



Committee for
Economic
Development of
Australia

CEDA Study

**EQUAL WORK
OPPORTUNITY IN
AUSTRALIA:**
Anti-Discrimination Laws
and the Wider Issues

**Carolyn Davis
John Nieuwenhuysen**

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spread of anti-discrimination legislation in Australia. But they do not resolve the problems of overlap and duplication in a Federal-State system of government. It is also open to question as to how far the Commonwealth's proposed laws will in fact apply in those States which have so far not enacted their own anti-discrimination legislation.

An especially important point is that the legislation concentrates almost exclusively on discrimination by employers, with little recognition given to other sources of discrimination such as unions, other employees and customers. This is a form of discrimination in itself.

The legislation usefully raises the awareness of those discriminating and those who are discriminated against. But this is a very limited achievement. The anti-discrimination laws are only one (small) part of the means by which greater equality could be achieved, if desired by Australian Governments. Moreover, it is important that the anti-discrimination laws should not obscure the need for an integrated policy and back-up system by governments intent on promoting equality of opportunity in the Australian workforce.

4. Equal Opportunity for Women

A review of the main characteristics of the status and role of women in the workforce produces a clear conclusion. Many of the impediments to progress towards workforce equality cannot be removed by mere legislation, such as anti-discrimination laws. A great deal of more varied and widespread action, and changes in attitude, are necessary. This conclusion is supported by a simple recitation of the two main characteristics of the status and role of women in the workforce.

First, there is horizontal and vertical job segregation between men and women, at industry and occupational levels. Whatever the economic justification for "men's" and "women's" jobs, this distinction is undoubtedly reinforced through the attitudes and expectations of employees and employers, which in turn are set by stereotyping processes established in early childhood.

Second, the fact of segregation *per se* is less important than the destinations of female segregation in Australia. Women are concentrated in the secondary job market, i.e. in jobs with relatively low pay and with less security, on the whole, than men's jobs. Women are also less likely to have access to superannuation benefits, overtime earnings, and promotional opportunities. This applies especially to those women employed on a part-time basis. Employers seem less willing to invest in general or on-the-job training for females.

Other characteristics of female employment in Australia emphasize the difficulty of overcoming the impediments to equality. On average, different levels of education are apparently less important than different levels of expectations about job possibilities as between men and women. The dual role of wife and mother, as well as employee outside the home, is reflected in subdued female expectations about career prospects which feed into behaviour patterns. Maternity leave, child care facilities and flexi-time are not sufficient to enable fulfilment of the dual role often required of women.

Women in the Workforce

Female labour force participation, especially among married women, has increased substantially over the last twenty years. Between 1966 and 1981, the proportion of women over the age of fifteen years in the workforce had increased from 36 to 44 per cent. In the same period, there was a rise from 29 to 42 per cent of married women in the workforce. The characteristic double-peaked (M shaped) distribution — with a fall in participation for child bearing — has also become less pronounced.

The female workforce has been increasing at a greater rate than has the male. This seems due largely to the substantial increase in the number of married women entering paid employment. (For example, between May 1981 and May 1982, 49 700 men and 52 300 women entered the workforce, rises of 1.2 and 2.1 per cent respectively.) By May 1982, 37 per cent of the civilian labour force aged fifteen and over were women, and almost 60 per cent of working women were married.

In general, unemployment rates have been higher for women than men. (In May 1982, 5.6 per cent of men and 8.2 per cent of women were recorded as unemployed. Moreover, the degree of hidden unemployment among women seems relatively higher than among men.)¹

Women are concentrated in a small number of lower status and less skilled jobs. These occupations — "women's jobs" — are usually characterized by compatibility with the role traditionally ascribed to women, such as child instruction, caring for the sick, preparation and serving of food, sewing and cleaning. Moreover, even in those occupations with a concentration of women, the positions of authority and responsibility are generally held by men.

Traditional sex stereotypes prevail, despite changes in the role of women in the labour market. Moreover, these stereotypes operate at a variety of levels, including why women want to work and what they can do. They are often based on the view that women do not need to work or have a career, whereas men do. There are undoubtedly specific expectations as to the type of jobs for which women are suited (i.e. stereotyping in employment

opportunity and choice). For instance, women are characterized in employment industries and occupations which require skills similar to those relevant to household duties; industries and occupations involving light physical demand, and no "dirty" work (service industries and occupations); industries and occupations involving contact with female customers (e.g. retail) and industries and occupations regarded as being associated with feminine characteristics such as manual dexterity (occupations involving keyboard skills, and certain production and process work).²

Even though women make up a large and increasing proportion of the workforce and are participating for a longer time, their share of senior and more skilled positions is still small (even in those occupations and industries regarded as female). For instance, in South Australia in 1978³ a survey of women teachers indicated that, although 58 per cent of the Education Department's full-time workforce was female, only 23 per cent of all promotion posts were held by women. (Similar research in Britain in 1980 found that women were under-represented at the top of the teaching profession.)⁴ A further example can be drawn from the Commonwealth Public Service (C.P.S.): in 1980, women made up 42.2 per cent of the 4th Division, 32.6 per cent of 3rd Division, and 1.8 per cent of 2nd Division. There were no women in the 1st Division in 1982, and women represented only 2.9 per cent of clerical and administrative officers of Class 10 and above. Most of the positions with management responsibility are in 2nd and 3rd Divisions. Women predominate, in 4th Division, particularly as typists and clerical assistants. In 1982, the majority (about three-quarters) of women were in 4th Division.

Education and Occupation Selection

In 1979 the (Evatt) Royal Commission on Human Relationships claimed that education was "the principal factor which determines the status of women in our society".⁵ Different education opportunities is the first element in the paradox of increased female workforce participation but continued job stereotyping and male predominance in top jobs. By 1981, 46 per cent of women (and 52 per cent of men) had attended at least the highest level of available secondary education, while 34 per cent of women possessed a post-school qualification (compared with 40 per cent of men). But these gains in education by women, and the similarity between male and female qualification attainments, have not been translated into equivalent occupational advances. Why is this so? One explanation is segregation in tertiary courses, for example, an increasing concentration of women in female dominated fields of study such as teacher education and paramedical studies.

