

HDA Oration

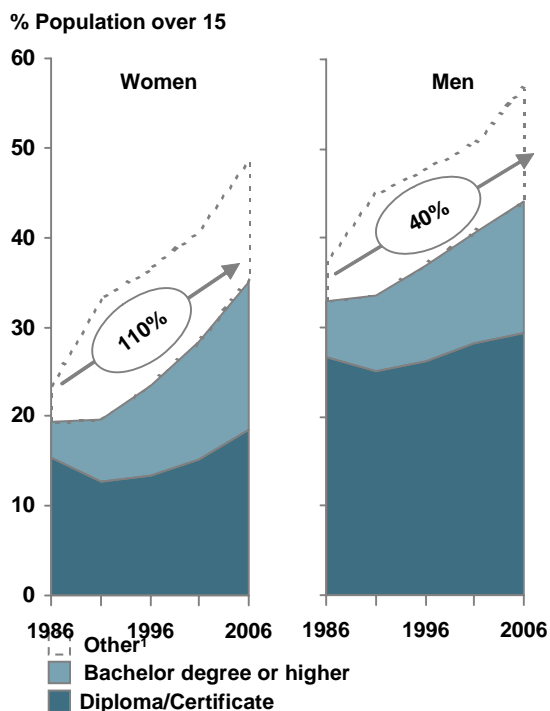
**Work, life and the well-being of children:
Four essential pillars for better outcomes in Australia**

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12th June 2008

Women are increasingly highly educated, are having fewer children (and later), and are participating more fully in the workforce

Women are attaining tertiary qualification faster than men

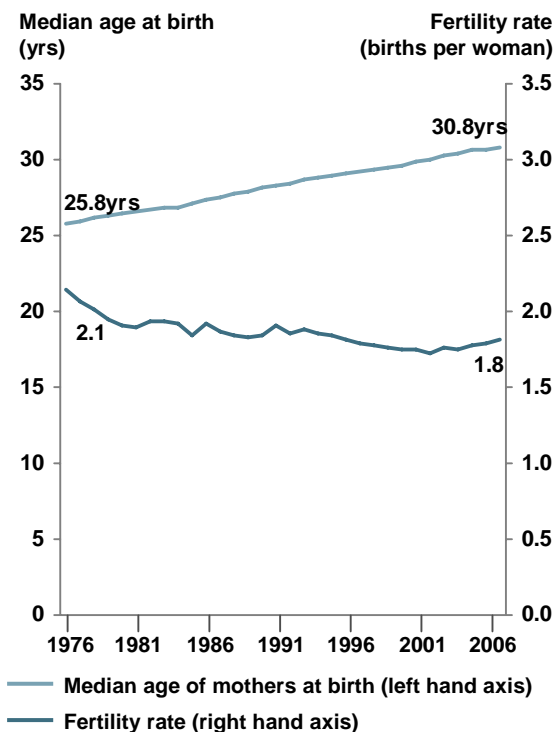
Highest level of qualification - Australia: 1996-2006



Today, 16.4% of women have a bachelor degree or higher, compared with 14.7% of men

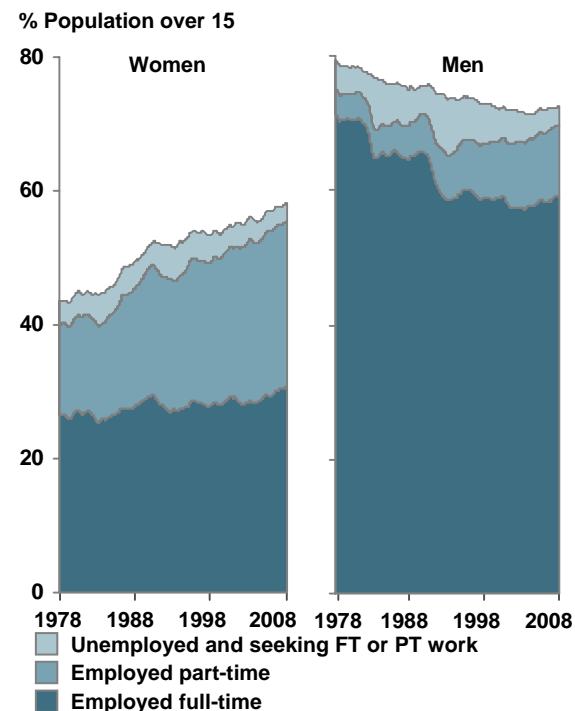
Women are bearing fewer children, and having them later in life

