The Centre for Work + Life is a national research centre that investigates work and its intersection with household, family, community and social life in Australia. It aims to identify long-term change and to fashion responses to the significant challenges around work and life.
The Centre for Work + Life

Directed by Professor Barbara Pocock

Established as part of the Hawke Research Institute for Sustainable Societies, University of South Australia in early 2006.

2006 HIGHLIGHTS

- National Roundtable on Childcare: the Centre convened with Dr Elizabeth Hill of Sydney University, a national Academy of Social Sciences in Australia-funded Workshop Childcare: A Better Policy Framework for Australia, 13-14 July 2006, through the Work + Family Policy Roundtable (www.familypolicyroundtable.com.au). This workshop brought together 21 Australian and international researchers dealing with issues related to early childhood education and care and related policy perspectives, from a diverse range of disciplinary backgrounds, including economics, sociology, medicine, early childhood, political economy, psychology, government and working life. Five experts from the community sector and governments also attended. The roundtable discussed the current research evidence about early childhood education and care in Australia and internationally. Fifteen papers were presented. The workshop will result in a book to be published in 2008 by Australian Council for Educational Research edited by Dr Alison Elliot, Dr Elizabeth Hill and Professor Barbara Pocock.

- The launch of Living Low Paid: Some Experiences of Australian Childcare Workers and Cleaners – a first report from the Centre’s research project on low paid childcare, hotel workers and cleaners in Australia. The launch occurred in Melbourne in April, in partnership with unions, Brotherhood of St Laurence, University of Adelaide, Sydney University and RMIT University.

- $10,000 UniSA grant awarded to Dr Helen Masterman-Smith to develop an ARC discovery project application on Working Poverty and Democratic Citizenship.

- A contract secured in November by Professor Barbara Pocock and Dr Helen Masterman-Smith with Allen and Unwin for a book titled Low Pay in a Prosperous Land, due out in 2008.

- $10,000 UniSA grant awarded to Dr Pip Williams to develop an ARC discovery project application on An Ecological Approach to the Interaction Between Work and Transitions in Parenting.

- $10,000 UniSA grant awarded to Dr Helen Masterman-Smith to develop and convene the Our Work… Our Lives 2007: National Conference on Women and Work in September 2007.

- $10,000 funding provided by SA and WA Health departments for the Centre to examine the Work/Life Balance for a Sustainable Health Workforce.

- $100,000 funding provided over the next two years by the Innovation and Economic Opportunities Group, associated with Mawson Lakes, to join as a new industry partner in the existing Work, Home and Community Study funded by the ARC and partnered by Lend Lease Communities and the University of South Australia.

- $30,000 funding provided over the next three years by Industrial Relations Victoria for the Centre to examine the Impact of WorkChoices on Work and Family.

- $80,127 funding provided by the AMWU for the Centre to conduct a Review of Organising in the AMWU nationally.

- Professor Barbara Pocock gave the 2006 Clare Burton Memorial Lecture titled Jobs, Care and Justice: A Fair Work Regime for Australia in six capital cities.

- Professor Barbara Pocock published a book, The Labour Market Ate My Babies (Federation Press, 2006) in October. The book was featured in most Australian daily newspapers with a chapter excerpt published in The Age in November.

- The Centre for Work + Life received a grant of $15,000 from SafeWork SA to examine the situation of vulnerable workers affected by the WorkChoices regulatory framework.
Partnerships

The Centre for Work + Life has established partnerships with:

• The Brotherhood of St Laurence
• Lend Lease Communities
• Industrial Relations Victoria
• The Liquor Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union
• SA Unions

These partnerships have enriched CWL research ideas, linked research to policy makers, made data collection easier, helped fund our work, and helped us test the value of the Centre’s work and the outcomes of our analysis.

The goals of the Centre’s partnerships are:

• to discuss research objectives and develop research relationships that are long term and mutually beneficial, rather than short term or consultancy-based;
• to cooperate in research activities;
• to help link research work to policy and practice in government, enterprises and community organisations and activities; and
• to increase research capacity around the themes of work and life.

