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THE IMPACT OF THE I L O CONVENTION 156
WORKERS WITH FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES
TO THE DEFINITION OF FAMILY IN AUSTRALIA

by

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CONTENT

Introduction	2
The Definition of the Australian Traditional Family	5
The Changing of the Australian Family	7
The Implementation of ILO Convention 156 Workers with Family Responsibility	14
The Extent of the Implementation of ILO Convention 156 Affect to the Definition of the Australian Family	20
Conclusion	28
Bibliography	30

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Introduction

Since the middle of this century the concept of family roles in Australia has changed. The participation of women in workforce has progressively increased and the proportion of men taking part in domestic life is increasing. Today, the workforce includes both women and men who are trying to share family responsibilities.

The traditional image of a family that consists of the father at work as breadwinner, mother at home as family domestic caretaker, and dependant children has become more a myth than a reality. The introduction of birth control in family planning has resulted in a decline in the birth rate, and subsequently the size of the Australian family has also decreased. The decline of the number of children has meant that less time is needed for pregnancy and caring thereby giving mothers more chance to participate in the workforce. As a result, the rate of women participating in the workforce has markedly increased. For women, who are usually the primary caregiver, balancing work and family responsibilities is an important issue. While for men, having a partner in the workforce has the potential to encourage them to seek

more time with their families and a more equal sharing of family responsibilities.

However, the changing roles of family members in the division of labour within the family and the workforce, where both parents work in paid labour, often produces some problems in sustaining work and family responsibilities. Sometimes conflict between work and family matters not only influence the family's welfare but also the individual's quality of work and ability to achieve their full potential in the workplace.

In response to these current tendencies and to encourage a better balance of work and family responsibilities by employees, in 1990, the Australian Government ratified the International Labour Organisation Convention No.156, Workers with Family Responsibilities (ILO C 156). The Government ratified this convention because it believed that workers with family responsibilities have a fundamental right to be treated equally in the work place and to have fulfilling and satisfying work and family lives (The Department of Industrial Relations, 1994:1). It is also recognised that the changes that have occurred in Australian society will have profoundly effects on families and workplaces. Furthermore, helping employees to balance work and family is not only important for the employees themselves (both men and women) but also for employers, governments, unions and the country's economy (The Department of Industrial Relations, 1992:1).

In this research paper I will argue that the success of implementing the ILO Convention 156 Workers with Family Responsibilities will depend on the willingness and extent of cooperation between the Government, employers, and unions to implement the convention in the workplace. To some extent, the implementation has provided a greater access to women to participate in the workforce, but the better balance of sharing-role within family has not achieved yet. This paper is structured into four parts: the definition of the traditional Australian family; changes to the definition of the Australian family; the objectives and the implementation of ILO C156 Workers and Family Responsibilities; and finally the effect of implementing the convention on employees' work and family lives.

The definition of the Australian traditional family

In writing about family and marriage in Australia, Cass (in Encel and Berry, 1986:177) mentions that the most interesting issue in the social history of the family is not the size and structure of the family, but the distribution of power within the family. Moreover Cass explained further that to discuss family it is not only deliberate the structure of family but also the material and emotional context of family life such as the sexual division of labour, the sexual rights and obligations of family members, the obligation to fulfil the reproductive responsibilities and caring children, and the provision of economic resources to maintain the

household. By deliberating on the aspects of the material and emotional context of Australian family in this century, the pattern of the traditional Australian family can be defined.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the concept of the 'family wage' was introduced into Australian society to protect the incomes of unskilled workers. As a result, future wage decisions based on the 'family wage' principle meant that wages paid to women were carefully differentiated from the wage for 'men's' work. It was assumed that women were supported by men and would not have dependant children to support and therefore did not require the level of income accorded to men workers. Unfortunately, the assumption was wrong in many cases, because some women continued to support not only themselves but also dependant children and disabled persons (Larmour, 1975:47). In effect the family wage disadvantage women by keeping their wages the of men, thereby increasing the difference between male and female income and establishing the basis for a sex-differentiated labour-market. In another survey that conducted by Margaret Power (in Cass, 1987:205) by using census data on occupation from 1911 to 1971, has shown that attitudes to women's place in the family in Australia have been produced in the sex-segregated and sex-segmented labour market.