The substantial rise in the number of women undertaking tertiary education has been concentrated in areas other than the traditionally male dominated ones such as agriculture, commerce and business, and applied science. This division in subject choice (which carries strong vocational implications) is also evident in schools. How does this arise?

First, there is a lack of perceived option. Girls may be unaware of available job opportunities. There is a lack of female models in jobs traditionally performed by men, and teachers and school career guidance staff do not have enough information on jobs and work to advise girls when career decisions are taken.

Second, there are stereotyped career expectations. Family, school and society (and the girls themselves) are inclined to produce and perpetuate different occupation and vocation expectations between girls and boys. There are markedly different parental aspirations for daughters and sons. The parental expectations for daughters seem concentrated in traditional roles, and there is concern for sons as likely breadwinners. In one survey (in 1974) a questionnaire was administered to 435 boys and 441 girls in Sydney in classes from year 6 to year 12. The results indicated a marked shift away from preferences for non-traditional occupations in direct relation to the increase in age of the children surveyed. An implication of this survey is that the influence of society opinion about "proper" occupational roles for women helped to bend the preferences of the girls to traditional jobs.⁶

Third is the choice of school subjects. A 1975 study group of the Schools Commission reported that:

Girls appeared to curtail the amount of maths studies substantially earlier than do boys in many schools. Girls appeared to be less influenced by career intention than boys at each age level. The reasons for subject choice were primarily interest for girls and practical and

career considerations for boys ... these differences are often sincerely enforced and accepted by teachers who believe that girls and boys are heading for different futures and it is the business of the school to prepare each set for its own destiny.⁷

School subject choice can limit the range of future occupational opportunities available. For instance, limited mathematics and science training will exclude women from many tertiary courses requiring these subjects as prerequisites. Equally, exclusion of schoolgirls from subjects such as wood or metal work can place at a disadvantage those intending to take up a trade.

In 1979, the Committee of Inquiry into Education and Training recognized the impact of subject choice at secondary school level on immediate job opportunities for school leavers and for those continuing to higher education. The Committee recommended that schoolgirls be encouraged to continue study of mathematics and science so as to not to limit possible career ranges, and that career advisers and parents broaden their thinking beyond traditional occupational sex-stereotyping.

Aspirations are very closely related to expectations. In a study of Queensland school leavers, B. McGraw found that the expectations among girls were below their aspirations, whereas boys anticipated that they would realize their expectations.⁸

Attitudes of Employers, Colleagues and Governments

Employers tend to have exaggerated perceptions as to the propensity of women to quit jobs. D.E. Lewis, in his interviews with personnel directors, concluded that there was a tendency to underestimate the quit rate of male and overestimate the quit rate of female employees.⁹ There is evidence that job turnover among women is higher than among men, but these results must be viewed with caution, since average data are likely to overemphasize sex differentials in turnover, and many of the jobs performed by women are not conducive to a long-term commitment.

Employer perceptions are reflected in recruitment and promotion policies, and different criteria are used in employment. This adds to the inferior labour market status of women. One author (the owner of a lawyer recruitment agency) gives anecdotal evidence of different employer attitudes in recruiting men and women for professional positions:

I had referred several men and women for a job (all lawyers) and I was sitting in the room next door, listening to them being interviewed. The job involved travel and the interviewer who was a partner with one of our law firms, referred to the young woman as girlie (he did not refer to any of the young boys as laddie), but what was more subtle was when he was discussing the travel involved, he said to the young man "this position offers exciting prospects for travel". When he spoke to the young woman he said "You know girlie you will be away from home a lot".¹⁰

The same author quotes other anecdotal evidence to illustrate how false traditional assumptions can be — for example, it is by no means safe to presume that men and not women have long term career commitments, reflected in their domestic support arrangements. But employers remain inclined to such stereotyped views — assuming, for example, that female work status is secondary and not that of a breadwinner, or that women are not able to handle certain jobs such as heavy labour.

Attitudes of colleagues or potential colleagues are also relevant. Men are often hostile or antipathetic toward women in non-traditional occupations. For example, Meredith Burgmann's study of women entering the New South Wales Builders' Labourers Federation found hostility to married women working while their husbands were employed, but this hostility was not apparent when single women were employed, since it was assumed that economic need required them to work. Moreover, men felt threatened and insecure as women moved into non-traditional employment. As one male member said: "It makes me feel inadequate, it makes me feel as if my job is not what I think it is, sheilas can do the work".¹¹

But it is not only in blue collar occupations that hostility to women in employment is found. In their study *Why So Few? Women Academics in Australian Universities*, Bettina Cass and others provide some alarming quotes. For example, a male tutor in the social

sciences stated his belief of a "a basic difference between males and females . . . a logical functional difference determined by accident of birth . . . If women choose to deny nature (they were designed to be mothers) and compete in the open market, they will encounter conflict". An associate professor in the sciences commented: "Far fewer women are interested in purely intellectual achievement rather than men. Women in general are more submissive". And a senior lecturer in sciences asserted: "Men and women are essentially different and there is something very nasty and wrong with the idea that they should be the same . . . I imagine the main reason that there are fewer women in this or that is that most women find more satisfaction in being a woman than trying to be a man".¹²

Attitudes of governments in Australia, through residual legal and institutional arrangements, also affect the status of women in employment. Despite the growth of equal opportunity legislation, protective laws with roots in other times persist in most States and prohibit or restrict female access to various occupations. These laws regulate working hours, facilities and lifting so as to protect women workers from the dangers of industrial occupations which could produce undue fatigue or physical problems for childbirth (for example, permissible lead emission levels in lead processing work environments are potential pregnancy abortive agents). A 1978 report by the Anti-Discrimination Board in New South Wales identified over 600 industrial awards containing discriminatory provisions (especially with reference to work hours and protective health clauses). These restrictions had the effect of precluding women from overtime and night shift. Maximum weight lifting restrictions were found also to unjustifiably proscribe female employment.

