that although the per cent of people not employed only changed by 2 per cent between 1997 and 2000, the people who were not employed did change. Of those not employed in 2000, about half were not employed in 1997. The second half were employed in 1997. These results show that there is significant mobility in and out of the employment sector.

## DO WE WORK TOO HARD?

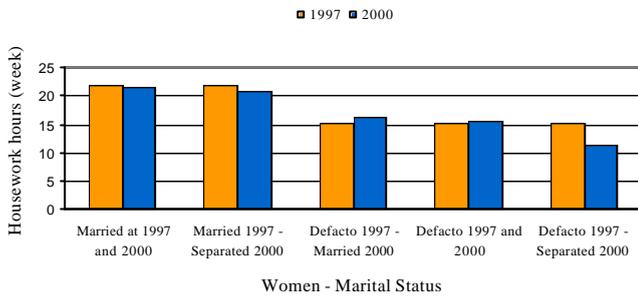
The NLC data indicates that in 2000, 43 per cent of Australians were unhappy with the number of hours they work.

The data also show that an increasing number of people would prefer to work fewer hours. These results suggest that Australians have many demands competing for their time, and would prefer to be spending more time outside the workplace.

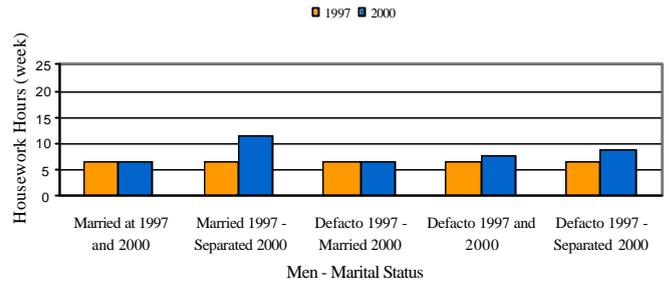


## WHO IS DOING THE HOUSEWORK?

The data show that women do more housework than men. But there are some variations according to marital status. Women who are married spend more time on housework than women who are living in a defacto



relationship. This difference does not exist between men who are married and men who are in a defacto relationship. However, men who are separated do more housework than both married men and men living in a defacto relationship.



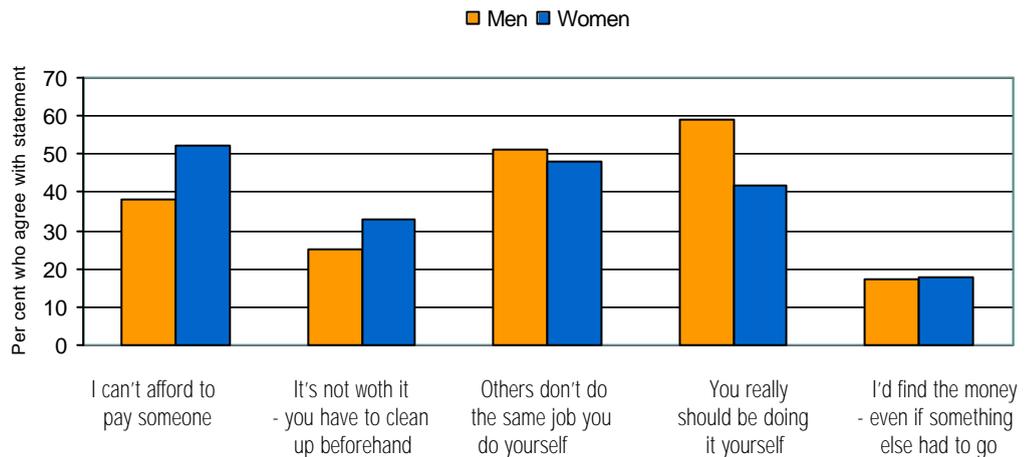
Negotiating the Life Course  
researching changes in  
Australian society

## AUSTRALIAN'S VIEWS ON PAYING FOR HOUSEWORK

18 per cent of participants in the NLC project pay someone to carry out household tasks.