The Advisory Committee

In 2006 the Centre’s Advisory Committee was established and will meet twice a year at the Centre in Adelaide. This Committee considers and advises on the strategic direction of the Centre and the relationship of its activities to that direction. It also advises on ways in which the Centre can strengthen its outcomes in relation to its goals.

Specifically, the role of the Advisory committee is to:

• consider the strategic direction of the Centre in relation to the Centre’s Charter;
• advise on that direction;
• advise on the range of activities of the Centre and consider their alignment with the strategic plan and Centre Charter;
• suggest ways in which the Centre and its activities can be improved to meet the Centre Charter; and
• support and promote the work and staff of the Centre as appropriate.

The Committee has a Chairperson and includes representation of key Centre partners and community representatives, reflecting the activities and priorities of the Centre. Appointments to the Advisory Committee and as Chairperson are by invitation and for a minimum two year period.

The Advisory Committee is not decisive. It is, however, very important in reviewing and suggesting strategic directions of the Centre and developing the activities and contribution of the Centre.

The Committee advises the Director of the Centre who has responsibility for the actual (including financial) management of the Centre and final responsibility for the Centre’s direction, activities and outcomes, operating within the rules, policies and frameworks of the University of South Australia.

The Advisory Committee’s members for 2006-2008 are:

Mr Mark Butler (Chair)
Secretary, LHMU SA Branch

Mr Kelvin Trimper
General Manager
Sustainability Initiatives
Lend Lease Communities

Ms Sharon Winocur
Director, Private Sector – Policy and Strategy
Industrial Relations Victoria

Professor Paul Smyth
Brotherhood of St Laurence

Ms Julie McMahon
Community Development Worker/Financial Counsellor
Uniting Care Wesley Adelaide

Mr Anup Raghavan
Resident, Mawson Lakes, SA

Ms Janet Giles
Secretary, SA Unions

Ms Margaret Hallock
Director, Wayne Morse Center for Law and Politics
University of Oregon

Staffing

All staff were new to the University of South Australia in 2006 which presented real opportunities and challenges. Our staff now include:

Professor Barbara Pocock
Barbara’s activities have revolved around conducting research, publishing, writing grants, managing staff, guest speaking, dealing with media and liaising with external organisations.

She has also had a lot of travel (26 interstate visits) and delivered the Clare Burton Memorial Lecture series in an Australian-wide tour.

Barbara’s web site www.barbara pocock.com.au sets out many of her papers and contributions and the linkages that her work makes between research literature and policy outcomes.

Dr Helen Masterman-Smith
Helen has been the project manager of an ARC Linkage project, entitled Low Paid Services Employment in Australia: Dimensions, Causes, Effects and Responses, since February 2005. She is heavily engaged in writing up and publicly disseminating the research findings.

Helen was recently awarded seed funding to develop future research on democratic citizenship and working poverty.

She assists in grant application development, report writing on other projects as required, and is on the coordinating committee of a national conference on women and work to be held in Adelaide in 2007.

Helen co-supervises postgraduate candidate, Catherine Earl.

Dr Pip Williams
Pip’s primary activity has been the management of the Work, Home and Community Study.
In addition she has been involved with the establishment of the Work-life index being developed for use across our research projects, and she has contributed to the future work of the Centre through applications for ARC funding.

Pip co-supervises postgraduate candidate, Sigrid Christiansen.

Jude Elton
Jude contributed to the low paid workers project through conducting phone interviews, research on the political economy of the hotel sector of the hospitality industry and assistance with focus groups.

She conducted interviews with elected and appointed officials of the AMWU in Sydney and Melbourne, and was also responsible for the carriage of the vulnerable workers project.

Catherine Earl
Catherine commenced work on the young workers project called Re-conceptualising citizenship and the commodification of labour: young casual workers in the SA labour market.

It aims to explore labour theories associated with industrial citizenship, casualisation and the commodification of labour as they relate to the current experiences of young South Australians in the labour market.

The industry partner on this project is SA Unions.

Catherine has submitted the research proposal, gained ethics approval for the project and will begin field work in early 2007.