Structure of Work

The large and growing share of part-time jobs to which women are assigned (usually because they are able to combine domestic duties with such jobs) has the effect of reducing women's status in the workforce. Table 5 gives details of the disproportionate number of part-time jobs occupied by women.

TABLE 5
Part-time Employment, May 1982
(*000)

	Full-time	Part-time (a)	Part-time as percentage of total	Total
Males	3860.5	230.4	5.6	4066.9
Married females	804.2	627.8	43.8	1432.1
All females	1520.3	817.5	35.0	2337.9
Persons	5356.8	1048.0	16.4	6404.8

NOTE: (a) Part-time employment is defined as less than 35 hours per week.
SOURCE: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *The Labour Force*, May 1982.

The opportunity to do part-time work may be convenient for those who bear the main share of domestic chores. But part-time work is in many ways inferior work, denying access to benefits attaching to full-time employment: for example, superannuation and promotional opportunities are rarely available to part-time workers. Union attitudes to part-time employees are inclined to be unsympathetic, and part-timers are less likely to be active or represented in unions.¹³

In view of the rather lower status and general privileges of part-time work, the South Australian and New South Wales governments have tried to introduce the concept of

"permanent part-time" work for State public servants. The schemes enable people to work part-time without jeopardizing promotional prospects or losing entitlement to superannuation or leave benefits.

Another feature undermining employment equality is the way in which working arrangements assume certain patterns or habits. As the 1977 (Evatt) Royal Commission on Human Relationships commented (p. 132):

In Australia work is still predicated to men's life pattern, freedom from childbearing, and ability to work from youth to old age. Consequently, when work patterns are broken because of childbearing and child rearing, penalties are exacted, often entailing resignation, refused promotion and downgrading.

Work location and the timing of the working day reflect an assumption of primary commitment to the labour force, or even the presence of full-time domestic help (whether paid or unpaid); i.e. they are predicted on a male lifestyle. School and shopping hours are usually shorter than or coincidental with the 9 to 5 working day, making it very difficult for people (usually women) responsible for child care.

Women face the difficulty of combining careers in paid employment with domestic tasks and homemaking. Indeed their expectations reinforce this. The South Australian Girls and Careers Project found from pupil essays that girls expected to shoulder complete responsibility for home and family. Boys in the same survey showed little inclination to do any household chores and concurred with the idea that such things are "women's work". Other evidence suggests that men are less prepared to share in domestic than in child care responsibilities. Even when women work in paid employment, husbands fail to take increased housework loads.¹⁴ The requirements of a dual role for women restrict their opportunities by causing hesitation in aiming at a career and by restricting development of a career outside the home.

Distribution Across Industries and Occupations

Women are customarily channelled into a very limited range of occupations and industries. This sex segregation has a very considerable implication for equality. As L. Broom and F.L. Jones comment, "in industrial societies the kind of work a person does is an immediate measure of income, prestige and authority".¹⁵

The long-standing persistence of segregation, with women concentrated in lower level occupations, emphasizes their inequality in the workforce. The small range of jobs open to women reduces their employment opportunity and increases their vulnerability to structural change in the economy. In addition to its inhibition to equality and opportunity, segregation also affects efficiency. If people are employed in (or choose) occupations or industries on the basis of perceived sexual roles rather than ability, the community as a whole can be deprived of the appropriate people and talents for the job, and efficiency and productivity are diminished. In economic parlance, there is a misallocation of resources.

Measures of Segregation

How can the degree of occupational segregation be measured? It is necessary to mention some of the alternative measures used by economists since there is controversy on which is the most suitable.

The first is the Oppenheimer measure,¹⁶ which looks to the percentage of the female labour force working in "disproportionately female" occupations and tries to indicate the extent to which the female workforce is segregated into a separate (and usually inferior or "secondary") labour market. Three categories are distinguished — industries or occupations in which (a) more than 50 per cent of employees are women (b) less than 20 per cent of employees are women and (c) 20-50 per cent of employees are women. These three categories are respectively referred to as disproportionately female, disproportionately male, and "well represented".

The Oppenheimer measure assumes that, if there were no discrimination based on sex,

the proportion of women in each occupation would be similar to their workforce proportion; i.e. in Australia each occupation group could be expected to consist of about 37 per cent of female employed workers. As a descriptive tool, the Oppenheimer measure obviously ignores any possible difference in comparative advantage between men and women in different occupations or industries.

A second measure is an index of segregation, associated with O.D. Duncan and B. Duncan.¹⁷ This is usually applied to sex segregation; it aims to compare the actual distribution of the paid female workforce across industries or occupations with a hypothetical distribution (based on the observed distribution for males). The measure is a summary intended to indicate the percentage of female labour force which would be required to shift industry-occupation categories in order to establish a distribution identical to that of males.

One of the difficulties associated with the segregation index is that it was originally designed to deal with race segregation and is based on the idea that the groups should be evenly distributed over all categories. It does not cover differences in geographic mobility or educational attainment or length of labour market experience, and implies an inflexible and rigid labour market. H. Moir and J Selby Smity,¹⁸ however, modify the index to try and accommodate the distribution across occupation of the total workforce, and use this distribution as an ideal standard against which to measure the distribution of particular groups. The index itself indicates the proportion of women employees who would have to shift industry classifications in order that female distribution between industries would be equal to that of the workforce as a whole. Achievement of this ideal distribution would eliminate all disproportionately male and female industries, since the proportion in each industry category will be the same as the proportion of females in the total workforce. The measure is designed to overcome the problem of assuming or implying an inflexible labour market but (as with the measures above) remains tied to the notion that groups should be evenly distributed over all categories.

A final measure worth mentioning is that of P.E. Lewis who composes an index to capture industrial and occupational segregation together, i.e. to "measure the percentage of males (or females) who have to change occupations and/or industries so that the distribution of males (females) is the same as the existing distribution of females (males)".¹⁹ The advantage of this measure is its aid to disaggregation, since it makes possible a distinction between similar work categories in different occupations (for example, an operator in a textile factory and an operator in a steel mill).