In general Cass (1987:157) argued that the segregation of women's role in the traditional sexual division of labour was because belief that it was the

female's natural destiny to bear and rear children, while the male's destiny was to be the income earner and family provider within the structures of the workforce. From some of the research and surveys conducted it could be concluded that the pattern of the traditional family in Australia was one structured as a male-headed family, with the man as a breadwinner providing economic resources to establish and maintain the household, a female whose main jobs were as home maker and child-carer, and dependant children. Even when these women did participate in the workforce, they were discriminated against because of assumption about their role and status within families.

In summary, Scanzoni (1983:34) outlines a 'conventional' model of the conjugal family consisting of elements such as:

- the male head of the household, the father, is the sole of economic provider,
- the female head of the household, the mother, is the home maker and is responsible for domestic care and the socialisation of the children. She is *helpmeet* to the husband providing support for him in his struggle for family's survival,
- the children are helpless and dependent, vulnerable and malleable. They must be nurtured full time by mother (or mother surrogate) only, as emotional stability is essential,
- the family is a private institution and within it individuals can fulfil their most important needs, and

- healthy families produce healthy individuals, who adjust to social roles.

However, the pattern of the traditional Australian family has gradually transformed. Many changes have occurred in Australian society in the last three decades, requiring a different definition of the Australian family.

The changing of the Australian family

The introduction of contraception and other kinds of birth control has contributed to the reduction of family size in Australia. The survey of population in Australia concluded that the most direct cause of the decrease of family size since the last decades in the nineteenth century has been the increasing use of effective birth control such as contraception, abortion, rhythm, and abstinence (Cass, 1987:195). Consequently this has affected the previous shape of the nuclear or conjugal family in Australia.

The popularity of using contraception in order to control childbirth is demonstrated in a survey conducted by the Department of Demography in 1971, where 90 per cent of married women interviewed in Melbourne were currently using some form of contraception. Overall, the national research found that the number of children dramatically decreased from six children in 1901 to three children in 1942, and with continuing reduction of family size since then, two or three children had become the

average for Australian families by 1973. However, the data also indicated that there were variations on reducing the family size relating to place of residence, religion, place of birth, husband's occupation, wife's education, and workforce participation (Population and Australia, 1975:51).

In summarising the correlation between the reduction of family size and women's participation in workforce, with regard to women who were mothers and therefore usually responsible for child care, it was no surprise to find that women's participation in workforce has a significant relationship with the average family size.

In general, the family size of all wives was 25 per cent higher than that of wives in the workforce. Wives with full-time careers had the lowest average family size of all wives in the workforce. Women with higher education and occupational skills, were more likely to marry at a later age, were also more likely to postpone the birth of the first child and had smaller completed families. From the data and information it can be concluded that the increasing participation of women in the workforce has influenced the family size thereby affecting the pattern and concept of traditional the family in Australia.

Other studies suggested that some changes had occurred and that there was a greater range of options open to men and women. The increase in the number of married women in workforce and the decrease in family size indicates some change but others can also be seen,

for example, the extended provision of child care and child care allowances. Bryson asserts that in 1977 the supporting mother's benefit (such as child care) was extended to males and became the supporting parent's benefit, hence making it possible for fathers to take on a full time parenting role (1986:133).

Related to the increasing role of fathers in the domestic sphere when their wives worked outside home, Harper and Richard conducted a study in 1978. The findings confirm that where wives were in paid work, husbands undertook a greater share of house work and child care, however the husband's contribution was not as much as that of the wife. When wives were working part time, husbands' participation in child care was relatively greater than when a wife was in full time home-work but their contribution in house remained same. Although these are not radical changes to the division of labour within the family, there seems to be a greater acceptance of more extensive fathering in two parent families and a range of 'share care' options is emerging. The contribution of fathers in child care can be seen as reinforcing the phenomena of changing the definition of the Australian family away from traditional model to one where the role of men and women, mothers and fathers at home and in the workforce is no longer completely separated. This point is illustrated in recent studies which show that the concept of the traditional family as consisting of a father as economic provider, a mother as a full time home maker and child carer, and some

dependant children is no longer appropriate to the typical Australian family.