Sigrid Christiansen
Sigrid commenced work on her PhD thesis. Her thesis forms part of the Work, Home and Community Study whose industry partner is Lend Lease Communities.

The project will look at what work, housing, family and community experiences young adults living in Adelaide aged 20-29 have, want and expect.

She completed her proposal, gained ethics approval for the project and will conduct focus groups in 2007.

Ali Elder
Ali provided assistance in developing research proposals, undertaking literature reviews and helping the Centre manage data in endnote.

Ali will join CWL as a PhD student in 2007, researching domestic work and its role in the construction of male and female identity across the generations.

Karen Brown
Karen managed a review of union organising in the AMWU. She has conducted a wide range of interviews with AMWU staff, traversing complex issues and putting her union leadership experience to very good use.

She and Barbara have written a report on her findings, advising the AMWU on its future strategies around union organising.

Hideki Nakazato
Hideki, from Konan University in Japan, visited the Centre for six months from September 2006.

He is undertaking a comparison of work and family issues in Japan and Australia and ran a seminar entitled Diverging life courses and enduring gendered regimes in Japan.

Kath Lockett
Kath has had a busy year setting up new systems for the centre helping other staff in settling in, editing and writing and developing effective relations with university staff and other units.

Kath has played a vital role in ensuring that the Centre is well established within the Hawke Research Institute and UniSA guidelines and criteria.

Natalie Skinner
Natalie started early in 2007 to assist with the Work Home and Community Study and to develop and establish other key research proposals for the Centre.

Joc Auer
Joc helped run planning days around centre practices and approaches in April and worked closely with CWL to develop the ARC linkage on health (see below).

Susan Oakley
Sue is a Lecturer at the School of Social Sciences at the University of Adelaide.

Sue has been a key collaborator with the Centre’s ARC linkage grants during 2006:

• The Low Paid Services Project,
• Young Workers and Workplace Citizenship and
• Work, Housing Services and Community Project.

Ros Prosser
Ros provided invaluable assistance in developing research proposals and undertaking literature reviews.

She has now taken up a tenured job in media studies at the University of Adelaide.

Visit the Centre’s website at
www.unisa.edu.au/hawkeinstitute/concentrations/cwl
Finance

The CWL budget for 2006 showed a healthy income revenue and ended the year with a budget surplus, much of which is committed to specific projects.

We plan to expand our activities in 2007, putting this surplus to good effect and making sure that Centre’s goals of doing research that makes a difference while working in a sustainable and enjoyable working environment are simultaneously achieved.

CWL funding comes from three sources:
• The University of South Australia
• The Australian Research Council through specific research projects (one discovery and three linkages).
• Our Research Partners as listed above.

These three sources fairly evenly share the funding of the Centre at present.

Current Research Projects

Low Paid Employment in the Services Sector

This study addresses four research questions:
• What are the characteristics of low-paid jobs and workers in Australia?
• Taking an industry and occupation focus, who are low-paid service workers and what are the characteristics of low-paid service jobs?
• What are the effects of low-paid work on individuals’ experience of work, and on the households and communities they are embedded in?
• What policy interventions are most appropriate?

The project has involved interviews and focus groups of 138 low paid workers in Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide.

Some remaining interview/focus group opportunities are currently being finalised. Political economy profiling of each case study industry is ongoing.

A start has been made on first round preliminary analysis. A dedicated project website (www.lowpayproject.com.au) has been maintained.

Analysis and write up of case study findings is well underway, as is feedback with relevant organisations and communities to discuss and review findings.
Outcomes
A book contract based on the study has been secured by Masterman-Smith and Pocock with Allen and Unwin (due 2008).

Two conference papers and one journal article have been prepared.

Other outputs to date include two refereed journal articles, two refereed conference papers, and seven non-refereed papers and research reports.

Preliminary results were made available publicly through a media launch in Melbourne on 5 April 2006, which attracted significant national press coverage.

Since then, Masterman-Smith has disseminated findings to the media on several occasions.