Application of the Measures in Australia

The application of these measures to the Australian evidence has produced two main conclusions: that there is substantial segregation of the workforce, and that little improvement or change has been achieved over the last century.

Using the Oppenheimer measure, Margaret Power²⁰ analyzes census data, from 1911 to 1971, and concludes that men and women are divided into two distinct and relatively non-competing labour groups, a polarization which restricts the access of women to occupational opportunities. Moreover, Power concludes that, since it is based on expectations, this polarization appears self-perpetuating and an inherent part of labour market institutions. This conclusion is largely confirmed by L. Broome and F.L. Jones, using census data from 1911 to 1966, in computing an index of dissimilarity between the relative distributions of occupation groups classed as either men's or women's occupations. Broome and Jones found only a marginal reduction in segregation over that period.²¹

Again, using a modified version of the Oppenheimer measure of the census data 1911-76, Jones concluded that there was little change in the degree of segregation since 1945 and that the changes which did occur were primarily within "mixed sex" (rather than female or male) occupations.²² Selby Smith also found, from an application of the Oppenheimer measure to Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey estimates 1974-77, that (despite increases in the number of women employed) females had failed to move into male occupations. At the same time, the numbers of women employed in "disproportionately female" occupations expanded rapidly.²³

Another test is that by Moir and Selby Smith²⁴ who examined industrial segregation,

using a modified index of segregation and the Oppenheimer measure. The conclusion here was that 56 per cent of women in the workforce were concentrated into "disproportionately female" industries in 1971/72, and 60 per cent in 1977/78. However, the importance of this increase is not easy to judge.

Yet further tests can be noted: (1) The Bureau of Industry Economics applied a form of the Oppenheimer measure to 1971-76 data and confirmed earlier findings that there was little change in sex-typing of occupations in the period.²⁵ (2) Lewis, using 1971-76 census data, constructed an index to measure the compound effects of segregation by occupation and industry, and concluded that both had declined (but at a diminishing rate). Moreover, in extrapolating these trends, Lewis concluded that the fall in the degree of segregation over the years to 2001 would be negligible "unless there is a substantial change in the forces affecting segregation".²⁶ (3) Eccles, using ABS labour force estimates from 1966-78, provided an index of the ratio of employed females to all employed persons to indicate year by year changes in the share of aggregate female employment. Eccles concluded that the industry distribution of women had a notable effect on their relative employment gains (i.e. once allowance was made for changes in industry employment distribution, female employment gains were substantially reduced).²⁷

Finally, an international comparison made by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (O.E.C.D.) in 1980 is significant. This noted that Australia had the highest degree of occupational segregation of women and men, and one of the highest degrees of industrial segregation. Also, Australia had experienced one of the smallest declines in the degree of segregation among the countries studied.

TABLE 6
Male and Female Workforce in Major Industry Groups, 1981

Industry	Males			Females			Total (^{'000})
	Number (^{'000})	As percentage of male workforce	As percentage of industry workforce	Number (^{'000})	As percentage of female workforce	As percentage of industry workforce	
Agriculture, forestry	271.7	6.9	71.6	107.7	4.6	28.4	379.4
Mining	82.0	2.0	9.1	8.0	0.3	9.0	89.0
Manufacturing	830.1	21.0	74.5	284.5	12.1	25.5	114.6
Electricity, gas and Water	114.3	2.9	91.0	11.3	0.5	9.0	125.6
Construction	354.5	9.0	89.0	43.7	1.9	11.0	398.2
Wholesale, retail trade	633.7	16.1	57.9	460.2	19.6	42.1	1093.9
Transport, storage	279.1	7.1	84.6	50.6	2.1	15.3	329.7
Communication	93.6	2.4	74.6	31.9	1.4	25.4	125.5
Finance, property, business	286.3	7.2	53.9	245.1	10.4	46.1	531.4
Public Admin., defence	254.9	6.5	72.1	98.7	4.2	27.9	353.6
Community services	348.5	8.8	37.1	590.8	25.2	62.9	939.3
Recreation personal, other services	148.5	3.8	45.1	180.6	7.7	54.9	329.1
Not classifiable	61.6	1.6	72.4	23.5	1.0	27.6	85.1
Not stated	186.4	4.7	46.8	211.7	9.0	53.2	398.1
TOTAL	3944.3	100.0	62.7	2348.3	100.0	37.3	6292.6

SOURCE: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census Data, 1981.

Why Does Segregation Occur?

This list of studies of segregation measurement in Australia is not exhaustive. There is further debate about refinement and sophistication of the measures. This is inclined, however, to relegate to second place considerations of why segregation occurs, and how it may be possible to desegregate the labour market. Moreover, of at least equal concern should be the fields into which women are segregated. "Women's jobs" are usually the lower paid ones, with less responsibility, less prospect of advancement or promotion, and often of a

TABLE 7
Male and Female Workforce in Minor Industry Groups, 1981
(%)

Female as percentage of workforce	No. of industries	As percentage of female workforce		As percentage of male workforce	
		%	CUM %	%	CUM %
≥ 90.0					
80.0 — 89.9	1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
70.0 — 79.9	0	—	—	—	—
60.0 — 69.9	2	11.9	26.7	4.3	7.3
50.0 — 59.9	4	15.1	41.8	2.8	10.1
40.0 — 49.9	7	27.7	69.5	18.5	28.6
30.0 — 39.9	6	5.1	74.6	11.1	39.7
20.0 — 29.9	12	18.5	93.1	27.2	66.9
10.0 — 19.9	15	5.6	98.7	21.5	88.4
0.0 — 9.9	9	1.3	100.0	10.4	98.4

Disproportionately female occupations
(i.e greater than 50 per cent of employees are female)

	As percentage of female workforce	Females as percentage of industry workforce
Private household staff	0.1	90.5
Community service (underdefined)	0.03	77.3
Health	12.3	75.0
Clothing and footwear manufacturing	2.4	74.8
Personal services	1.8	65.5
Education, museum, library services	10.1	61.4
Welfare, religious institutions	1.6	59.5
Restaurants, hotels, clubs	4.4	56.5
Financial, property, business services	0.004	50.0
TOTAL	32.734	

SOURCE: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census Data, 1981.

part-time nature. This "secondary" aspect of women's jobs clearly influences their economic status. In trying to understand why segregation occurs, and what its consequences are, it is therefore necessary first to ask where it occurs. This must be examined in two parts — industrial segregation and occupational segregation.