By 1983, the labour force participation rate of women had increased 45 per cent and in 1993 it was 52 per cent; while the proportion of employed women who work part time increased from 28 per cent in 1973 to 42 per cent in 1993 (ABS, 1994:5-6). Most of these increases reflected the move of married women, particularly those with children, into the workforce.

Besides the changes to roles and the division of labour within the family, another important change that has also affected the shifting definition of the Australian family, is the change in family formation. The increasing number of single parent families in Australia reinforces the shift away from traditional definition of family. In November 1975, the Australian Bureau Statistics (in Cass, 1986:193) estimated that there were 173,700 one-parent families with dependent children in Australia. Most of these family were headed by women (146,700) and about 25,000 were headed by men. Also, Millard (in Cass, 1986:223) estimated that in Australia the number of single parent increased from 9 percent of all families with dependant children in 1974 to 14 per cent in 1985, of which almost 90 per cent were headed by women. In one-parent family, the custodial parent has to performed two aspects of family responsibilities: caring for children's physical and emotional needs, and maintaining the household economy. In 1991, ABS (1994:44) reported that 87 per cent of lone parents were women.

From the total of single parents, only over half of lone mothers were in the labour force, compared to 80 per cent of lone fathers. The need to re-entry the workforce after divorce or separation in order to provide for the family's economic needs can be particularly problematic for single mothers who may have had an extended period of 'unemployment' while raising young children. Overall however it is likely that all single parents have particular problems in combining work and family responsibilities. Raising number of the single parents and their participation in the workforce, therefore, is one of the phenomena that the formation and division of labour within family and workforce in Australia change.

The move away from the definition of family from the traditional Australian family to a new model where men and women share their responsibilities within family and work, not only brings some positive changes but also carries with it some disadvantages and consequences. The disadvantages include difficulties in entering the workforce because of the caring role and having to leave to the workforce to take up caring responsibilities. In 1992, about 340,000 people said that their family responsibilities were the main reason why they experienced barriers to labour force participation (ABS, 1994:13). Although the opportunities for workforce participation are increasing, compared with men, women still have many barriers to overcome. In the same report ABS(1994:13) mentioned that female partners in couple families were almost nine times more likely than male

partners to state family reasons for the barrier, 67% and 7% respectively, while two-thirds of lone mothers and about half of lone fathers stated family reasons as a barrier.

Families that have either dual earners or are single-parent often experience particular difficulties in managing work and family responsibilities. The competing demands of work and family commitments, and attempting to balance them under contemporary conditions in Australia have been recognised as a potential source of conflict and stress (ABS, 1994 and Wolcott, 1990). The stress not only affects family functioning but also work performance such as absenteeism, lateness and so on. Difficulties in combining work and family responsibilities were found particularly amongst working parents (couple and lone parents) with children aged 11 and under. In 1992, ABS (1994:19) reported that 665,000 working parent did find managing work and caring for their children difficult. Differences in the characteristics of couple and one parents families highlighted the extra difficulties faced by lone parents in terms of the absence the other partner to care for their children. Overall, lone parent workers with young children were more likely to report difficulty in managing their work and family responsibilities (44%) than those in couple families (28%). However, compared with families with one working parent (22%) the difficulties of handling work and family responsibilities

were more likely to be stated by parents in couple families with two working parents.

Furthermore, ABS (1994) in a survey of work and family indicated a variety of reasons for experiencing difficulty in balancing work and family responsibilities, especially child caring. In terms of work, the difficulties included the length and inflexibility of work hours. The difficulties relating to family reasons covered the affordability and suitability of child care, as well as the availability of child care itself.

In response to these problems of managing work and family commitments, the government has deemed it important to endorse policies that could create a work environment more conducive to providing workers with the opportunity to fulfil and satisfy both their work and family responsibilities.