The research has been cited by state governments and community/church/welfare sector peak bodies in federal government inquiries (Fair Pay Commission and WorkChoices) and state wage case hearings (WA, SA and NSW).

Four keynote speeches and two ALP taskforce submissions have been made, alongside other policy briefings.

Work Home and Community Study
The Work, Housing, Services and Community Project is an ARC Linkage project jointly involving the University of South Australia, Lend Lease Communities, the Australian Research Council and the University of Adelaide.

It is a national study exploring how men, women and children think about issues related to work, home and community.

In particular, it analyses how changes at work and in households are reconfiguring relationships between work, home, services and community in eight sites across four states.

The Project explores the following questions:

- What do workers and those they live with seek from their work, homes and communities?
- What kinds of relationships do they seek between their workplaces, homes and communities?
- How do workers and families build their communities and sustain and strengthen their social fabric?
- Are these relationships and communities sustainable?
- What can be learned from experiences elsewhere?
- What are the policy implications of the analysis for different levels and elements of government, as well as for employers, unions and community organisations?

Preliminary focus groups
Preliminary focus groups were conducted with men and women residents and workers at two study sites in South Australia and Victoria.

These focus groups were conducted in order to gain a preliminary understanding of the issues faced by women and men in relation to fitting their work, home and community lives together, and to identify particular structures, services and amenities that facilitate a good fit.

Analysis of these focus groups was completed and has been discussed in the report fitting it all together which can be downloaded from www.unisa.edu.au/hawkeinstitute/cwl.

Survey development
Findings from the preliminary focus groups are being used to develop a household survey to be used across all study sites, and a short work-life index, to be used within this project and more generally.

Both surveys are near completion and due for testing early 2007.

Outcomes
A preliminary report was produced and the findings reported at various seminars and conferences included as part of the recent Clare Burton Lectures.

A number of refereed papers are currently being developed. The Innovation and Economic Opportunity Group (based at Mawson Lakes) joined the project as a new industry partner. This has allowed the Centre to undertake the full range of research planned, despite not receiving all funds originally sought from the ARC.

We are also expecting to extend the scope of the project to two new inner-city high-rise housing developments in Sydney and Melbourne.
Workchoices and vulnerable workers

This two part qualitative national study aims to assess the effects of changes in work regulation brought about by the WorkChoices Act, 2006 (Cth) on vulnerable groups of workers; particularly women of diverse backgrounds, circumstances and ages, in cleaning, clerical, hospitality, child care and aged care jobs.

It addresses four research questions:

- What effects are changes having on remuneration, including base rates of pay, loadings and overtime?
- What effects are changes having on the form of the contract of employment; on hours and patterns of work, and on job security?
- What effects are changes having on access to and amount of paid and unpaid leave, including that relating to sickness, childbirth and other forms of care?
- How are changes affecting the ability to balance and participate in work, family and community life?

Part 1 will involve the conducting and analysis of at least twenty in-depth interviews in South Australia and the writing of a report on the findings by the Centre For Work + Life.

This aspect of the project has been funded by the South Australian Government. The SA study is being matched by similar studies in Queensland, New South Wales, the ACT, Victoria, and Western Australia.

Part 2 entails the writing of a national report from findings from all states by the Centre For Work + Life.

These aspects of the project are funded by the National Federation of Australian Women, the Young Women’s Christian Association and the Women’s Electoral Lobby.

Common research instruments have been developed, piloted and agreed upon. University ethics committee approval for the project aims, processes and instruments has been obtained. Interviews with workers and community organisation advisers in contact with workers experiencing change have commenced.

Outcomes

It is planned to complete interviews by the end of January 2007 and coding and analysis of interview transcripts in February. The state report will be drafted during February and completed in early March. Themes for the national report will be developed at a national workshop of researchers, to be held in Melbourne in mid April.

It is intended that the national report will be complete by July 2007 and that there will be a national release of its findings.

State research findings will also be taken up in public presentations and publications through 2007.

Review of Organising in the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union

This project undertakes a review of the national organising strategy of the union. It builds on past work by the Director on union strategy and management. It is being conducted by Karen Brown (past SA Secretary of the Finance Sector Union working with Barbara).