Industrial segregation refers to the concentration of women into the so-called "women's industries", and is important when considering the effects of structural change. Some of the details of industrial segregation in Australia are given in Tables 6 and 7.

Industrial segregation is not as complete as occupational segregation, although women in Australia are still by and large concentrated in "female" industries, such as clothing and footwear manufacturing, retail trades and service industries. Occupation however, is a classification more dependent upon prior qualifications and marked by pre-entry discrimination. As such, occupational segregation tends to be more pronounced. In addition, occupation in many instances is regarded as a measure of status and emphasis is placed on the importance of occupational rather than industry choice.

Occupational segregation is concerned with the concentration of women or men into female or male occupations. A disproportionate number of women in an occupation, relative to the overall share of women in the workforce, produces the designation of the occupation as "female". These so-called female occupations seem to be related to the traditional roles in society which women are expected to perform. For instance, Power characterizes predominantly female occupations as those dealing with the care of the sick, instruction of children, preparation and serving of food, and cleaning and sewing. In Tables 8 and 9 some of the relevant details are set out. It will be seen that women in Australia are under-represented in administrative, executive, and managerial occupations; agricultural

TABLE 8
Male and Female Workforce in Major Occupation Groups, 1981

Occupation	Males			Females			Total ('000)
	Number ('000)	As percentage of male workforce	As percentage of occupation workforce	Number ('000)	As percentage of female workforce	As percentage of occupation workforce	
Professional, technical etc.	459.7	11.7	53.6	398.2	16.9	46.4	857.9
Administrative, managers etc.	290.0	7.3	86.7	44.6	1.9	13.3	334.6
Clerical workers	328.9	8.3	30.5	749.7	31.9	69.5	1078.6
Sales workers	268.5	6.8	49.9	269.5	11.5	50.1	538.0
Farmers, fishermen	300.0	7.6	74.6	102.4	4.4	25.4	402.4
Miners, quarrymen etc.	35.7	0.9	98.6	0.5	0.02	1.4	36.2
Transport, communication	260.7	6.6	86.4	40.9	1.7	13.6	301.7
Tradesmen, process workers	1556.1	39.4	88.0	212.9	9.1	12.0	1768.9
Service, sport, recreation	206.7	5.2	39.2	320.6	13.6	60.8	527.3
Members of armed forces	59.0	1.5	93.1	4.4	0.2	6.9	63.4
Inadequately described	178.8	4.5	46.6	204.6	8.7	53.4	383.4
TOTAL	3944.3	100.0	62.7	2348.3	100.0	37.3	6292.6

SOURCE: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census Data, 1981.

TABLE 9
Male and Female Workforce in Minor Occupation Groups, 1981
(%)

Females as percentage of workforce	No. of occupations	% of female workforce		% of male workforce	
		%	Cum %	%	Cum %
≥ 90.0	2	9.7	9.7	0.2	0.2
80.0 — 89.9	1	0.9	10.6	0.1	0.3
70.0 — 79.9	4	10.5	21.1	2.0	2.3
60.0 — 69.9	6	30.0	51.1	9.3	11.6
50.0 — 59.9	6	29.8	80.9	13.5	25.1
40.0 — 49.9	2	1.0	81.9	0.8	25.9
30.0 — 39.9	5	5.5	87.4	6.4	32.3
20.0 — 29.9	9	6.2	93.6	10.8	43.1
10.0 — 19.9	9	3.8	97.4	13.3	56.4
0.0 — 9.9	29	2.6	100.0	43.6	100.4
≥ 50.0 ^(a)	19	80.9	80.9	25.1	25.1
20.0 — 49.9	16	12.7	93.6	18.0	43.1
≠ 19.9	38	6.4	100.0	56.9	100.0

^(a)Disproportionately female occupations
(i.e greater than 50 per cent of employees are female)

	As percentage of female workforce	Females as percentages of industry workforce
Stenographers, typists	4.2	99.2
Nurses		
Telephone operators etc.	0.9	85.9
Barbers, hairdressers etc.	1.1	78.5
Housekeepers, cooks etc.	5.5	78.1
Book-keepers, cashiers	3.2	74.1
Packers, wrappers	0.7	73.8
Launderers, dressers etc.	0.4	68.4
Waiters, bartenders	1.9	67.4
Other clerical workers	24.6	65.7
Service and other workers not elsewhere classified	1.9	63.0
Tailors, cutters etc.	1.1	60.3
Tobacco preparers	0.04	60.0
Teachers	6.8	59.5
Caretakers, cleaners	2.5	58.8
Proprietors, shopkeepers, shop assistants	10.9	57.6
Professional medical workers	0.6	55.3
Spinners, weavers etc.	0.3	51.8
TOTAL	66.6	

SOURCE: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census Data, 1981.