The implementation of ILO Convention 156 Workers with Family Responsibility

Considering the changes that have recently occurred within the family and workforce in Australian society, in 1990, the Government ratified the International Labour Organisation Convention 156 Workers with Family Responsibilities that was adopted by ILO in 1981. This convention requires the promotion of broader public awareness of equal opportunities for men and women

workers; the problems faced by workers with family responsibilities; and the support for conditions that can overcome these problems. The convention makes it an aim of national policy to:

"enable persons with family responsibilities who are engaged or wish to engage in employment to exercise their right to do so without being subject to discrimination and to extent possible, without conflict between their employment and family responsibilities"

In working toward this aim the Federal Government has developed a strategy with the aim of facilitating the implementation of ILO C156 across its policies and programs (Work and Family Unit, 1992:3). The Minister of Industrial Relations, who has main role in the implementation of the convention, has been responsible for the development of the strategy. It is mentioned in a Work and Family Unit publication(1992:3) that the strategy is based on the key articles of the Convention. It identifies six primary objectives which must be met, over time. The objectives are:

1. To create a climate of opinion conducive to addressing the needs of workers with family responsibilities.
2. To remove discrimination against workers with family responsibilities in the area of employment.
3. To enhance terms and conditions of employment to assist workers with family responsibilities.
4. To improve access into the workforce for people with family responsibilities.

5. To ensure equal access to training and education by workers with family responsibilities.
6. To improve community services and planning for workers with family responsibilities.

In order to introduce the convention to Australian society, the Government's first step following ratification was to initiate a community education program about work and family and to set up the Work and Family Unit to do further work on these issues. The education program has actively involved more than 6000 groups and individuals across Australia, ranging from church groups and marriage guidance counsellors to ante natal educators (The Department of Industrial Relations, 1992:3).

Moreover the Department of Industrial Relations mentioned that many government departments and agencies were already working to assist workers with family responsibilities. To anticipate new situation arising, the strategy was flexible and would be adaptable in order to build on the new opportunities.

The following section provide some examples of how each strategy is being implemented (the Department of Industrial Relations, 1992:5-15):

1. *To create a climate of opinion conducive to address the needs of workers with family responsibilities.*

It is true that Australian community, employer and union attitudes about the more equal sharing of family responsibilities, which strongly influence the way

organise of working and family live, are often regardless the facts about the broadening roles of men and women. This is particularly for women who have traditionally undertaken the range of caring and other family responsibilities. The Government intends to has role to play in informing the Australian community about the issues and tries to help to change the attitudes.

The Government's actions in promoting this objective focus on a community education campaign to raise awareness and stimulate debate on work and family, in order to achieve a fairer division of paid and unpaid work between men and women; ensuring that the issue of shared responsibilities for family matters is discussed in schools, by including the issue into the school curriculum; studying how workers deal with 'juggling' work and family commitments; studying other issues related to work and family; and providing a range of publicity material.

2. To remove discrimination against workers with family responsibilities in the area of employment.

The principle key of the Convention is removing discrimination against workers with family responsibilities. Hence, it is crucial to build and strengthen the legislative framework to combat discrimination to assist the workers. The Sex Discrimination Act and Affirmative Action Act are some the legislation that covers these issues.

The actions undertaken by the Government to achieve the objective includes looking to extend the Sex Discrimination Act to remove all kinds of discrimination in employment against workers with family responsibilities; extending the Sex Discrimination Act to cover industrial awards and workplace agreements; and educating the community to promote awareness of this legislation and how it benefits workers with family responsibilities.

3. *To ensure that the needs of workers with family responsibilities are taken account of in terms and conditions of employment.*

This strategy recognises that when workers go to work they still have other responsibilities, that is family matters. The terms and conditions in a workplace must help them to balance their work and family commitments, because harmony between work and family will facilitate a better quality of life.

To support this aim, the Government has developed and implemented parental leave legislation to ensure that some working parent have access to parental leave. The other actions include supporting fair, flexible, and 'tailor-made' workplace agreements; publicising the flexible working arrangements; and establishing the work and child care advisory body to help employers explore the child care needs of the employees.

4. *To improve access into the workforce for people with family responsibilities.*

It is essential that all Australians must be able to choose their own paths to economic independence. In implementing this goal, the Government will ensure that the income security and employment systems are flexible enough to enable as many options as possible for entry into the workforce.