Karen has conducted interviews with 30% of the union’s staff around Australia and a report is due in early February 2007.

It will recommend strategies for organising and union structure to assist its efforts to better represent workers in manufacturing.

Work life fellowship: ARC Discovery

This fellowship investigates work and life issues in Australia.
Publications for 2006


- Pocock, B. ‘The Community in Unionism: The Role of Community Activists and Engagement in Union Renewal’ Paper to XVI ISA World Congress of Sociology, Durban, South Africa (with David Peetz).


Poverty: Closer Than You Think Conference, South Australian Council of Social Services, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, July.


Media, public presentations and other signs of impact

Public Presentations


Barbara Pocock – ‘Fitting it all together: Work, home and community in two master planned communities’ Seminar to Department of Public Health, University of Adelaide, 29 November, 2006 (with Dr Pip Williams).

Barbara Pocock – ‘Changes at work and their implications for the Third Sector’ National Third Sector Conference, University of South Australia, 27 November 2006.

Barbara Pocock – ‘Fitting it all together: Work, home and community in two master planned communities’ Seminar to Lend Lease Communities, Mawson Lakes, 14 November 2006.


Barbara Pocock – ‘Researching Women and Work: Pleasure, Pain, Prospects’ EASS Divisional Research Day, University of South Australia, Magill Campus, 12 August 2006.


Barbara Pocock – ‘The configuration of work, home and community in Australia: Research background, context and some early analysis in two communities’ Seminar, School of Business, University of Queensland, 4 August (main author, with Pip Williams and Susan Oakley).

Barbara Pocock – ‘The childcare policy challenge and some principles for discussion’ Academy of Social Sciences Workshop, University of Sydney, 13-14 July (Main author, with Elizabeth Hill).


Barbara Pocock – ‘Introduction to the Centre for Work and Life’, HRISS Seminar, Hawke Research Institute, Murray House, University of South Australia, 1 June.


Barbara Pocock – Appearance at House of Representatives Inquiry into Work and Family 10-12am, by teleconference, 24 May.


Barbara Pocock – ‘The next generation: Children and young adults on work, family and choice’, Work, Families and Wellbeing Forum, Old Canberra House, Acton, ACT 4-5 May.


Barbara Pocock – ‘WorkChoices and the future of work’ Seminar at Public Service Association of South Australia, Pirie Street, Adelaide, 24 March.

Barbara Pocock – ‘Organisers, Delegates and building union members’ power: What have we learned?’ Referred paper to AIRAANZ Annual Conference, Stamford Grand Hotel, 1-3 February (with David Peetz, main author).

Barbara Pocock – Launch of Labour Market Deregulation edited by Jo Isaac and Keith Hancock, AIRAANZ Annual Conference, Stamford Grand Hotel, 1-3 February.

Helen Masterman-Smith and Jude Elton – Presentation to the National Labor Parliamentary Task Force on Industrial Relations Inquiry into the Effects of WorkChoices, 27 April 2006.


Jude Elton – ‘Black labour to be paid the same as white labour: Aboriginal workers and equal pay in the South Australian pastoral industry, from the Great War to the Depression’, Special State History Conference, 3 August 2006.


Helen Masterman-Smith – 2006 Keynote speaker, Shrinking World of the Low Paid Worker, Australian Education Union Annual TAFE Conference, AEU (SA Branch), Adelaide, 18 August.
Marketers prey on working parents’ fears that they don’t see enough of their children, encouraging them to compensate by spending up big. But giving kids “stuff” is not enough.

By BARBARA POCOCK

Here is a television commercial formula, familiar to us all, that goes like this: a smiling mother in the kitchen organizes snacks for children as they come in from school. She is warm, generous, laughing, prepared. Her children are delighted to see her, well fed, nurtured by her presence. Her kitchen is clean, well stocked. Whether she is buttering bread, attending a bruised knee or washing those football jumpers, it is a mother’s time and love that these advertisements speak to. They get us to spend on扩张 parental spending on a shrinking population of children. Pressing upon guilt is one means of stimulating consumption. Marketing experts are explicit: they see parental guilt as a “major motivator” for parental spending, and set about narrowing into parental wallets by means of their children, who are seen as a major commercial force.