TABLE 10
Employed Entrants to the Workforce aged 15 to 25 Years, May 1981

(1) Industry

Industry	Males			Females			Total	
	Number ('000)	As percentage of male entrants	Number ('000)	As percentage of female entrants	Female entrants in industry (%)	Females in industry (%)	('000)	(%)
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	8.0	6.2	—	—	—	28.4	9.7	4.2
Manufacturing	36.8	28.3	9.9	9.8	21.1	25.5	46.8	20.3
Construction	14.0	10.8	—	—	—	11.0	15.3	6.6
Wholesale and retail trade	30.2	23.2	32.6	37.0	51.8	42.1	62.9	27.3
Transport, storage and communication	5.7	4.4	—	—	—	18.12	8.2	3.5
Finance, property, business	11.9	9.2	19.0	18.8	61.5	46.1	30.9	13.4
Community services	10.3	7.9	19.9	19.7	65.9	62.9	30.2	13.1
Recreation, personal services etc.	4.9	3.8	6.9	6.8	58.5	54.9	11.8	5.1
Other	8.1	6.2	7.0	6.9	46.4	—	15.1	6.5
TOTAL	130.0	100.0	10.9	100.0	43.7	37.3	230.8	100.0

(2) Occupations

Occupation	Males			Females			Total	
	Number ('000)	As percentage of male entrants	Number ('000)	As percentage of female entrants	Female entrants in occupation (%)	Females in occupation (%)	('000)	(%)
Professional, technical	14.2	10.9	16.1	15.9	53.1	45.0	30.3	13.1
Administrative, executive	—	—	—	—	—	14.8	—	—
Clerical	15.2	11.7	46.6	50.2	75.4	70.7	61.8	29.0
Sales	10.5	8.1	17.2	17.0	62.1	51.3	27.7	12.0
Farmers, fishermen	9.1	7.0	—	—	—	21.8	10.9	4.7
Transport and communication	—	—	—	—	—	14.3	—	—
Tradesmen, process workers	71.2	56.9	6.8	6.7	8.7	12.5	77.9	33.7
Service, sport and recreation	7.1	5.4	10.3	10.2	59.2	62.6	17.4	7.5
TOTAL	130.0	100.0	100.9	100.0	43.7	36.3	230.8	100.0

SOURCE: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

work; transport and communication and as tradespersons, production workers and labourers. Women are over-represented in clerical, sales, service, sport and recreation. As shown in Table 8, although nearly half (46 per cent) of the professional, technical and related workers are women, most women (70 per cent) in this category are teachers or nurses.

This occupational distribution between men and women does not seem to be changing: as shown in Table 10, new entrants (school leavers) to the work force reinforce the established job distribution pattern.

If one looks at both occupational and industrial segregation together, the picture becomes even clearer. The Bureau of Industry Economics concluded on the basis of 1971 and 1976 data that "generalisation based on occupation alone may mask the more considerable differentials in the demographic composition that exist when occupation and industry are considered simultaneously".²⁸

This conclusion is equally valid in 1983. Table 11 indicates that, for instance, in the occupational group "professional and technical and related occupations", women make up 45.7 per cent. However, in the community services industry, women make up 62.7 per cent of professional and technical workers (mainly teachers and nurses), whereas in the manufacturing industry only 15.2 per cent of professional and technical workers are women. Similarly women are under-represented in 10 of the 12 industry qualification in administrative, executive and managerial occupation.

Women make up over 70 per cent of all workers in clerical occupations. However, their distribution across industry groups indicates a heavy concentration in wholesale and retail trade, community services, and entertainment and recreation industries.

Vertical segregation has not been the subject of great attention in the economics literature. But it is important in considering the economic status of women. Even in the occupations in which women are over-represented (i.e. disproportionately female occupations) they are concentrated in, if not confined to, the lower levels of the bureaucracy, as the following examples illustrate.

Teaching is a very strongly "female" occupation, but women are disadvantaged by the promotion system and remain in the lower strata of the job hierarchy. However, it would be wrong to jump to the conclusion that this poor outcome for female status in the teacher workforce is caused solely or even principally by discrimination. Part of the reason may well be that fewer women than men are trying for promotion, or are prepared to accept the

TABLE 11
Percentage of Females By Occupation Within Industry, August 1983

Industry	Professional, technical & related workers	Administrative, Executive, managerial	Clerical	Sales	Farmers	Transport	Tradesmen & related workers	Service, sport & recreation	Total
Agriculture	—	—	75.0	—	21.9	—	—	100.0	23.4
Mining	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7.2
Manufacturing	15.2	8.8	71.7	28.8	—	—	19.9	34.4	24.8
Electricity	—	—	41.9	—	—	—	—	—	8.2
Construction	—	—	81.8	—	—	—	—	—	10.6
Wholesale, retail trade	21.8	16.2	83.5	59.8	—	—	12.2	57.7	43.1
Transport, salvage	—	—	55.1	—	—	6.6	—	—	14.9
Communication	—	—	44.5	—	—	43.9	—	—	25.5
Finance	15.1	13.3	70.4	15.1	—	—	—	55.9	47.5
Public administration	18.9	—	55.6	—	—	—	—	58.5	32.5
Community service	62.6	32.3	86.5	—	—	—	16.9	63.6	62.7
Entertainment, recreation	47.3	22.5	83.4	67.9	—	—	—	67.4	57.4

SOURCE: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *The Labour Force*, August 1983, Cat No. 6203.0.

TABLE 12
Men and Women in Managerial Positions in the Commonwealth Public Service
December 1979

Division		Men	Women	Total
1	(%)	100	—	100
	(N)	130	—	30
2	(%)	98.4	1.6	100
	(N)	1317	21	1338
3 (class 10/11, clerical/admin.)	(%)	96.5	3.5	100
	(N)	2124	75	2199

SOURCE: Public Service Board, *Statistical Yearbook*, 1980, pp. 69,84; in D. Deacon, "The Employment of Women in the Commonwealth Public Service: the creation and reproduction of a dual labour market", *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 41, 1982, pp. 232-50.

conditions accompanying promotion. Women teachers are concentrated in large cities and can sometimes receive promotion if they are prepared to move to a country posting. (Since education is organized on a State basis, service in remote and country areas is used as a stage in the promotion process. For example, a principalship in a smaller country school can be part of a progression to one in a larger, usually urban, school.) However, many women are unable or unwilling to move in order to participate in this promotion process. It is true that women have gained promotion in certain parts of the profession, for example in infant and primary schools, but it is notable that these posts are generally those of lower status. The connection between mobility and promotion is a definite disadvantage to women.

