



The University of Sydney
Faculty of Economics and Business

Women ♀ Work
Research Group
School of Business

Gen M

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'Generation F - attract, retain, engage'

EOWA ♀ WWRG Forum

1 August 2008

The Parental Leave in Australia Study*



- Level 1 - National survey of parents of young children
- **Level 2 - Organisational case studies (the workplace context)**
- Level 3 – Household interviews (the domestic context)

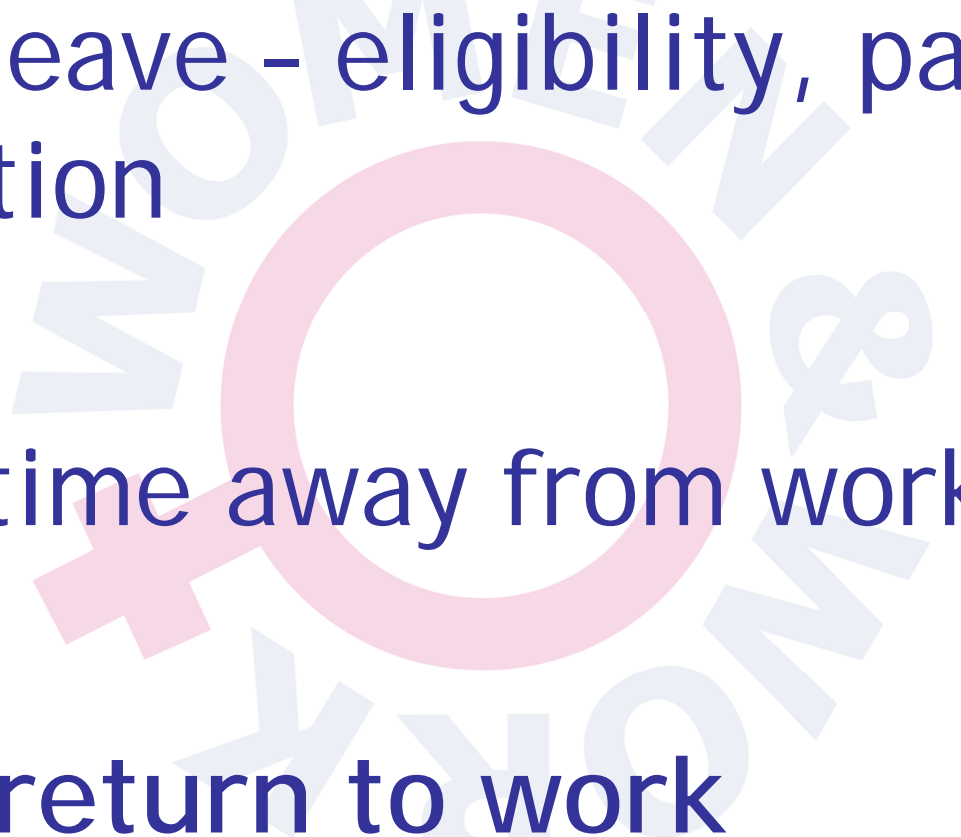
*Whitehouse, Baird, Diamond and Hoskings

The Cases

Case	Industry	Sector	Emp'ees	Policies
1	Transport	Private	37000	10 weeks paid maternity leave 1 week paid paternity leave
2	Finance & Insurance	Private	27000	12 weeks paid parental leave
3	Professional Services	Private	360	12 weeks paid parental leave (made in 2 instalments)
4	Manufacturing	Private	8500	14 weeks paid maternity leave
5	Heavy Manufacturing	Private	7000	6 weeks paid maternity leave 6 weeks career resumption pay 1 week paid paternity leave
6	Education	Public	3500	26 weeks paid parental leave 1 week paid partner leave
7	Defence	Public		14 weeks paid maternity leave 2 weeks paid paternity leave
8	Utilities	Public	3500	9 weeks paid maternity leave (increased to 14)

Three Parts to Effective Parental Leave Policy



1. The leave - eligibility, pay, duration
 2. The time away from work
 3. The return to work
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Gen M - Views on the Policies...



- 'Parental leave entitlements are extremely generous Australia-wide'.
- 'The more senior you are the better deal you can broker. It is that simple.'
- 'Can feel guilty taking advantage of the policies: stated policies vs. practical working of the same can differ'.
- 'A number of the male partners did say to me, some of them in a half joking way, not seriously, that they thought it is ridiculous and that they were back at work, you know the day of the birth or the day after when their children were born...'

Gen M Return ... to Work



- ‘Different parts of (the organisation) are very culturally different- in (this section) if you’re female you don’t work part-time’.
- ‘I needed to talk to night shift ... so I came in... You know I put the first one to bed and then the second one was pretty happy so I left at seven to come in
- ‘It depends on your actual manager-if they are career minded they’ll push you harder to come back full time’.

The Gen M-wall and Gen M-career



- ‘You made a conscious decision to step out of the main game...’
- ‘I made a conscious decision to step out of that continual get a bigger job thinking...’
- ‘This may reduce the likelihood of a promotion for me and slow down my career progress, but I do not mind as this is the ...balance that I want.’
- ‘Part-time work is the discrimination you never hear about – it definitely affects your career...’

The Gen M Solution



- ‘I had a lot of support... also I guess I’d built up enough credibility and relationships in the role before I went on maternity leave
- ‘I’ve been around a long time and I’ve got credibility and I’ve got a reputation for being a hard worker and producing what’s required
- ‘I’ve worked hard as well but I had a good reputation when I went off on leave.’

The Gen M Reality



- ‘I wouldn’t work full time because no-one else is going to bring up my kids but I’ve (also) invested so much time and energy in my career.’
- ‘Part-time isn’t part-time - I don’t take lunch, I don’t jog at lunch time like my colleagues, I work every minute of the day’; ‘I take work home’; ‘I take my lap top home so I can work’.
- ‘Less than 3 days in the office is not acceptable-visibility is the key
- ‘it’s ‘precision parenting’
- ‘it’s all tight- it’s all run, run, run...’

Gen M ... Conclusions



- Knowledge gaps and myths.
- Variability in policy across organisations.
- Variability in access within organisations – spatially and seniority considerations.
- Importance of organisational policy – link with practice and culture.
- Maternity leave accepted; stay-in-touch needs more work.
- **RTW problematic**; Highly gendered policy use; difficult for men; slow change.
- Work organisation a major barrier – especially long hour shifts; 24/7 operations; work away from home.
- **Work and motherhood: point of maximum conflict and ‘private accommodation’.**