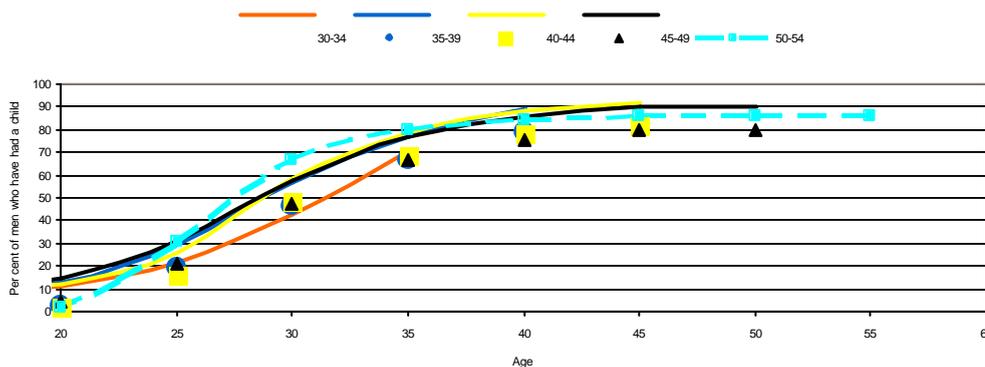
Australians have a variety of opinions about employing someone to do housework.

Almost 60 per cent of men agree that 'you really should be doing household tasks yourself', while 52 per cent of women agree with the statement 'I can't afford to pay someone' to do household tasks.



## MEN ARE ALSO HAVING CHILDREN AT LATER AGES

In early 2003, a paper using the NLC project showed that like women, men are also having children at later ages compared to men in previous generations.



You may have read about these results in the newspapers as they generated considerable interest from the public.

For men aged 50 to 54 when interviewed, the average age of having a first child was 28. For the 30 to 34 year age group this had increased to 33.

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# PROJECT INFORMATION

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## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROJECT?

The Negotiating the Life Course project has been running for seven years. Over this time, the project has collected valuable data about how Australians balance their work, wealth, family, health and education. The project explores the changes that take place in each of these areas over the life span.

This information is a precious resource for both researchers and government policy makers. Without surveys such as this one, it is difficult to observe how life in Australia is changing and where resources should be allocated to improve quality of life. That is why your continued involvement in the survey is so important.

## IS THE INFORMATION I PROVIDE CONFIDENTIAL AND PROTECTED?

Any identifying information you provide is kept totally confidential from both academic and government users of the data. It is not possible for data users to identify you from the Negotiating the Life Course project data.

Any academic or government department that wishes to use the project data in their research needs to go through an application process. Applications for the data are reviewed by the Australian Social Science Data Archive and final approval is needed from the project leaders before the data can be provided. Market researchers do not have access to the project data.

Your involvement in the Negotiating the Life Course project is also protected by The Australian National University Ethics Committee. The project is routinely reviewed by the Ethics committee to ensure that your privacy and the information you provide is protected.

## HOW LONG WILL THE PROJECT RUN FOR?

The longer the Negotiating the Life Course project runs for the more information there will be on the varying and changing nature of Australian society. The project team aims to collect at least one more round of survey information in 2007. We hope you will continue to participate in this valuable project.

## DID YOU MISS OUT ON PARTICIPATING IN THE THIRD WAVE OF SURVEY COLLECTION IN LATE 2003?

If you did not participate in an interview and would like an opportunity to contribute your experiences to this study of Australian society, please contact the Data Manager:  
Liana Leach (02) 6125 2995

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## PROJECT LEADER CONTACT INFORMATION

Information on project leaders is available at their websites.

### **Professor Peter McDonald**

The Australian National University

<http://demography.anu.edu.au/People/Staff/peter.html>

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### **Associate Professor Janeen Baxter**

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