Some examples how the Government is addressing this issue are: providing a single family payment directed to the primary carers of children; creating child care fee relief and effective child care arrangements; improving existing income support and employment programs; improving access to the Jobs, Education and Training programs for disadvantaged groups (older widow pensioners, certain sole parents).

5. To ensure equal access to training and education by workers with family responsibilities.

In many cases, workers who have been out of workforce for long periods while caring for their family often find it difficult to get access to training and career paths. These difficulties are particularly relevant to part-time or casual workers. The Government is renewing Australia's training system to ensure that all workers have access to appropriate training and career paths.

To achieve the aim the Government has created new entry-level training which makes it easier for workers with family responsibilities to undertake training; is researching the characteristics and barriers to the

training of part-time and casual workers, particularly with family responsibilities; and conducting their own training and skills assessment.

6. *To ensure community services and planning address to the needs of workers with family responsibilities.*

Affordability and quality of community services related to child care, aged care, health, housing, and disability services are essential factors that can profoundly affect to the workers productivity. The availability and affordability of these services will support the workers to participate fully in the workforce.

To ensure that this objective will be achieved, the Government is increasing the number child care places; encouraging the provision of employer-supported child care places; providing child care fee relief for low and middle income families thereby improving child care affordability; conducting research on how community services affect decisions about the balancing of work and family life; and also conducting other actions related to the development of services that can support the workers with family responsibilities.

All of the actions that have been done or are being done by the Government and agencies to achieve the objectives of the succeed the implementation of ILO C156 are expected to improve the condition of workers and help them to balance their work and their family commitments. However, the success of the implementation

of ILO C156 will depend on equal efforts by the State, Local Government, employers, unions and the community.

The extent of the implementation of ILO Convention 156
Affect to the definition of Australian Family

The implementation of ILO C156 have been responded to and supported by many agencies concern with workers with family responsibilities such as governments corporations, private enterprises, other institutions (such as school), unions, the workers themselves, and the broader community in Australia. Although the implementation of the Convention still needs to be promoted and conducted in the wider community, many corporations (both governmental and private) have put into practice ideas of the Convention to improve and help their workers to balance their work and private life. The following identifies some of the key areas where changes are being made.

Child care. Child care is one of the most important service needed by the workers with family responsibilities. The essential nature of this kind of service made the Labour Government, make a major commitment to the issue. DEET (1990:5) noted that Mr. Hawke (then Prime Minister) during the election 1990 announced that under the existing child care strategy the government will have created 144,000 new child care places by 1992, and would also warrant more affordable

access to them. It was also stated by Mr. Hawke that further incentives for employers to extend child care in both the public and private sectors would be provided, and the increase of child care centres would be followed by the increase of fee relief for low and middle income family. This statement is one action planned by the Government to support the implementation of the Convention.

In 1993-94, Women and Work journal indicated that the number of childcare places has expanded rapidly from 46,000 to about 200,000 over the past ten years. However, despite the expand of childcare places, there was a substantial unmet need for childcare. In the 1993 ABS National Childcare Survey found 42 per cent parents said that they needed more formal childcare (for example, arrangements which are regulated by legislation). The most common reasons for the needing was that there were no services in their area, or they didn't know of any. For 16.5 per cent of children who needed additional care, there were no available places (1994:3).

Some Australian companies have responded to the child care needs of their workers Portland Aluminium provides an occasional care creche, ANZ, Colonial Mutual, National Australia Bank and Colonial Mutual Life Association have sponsored the Consortium Holiday Child Care, and National Mutual Life Association has produced a child care information directory (Work and Family Unit, 1994:24).

Despite providing the new places, increase of fee relief and extend fee relief were also established to support many low and middle income families. The increase and extension of fee relief were expected to solve problem surrounding the affordability of child care. From 1 October 1990 the fee relief ceiling for long day care would be increased and about 94,000 families using existing Government fund long day care services would receive extra help with their fees (DEET, 1990:6).

