

## Australian women and welfare to work: Lessons from international experience

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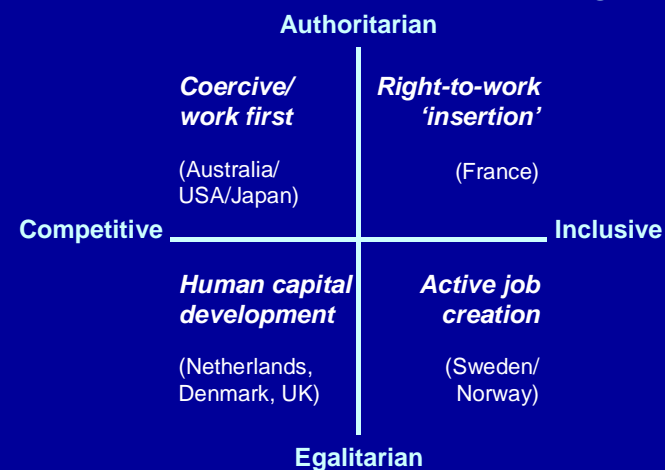
## Outline

- Welfare to work in Australia
- Other welfare to work regimes
- Assessing the impact overseas
- Lessons for Australia
- Agenda for Australian research

## Welfare to work in Australia

- New workforce participation requirements & compliance measures
  - To expand labour supply by 'activating' the 'inactive'
  - Mutual obligation extended to new groups incl. sole mothers
  - Lower income support rates for sole mothers with school aged children

## Varieties of welfare to work regime



Source: Carney (2007:8) , adapted from Dean (2006)

## Assessing the impact

- US and UK 'success stories' – welfare rolls shrinking
- Looking behind the success story...
  - Movement from welfare to work?
  - Mothers' behavioural logic: is it the same as the program's?
  - Impact of sanctioning?
  - Poverty and job quality
  - Quality and nature of job training

## Impact of welfare to work on family life

- Child care arrangements
- Family expenditures and costs of work
- Parenting quality and child development
- Child maltreatment

## Lessons for Australia

- Activation policies are not, *of themselves*, bad for sole parents
- Need to be cautious about measures of success
- Policy interfaces crucial, especially income support and industrial relations

## An agenda for Australian research: To understand

- Impact of workforce participation
- Vulnerable mothers' experiences of paid work
- Stakeholder (employers, Job Network providers and others) responses to reform
- Rethinking 'job readiness'
- Rethinking the service and policy mix