In the face of a squeeze on family time, parents are encouraged by advertisements to create family experiences that are special — “special” meaning commodified and preferably “expensive”, the more expensive the more special.

At the upper end, this is represented by the pram or the expensive pram. It is the pram that costs $4000 that says “expensive”, not the pram that costs $300.

From The Age, 11 November 2006


Barbara Pocock: The Australian. Low paid workers, 10 April 2006.


Barbara Pocock: 3SER. Low paid workers, 10 April 2006.


Barbara Pocock: SAA. House of Representatives appearance on work and family, 24 May 2006.

Barbara Pocock: The Advertiser. House of Representatives appearance on work and family, 25 May.


Barbara Pocock: ABC Riverland South Australia. 21 June.


Barbara Pocock: The Australian. ‘Principles for an Early Childhood Education and Care System’ p. 4.


Barbara Pocock: ABC The World Today. ‘Principles for an Early Childhood Education and Care System’.


Barbara Pocock: ABC Adelaide Regional radio, Carol Whitelock. Women in leadership, 13 October 2006.


2007 Plans

We are planning to expand further with four additional researcher work stations providing accommodation for 13-15 staff.

Roundtable around national policy responses on work and family (June 2007);

National Federation for Australian Women (NFAW) roundtable on WorkChoices and Vulnerable workers in March 2007;

A national roundtable on a fair and flexible industrial relations system for Australia (May 2007);

A seminar on running work-related social science research centres like ours (September 2007);


CWL key staff will be participating in international conferences in Canada (Barbara Pocock, 2007 by invitation), the US (Barbara, January 2008, by invitation), Amsterdam (Helen Masterman-Smith, 2007) and the United Kingdom (Barbara Pocock and Pip Williams, UK, 2007).

Proposed Research Projects for 2007

ARC Linkage Work Life balance, health and well being: theory, practice and policy Submitted November 2006 Seeding funds $10,000 from WA government and the SA Health Department

This ARC linkage project was submitted in late 2006. The planned research will address well-being and work/life balance issues within the health sector and the larger Australian workforce.

It will do this by analysing work/life across the Australian labour market.
(establishing a longitudinal survey instrument, the Australian Work and Life Index (AWALI)) and through deep qualitative investigation of work/life conflict and workforce challenges in the health sector in Western Australia in relation to key transitions of working life.

The partners are the WA Work/Life balance committee of the health sector, and the SafeWork SA group which is now part of the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

AWALI will inform the SA strategic plan. Partners will contribute $130,000/year for three years. Slightly more than this has been requested for each year of the project from the ARC.

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**ARC Discovery**

**Working Poverty and Democratic Citizenship**

HELEN MASTERMAN-SMITH
To be submitted M arch 2007
Seeding funds $10,000 from DPDS

This study aims to examine the implications of rising low pay and working poverty for the health of democratic citizenship in Australia today.

It will examine the experiences, expectations and attitudes of a cross-section of Australian men and women experiencing working poverty, in relation to notions of democratic citizenship.

It will also investigate the views of relevant stakeholders including community service organisations, political parties, trade unions and government agencies.

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**ARC Discovery**

**Understanding work/care regimes and international work/care chains in Australia and beyond – a comparative perspective of theory and policy.**

BARBARA POCOCK

This study will analyse work/care chains and their implications for women, men and children across the socio-economic spectrum in four countries that are linked by such chains (Australia, Canada, the Philippines, Malaysia).

It will investigate national and international chains of work and care in both rich (care importing) and poor (care exporting) households and countries, and their implications for justice and well-being, contributing to the conceptualisation of work/care chains and to national and international policy.

The project continues a QEII Fellowship for Barbara.
The Centre for Work + Life is a national research centre that investigates work and its intersection with household, family, community and social life in Australia. Its aim is to identify long-term change and to fashion responses to the significant challenges around work and life.