Parental leave. Parental leave allows the employees with a new child to care for their child at home on a full-time basis in the child's first year and still retain their employment and accrued entitlement (Napoli, 1994:30). Provision of parental leave acknowledges that work and family issues are not just the matter of women but men too. In 1990 the Australian Industrial Commission handed down the Parental Leave Test Case decision which extended the provision of the maternity and adoption leave standards to case the paternity leave. The decision regarded the right to unpaid leave to enable both mother and father to share leave for a child in the first year following birth or adoption (Wolcott, 1993:12). In extending this idea Ericsson Australia is the one company that has established a women's forum which keeps women on maternity leave in touch with new developments in the workplace.

Another kind of leave is special family leave such as short-term leave to care for family members. This

maybe, for examples, a leave to take care of a sick child, or such as an elder's medical appointment, or a planned event and so on. Vandenheuvel mentioned in Family Matters (1993:53) that of the various forms of paid leave available most parents (37 per cent) used their own sick leave to care for their sick children. Related to the leave for caring sick children, mothers (36%) in couple families with both parents employed were more than twice as likely than the fathers (16%) in such families to take time off work to care for a sick child. Furthermore ABS indicated that mothers (34%) in couple families with both parents employed were also more likely than fathers to take unpaid leave to care for sick children. In this case, again, the caring duty seems still to be responsibility of women/mothers although the participation of fathers has increased.

Work and Family Unit (1994:32) indicated some companies that implemented parental and special leave were Biotect, Esso, Optus, and Bunnings, providing paid and unpaid leave to care for a sick spouse or child and other family emergency matters.

Part-time work. Permanent part time work is an arrangement which can provide considerable benefit to both the organisation/workforce and its employees. Napoli (1993:38) and Work and Family Unit (1994:29) mentioned that the introduction of permanent part-time work can have many benefits as follows: increase retention of employees, reduce in absenteeism, better returns on

training, increase productivity, reduce overtime, and easier recruitment. Part-time work becomes an important kind of work besides full-time work, especially for women. In August 1991 female employed part-time comprised 17 percent of total employment while men comprised only 5 per cent. There was a large difference in the reason given by parents for working part-time, with mothers of 0 to 14 year-olds were almost nine times more likely to work part-time for family reason (34%) than Fathers (4%). In this case, seems that part-time work provides more access for women to participate in the workforce, however, it does not mean that women are freed from domestic and caring responsibilities.

Organisation which encourage permanent part-time work include The Commonwealth Bank, Hewlett Packard, National Mutual and Qantas Airways.

Flexible work. Flexible working arrangements can cover a range of workers and business needs. These measures can be implemented through flexitime, flexible job design, and home-base work (Work and Family Unit, 1994: 27). Flexitime or flexible working hours allows workers and employers to negotiate starting and finishing times, enable workers to take unplanned days off without penalty, with information being provided to allow work rescheduling, and allow for rostered days off. The insurance company MLC Life was one example that implemented of flexible hours. Employees could choose to work any five days a week, including Saturday and Sunday,

between 7.00 am and 9.00 pm. For many of committed fathers flexible hours is the solution to continue working full-time, while finding ways to spend time with their children (Work and Women, 1994:14).

However, not all kinds of work is suitable for the implementation of flexitime arrangements. For example, it will be difficult to be implemented in hospitality jobs such as nursing or doctoring. It was mentioned by Wolcott and Glezer (1995:16) that men and women who were managers, administrators, and professional employees were most likely to have flexible hours available to them if needed (75 % and 74 % respectively). Nevertheless, more than half employees (men and women) who work in laboring jobs, plant and machine operators were likely least to have these flexible working conditions.

Home-based work or telecommuting involves staff working away from the workplace. Facilities such as computer terminal and a modem could be required. The idea of telecommuting work is expected to bring about some benefits like saving on office space, increased employee motivation and job satisfaction, saving energy of employees in terms of reduction of commuting, and so on. Organisations which use telecommuting include BP Australia, Wormald Australia, Qantek, Ericsson Australia and Nissan Australia (Work and Family Unit, 1994:32). The reasons for beginning to work from home differ between men and women. The main reason for women to work from home was related to the care of children (25%), while

more than half of the men who work from home did so either to avoid or reduce office costs (31%).