In professional employment, the incomes of women tend to be lower than those of men with the same training and experience. Part of the reason for this may be that more women than men are employees. For example, women have studied medicine and practised as doctors in Australia since before 1900. But they have predominantly held salaried posts rather than worked in private practice, and have specialized in "women related" aspects of medicine such as paediatrics, obstetrics and gynaecology.³

In the Commonwealth Public Service women make up 42 per cent of 4th division and 22 per cent of 3rd division, but only 1.8 per cent of the 2nd division. And there are no women in the 1st division of the service. The dual labour market for men and women is illustrated by Dr Radford's distinction between management and other jobs. Management posts provide a pool from which 2nd and 1st division jobs are filled. In Table 12 details are given of men and women in managerial positions. As D. Deacon notes, "women are probably being tracked into those jobs which provide little or no training in the skills required for positions of leadership in the CPS, and . . . they may be exposed less often to the sorts of challenges and opportunities that encourage ambition and commitment to a career".²⁹ In tertiary education, the expectation would be for equal opportunity for women, since universities and colleges of advanced education generally emphasize academic merit rather than sex role stereotypes. But there is a very uneven distribution and representation of women in the hierarchies of universities. In 1979, women held 16 per cent of the teaching positions in Australian universities. The distribution across levels is, however, remarkable: women held 39 per cent of tutorial positions (these are untenured posts), 18 per cent of lectureships, and only 2 per cent of professorial appointments.

Inequality and Lower Female Earnings

The unequal status of women in the workforce is also reflected in their relatively lower income and earnings. (In Australian society, as elsewhere, incomes and earnings are of course a general proxy and indicator of prestige, success and economic status.) Despite the

decision of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission to grant equal award pay for men and women in 1972, and the Commission's extension of the minimum wage to women in 1975, there is still an earnings differential between men and women in Australia.

Australian Bureau of Statistics income distribution data for 1978/79 show that more than 60 per cent of female income recipients received \$5000 or less per year. The comparable figure for men was only 24 per cent. The median income for men in 1978/79 was \$9740 compared with only \$3300 for women. (These figures include part-time and full-time employees and also those in receipt of government benefits.) Comparing the total income of full-time, full-year workers, 65 per cent of women, but only 34 per cent of men, earn less than \$10 000 per year. The median income for men was \$11 530 and for women \$8920.

Wage relativities can be considered at different levels. One is award wages. Although differentials have narrowed in awards (since the extension of minimum award wages to women) female minimum hourly rates are still not fully equal to those of males. In 1982, adult women working in full-time non-managerial employment earned 93 per cent of the male rate.

But perhaps the best available aggregate measure of wage relativities is average hourly ordinary-time earnings. As shown in Table 13, this includes the award or agreed base rate of pay, payment by results (such as incentive payment, piecework, commissions) and other over-award payments (such as bonuses and profit sharing).

TABLE 13
Composition of Average Weekly Earnings:
Full-time, Non-managerial, Adult Employees, May 1981

		Males	Females	Females as percentage of males
Overtime	(\$)	29.00	5.90	20.3
	(hours)	2.8	0.7	25.0
Ordinary time	(hours)	38.6	37.7	97.7
Award or agreed base pay	(\$)	252.70	225.80	89.3
Payment by measured result	(\$)	7.10	2.30	32.4
Other pay	(\$)	8.70	4.20	48.3
TOTAL	(\$)	297.50	238.30	80.1
	(hours)	41.3	38.4	92.9

SOURCE: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Earnings and Hours of Employees: Distribution and Composition Australia*, May 1981. Cat. No. 6306.0.

Pay for "Women's" and "Men's" Jobs

Are women's jobs typically lower paid than those of men? Are the industries employing a low proportion of women also those characterised by high male earnings? The Spearman Correlation test carried out on data in Table 14 implies that in Australia there is an inverse relationship between average weekly earnings for males and the proportion of females in each group, i.e. the industries which employ a low proportion of females are also those characterized by high earnings. This means that the distribution of female employment is unfavourable compared with that of men as related to occupations with high earnings.

Within occupations, pay differences between male and female earnings may be greater

than differences among groups. Women lack seniority and promotion opportunities relative to men. In 1981, male and female average weekly earnings were (respectively): administrative, executive and managerial, \$362 and \$296; clerical, \$282 and \$226; sales \$275 and \$209; professional, \$355 and \$285.

TABLE 14
Male Earnings and Female Rankings by Industry Group, 1980

Industry	Average weekly male earnings (\$)	Ranking X	Female Employees as % of total employees	Ranking Y	X-Y	d ²
Mining	351.10	1	14.3	12	-11	132
Electricity	263.10	4	9.6	14	-10	100
Construction	238.50	9	5.8	15	-6	36
Wholesale	234.10	10	27.5	5	5	25
Retail	180.90	15	50.2	1	14	196
Transport, storage	248.70	7	16.3	10	-3	9
Finance, business services	258.20	6	46.1	2	4	16
Public administration	267.70	3	42.5	3	0	0
Manufacturing:						
Food	233.30	11	27.3	6	5	25
Textiles	233.70	12	40.3	4	8	64
Paper	244.40	8	25.8	7	1	1
Chemicals	292.10	2	23.9	8	-6	36
Basic metals	262.60	5	12.4	13	-7	49
Fabricated metals	229.50	13	20.9	9	4	16
Transport equipment	228.80	14	14.9	11	3	9
Total manufacturing	239.30		29.4			

SOURCE: Australian Bureau of Statistics data, 1980.

Why Inequality?

There are various explanations for the disparity in male and female earnings. Distribution between and within industries and occupations has already been mentioned. Other factors include qualifications, age, over-award rates and overtime.

Some of the differential can be explained by lower over-award and overtime pay received by women. Based on ordinary-time earnings, women on average earned 86.5 per cent of average male earnings in May 1981. For men, overtime added a further \$29.00 to the ordinary-time payments, but only \$5.90 for women. Men had access to more overtime hours, women being subject to protective legislation which places restrictions on hours worked. To similar effect, employers often assume that women are not interested in overtime because they have household as well as labour force responsibilities. (See Table 13.)