Overall, in terms of flexible working arrangements in ABS report (1994:33) stated that employed mothers are almost three times as likely as employed fathers to use some form of flexitime working arrangement to care for their children. Related to these kinds of work flexibility and the reason of using the facilities seems that working mothers were more likely related to the domestic responsibility than working fathers.

In general, the ideas and implementation of ILO convention 156 have been responded by many sectors in Australian society. The government has tried seriously to encourage and support the successful implementation of the convention by providing facilities and creating policies. Many companies and organisations have also applied the convention in their workplaces by building facilities and creating work arrangements to help their workers balance their responsibilities at work and home. However, the implementation and the results need to be evaluated further. The implementation not only means increased workers' costs but also requires enormous flexibility of the workplace. This flexibility could require restructuring the organisation and rebuilding the workplace, thus bringing about further effects. For example, work-home based arrangements that require computer terminals and modems will require a large capital outlay, and to organise this type of work will need special structures between staff and organisation.

The issues of high cost and special organisation requirements will produce difficulties for companies or organisations that have limited resources and small staff numbers. In the examples of companies which have already implemented the convention, it seems that these it is restricted to big, financial strong companies/organisation such as IBM, Ericsson Australia, Hewlett Packard and so on. This indicates that the convention is much more applicable to organisations that have a strong financial condition and relevant structure organisation.

Another important evaluation is that from the many cases can be seen that the implementation of the ILO Convention 156 has provided a greater access for women to participate in the workforce, but it does not mean that a better balance of sharing-role within family has been achieved. If so, the achievement is only a little. The provision of facilities in the workforce such as childcares, parental leaves, part-time work, home-based work, and flexitime arrangements only makes easier for women to take jobs while they have to sustain their family responsibilities. Although the participation of men in domestic tasks (such as child caring) has increased, compare to men, women are more likely to use the facilities for family reasons/responsibilities. Hence the better balance of sharing-role within the family in Australia has not actually been achieved.

Furthermore, the implementation of the Convention does not seem provide benefits for women in terms of better income and career prospects. It has not evaluated

enough whether the implementation has better impacts to reduce the sexual segregation and discrimination of women in the workforce or not.

Conclusion

In Conclusion, Australia has undergone profound changes in family structures and processes over the past two decades. Neither work policies, nor family policies, can be based any longer on the 'traditional' concept of men as the sole breadwinners and women as the sole child carers. This model has not applied any longer to the everyday lives of Australian families, where breadwinning and family care were handled by a variety of family members.

The situation has changed in the Australian families. Increasing women participation rate in the workforce, increasing men distribution in the domestic tasks, especially child caring, increasing number of single parents has demanded changes in the workforce as well. The increasing participation of both two parents and sole parents in the workforce has caused the difficulties on managing work and family responsibilities. To anticipate these changes, the Australian Government has ratified the ILO Convention 156. This convention requires the promotion of broader public awareness of equal opportunities for men and women workers, the problems faced by workers with family responsibilities, and the support for conditions that can overcome these problems. Many public and private agencies

response this convention ratification by provide facilities in order to make their employees can work better while they sustain their family commitments. Providing childcare services; introducing permanent part-time work, flexible time work, home-based work; providing parental leaves, are some actions that have been doing by the Government and many agencies. For women this facilities have accommodated them to a greater access to participate in the workforce. Moreover, by increasing women's participation in the workforce and providing the facilities, is expected men can more involve in the domestic responsibilities. However, up to now this domestic areas seems still to be women's responsibilities. It can be seen, compare to men's, the reasons of women to use the facilities provided are more likely to be family reasons. Hence, although many changes have happened in the Australian family, women seems still have more responsibilities in domestic matters. Furthermore, it need to be assessed more, to what extent the impact of the implementation the Convention 156 to the equal opportunities in terms of income and career prospects.

Therefore, the further success of implementation of the ILO Convention 156 will be depend on the willingness and the better cooperation between the Government, employers, unions, and the community to implement this convention in the workforce and everyday lives in the Australian families.

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