As far as qualifications are concerned, the Australian Bureau of Statistics Income Distribution Survey for 1978/79 estimated that the annual income of persons with post-school qualifications was on average 32.9 per cent higher than that earned by persons without such qualifications. In 1978/79, 60 per cent of women had no post-school qualifications compared with 49 per cent of males. However, this is not the full picture regarding qualifications. As pointed out by S. Eccles (1980), the earnings position of women was lower than that of men at all levels of educational attainment. "In fact, the relative position of women with post-school qualifications (75.4 per cent) is worse than that of

women without such qualifications (75.8 per cent). Women with degrees are in the lowest relative earnings position (69.3 per cent)".³⁰

The concentration of the female workforce in the lower age groups has some influence on female earnings. In May 1982, 31 per cent of the female workforce in Australia was under the age of twenty-five, whereas only 22 per cent of the male workforce was within that age range. It is generally unlikely that young workers will be employed in higher paid positions. Age is often used as a proxy for experience. Therefore the wage differential is often seen as being partially accounted for by differential labour force attachment and experience of females. However, women earn less than men at all age groups, with the difference increasing with age.

Differences between men and women can be identified in a variety of productivity-related characteristics. The presence or absence of such characteristics can lead to variation in wages. These would have to be held constant to give a true picture of the differential. Many of these characteristics — for instance, education, turnover, absenteeism, experience, attachment — are dealt with elsewhere in this study.

It is, therefore, misleading to see the whole of the wage differential as being attributable to discrimination. Some studies have tried to identify and "control" for sex related wage determinants. Once these controls are introduced, the residual wage difference is generally attributed to discrimination *per se*. A frequent conclusion of the studies is that a large proportion of the differential in earnings by sex is attributable to discrimination in the form of confinement of women to lower paying jobs, rather than unequal wages for the same job.

Consequences: Poverty and Household Compositions

The consequences of unequal pay, occupational and industrial segregation are closely linked. Low occupation status and low pay have implications for income distribution and welfare, especially with the growing number of households that have female heads. Household composition is directly relevant in considering the consequences of unequal pay and opportunity for women.

Work structures and attitudes usually imply or assume that men support families whereas women do not. But this is obviously not a realistic assumption. There are many families where the father is absent. Divorce and separation are increasing, and the age at which divorce occurs is declining. The expectations that marriage will provide economic security for women is increasingly unjustified. Women have tended to see their workforce commitment as short term, acquiring education and qualifications to suit the expectation of a temporary attachment to the workforce. There is a need to reassess attitudes towards education, qualifications and the nature of women's commitment to the workforce.

The Henderson *Report on Poverty* highlighted the problems emerging from the concentration of women into low-paying occupations and industries (for whatever reason). Fatherless families were identified as the group comprising the largest overall proportion of very poor people. On average the income of fatherless families was 36.5 per cent below the poverty line before housing and 30.0 per cent after housing. Such families (defined as income units where the head was a lone female with one or more dependent children) made up 10.5 per cent of the very poor with disabilities, and single females a further 11.3 per cent of the poor.

In June 1981 there were 399 300 families with a woman as head or 73 per cent of all families. (This figure does not take into account those families where both husband and wife are present, but the wife is the household head and income earner). Of these families, 236 800 had dependent children. Some 33.3 per cent (133 100) of female heads were employed, and 37.6 per cent (89 000) of these had dependent children present.

A 1978/79 income distribution survey by Australian Bureau of Statistics revealed that the median income of female heads of households was \$5850 (mean income \$6240). Moreover, more than 80 per cent earned below \$10 000.

The problems associated with such a high incidence of poverty among female-headed households are related to the structure of the labour market, community attitudes to the position of women, and women's own decisions about education, experience and childbearing. The magnitude of the problem is increasing as the number of female-headed families is growing faster than husband/wife families. This is related to instability and higher illegitimacy rates, with a tendency for women to keep the children.

Conclusions

It is clear that the creation of equal employment opportunity for women depends on a great deal more than anti-discrimination laws. The main characteristics of the status and role of women in the workforce as described in this chapter emphasize the complexity of the problem. To help secure equality (and a freer flow of labour resources) the following aspects of these characteristics need to be considered by policy makers:

1. Horizontal and vertical segregation (by industry and occupation) implies a distinction between "men's" and "women's" jobs. This is reinforced by attitudes and expectations of employees and employers, as well as by set stereotyping processes which begin in early childhood. To attain equality, these attitudes will need changing. There is no doubt that change is under way and this is being produced partly by the educational role of some of the anti-discrimination laws. But for many the changes are not rapid enough.
2. A second issue is the dual role of women as wife and mother as well as employee in the labour market. To procure greater equality of opportunity, the relationship between this dual role and the structure of the working day, and school and shopping laws, needs attention. Allied to this are questions of maternity leave, child care facilities, flexitime, and the incidence of part-time employment.
3. Women face handicaps before entry to the workforce. These include a level of education which is on average less than that for men, and, more importantly, education which is inappropriate for many jobs. Expectations are also subdued by social conditioning so that women are often unprepared for long term commitment to the labour force and consequently approach education and qualification attainment without the fullest ambition. Again, policy attention could be focused on influencing the type of education undertaken by women, and attitudes to it.
4. Especially where they are part-time employees, women are concentrated in a small number of low paid, less secure jobs, with less access to the benefits of superannuation, overtime earnings and promotional opportunities. Employers appear less willing to invest in general or on-the-job training for women. The lower return on skill, experience and workforce attachment for women is only partly related to employer attitudes. It is difficult to see what policy makers can do, apart from seeking to influence attitudes, unless it be through a programme of affirmative action. This possibility is soon to be surveyed by a Commonwealth Government Green Paper.
5. It is also difficult to see how policy makers can intervene in the interaction between the influences described in this chapter. This interaction amounts almost to a vicious circle, with little apparent scope for a draconian break-in to stop its tight hold on continuing inequality. Nonetheless, understanding the nature of the problem, and beginning with efforts that may at first have only marginal effect, is surely better than no attempt at all.