Crude birth rate and median age of mothers at birth: 1976-2006

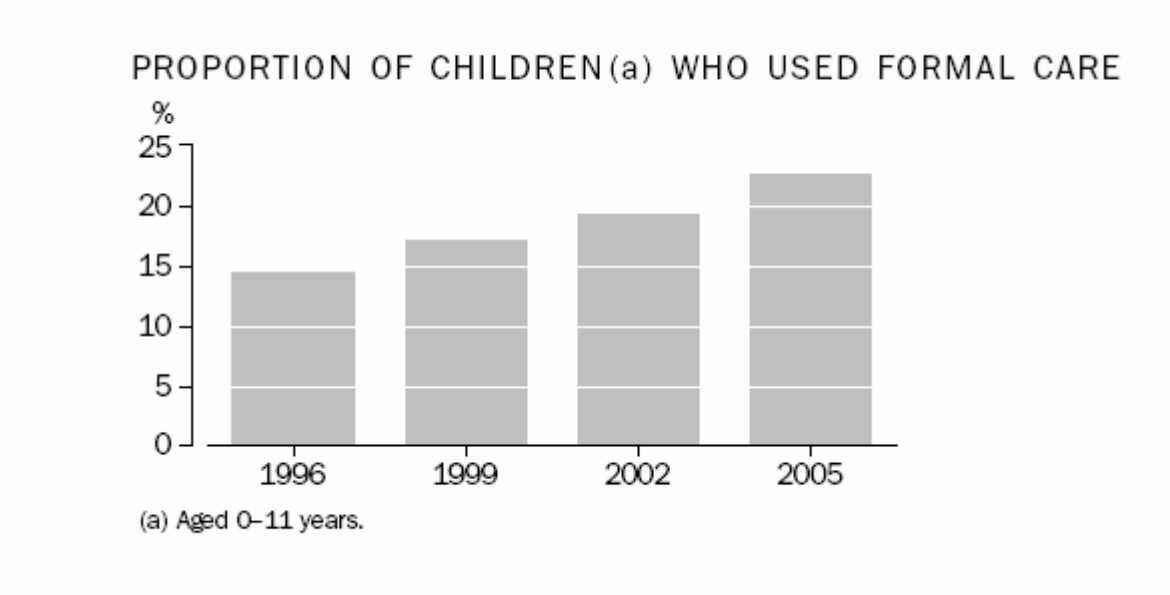


More women are working, especially dominant in part-time employment

Australian Labour force profile: 1978-2008



Growing use of formal childcare



Source: ABS Cat no 4401.0, June 2005 (reissued) p 3.

Four pillars for good outcomes for children when parents work



Four pillars for good outcomes for children when parents work

Long parental leaves



Four pillars for good outcomes for children when parents work

Long parental leaves



1. Improved maternal and child health
2. Lower maternal depression
3. Lower infant mortality
4. Fewer low birth-weight babies
5. Higher rates of breast feeding
6. Greater use of preventative health care

Four pillars for good outcomes for children when parents work

Long parental leaves



Quality child care



Four pillars for good outcomes for children when parents work

Long parental leaves



Quality child care



What matters?

- Length of hours in care
- Age of child
- Quality of formal care
- Especially staff/child ratio
- Trained staff
- Home life of the child

“Warm, responsive care”



Four pillars for good outcomes for children when parents work

Long parental leaves

Quality child care

Flexibility at work
Quality part-time work



Four pillars for good outcomes for children when parents work

Long parental leaves



Quality child care



Flexibility at work
Quality part-time work



Good management



Work overload is critical



Marie, Registered Nurse, Western Australia

My marriage fell apart [overnight]. And [cries] I needed to contact my manager about going back on the ward ... I needed an 8.00am to 4.30pm shift and I was told no – after 17 years. I've gone from being a full-time mum to being at full-time work. I now live by myself with my four year old son who is in full-time day care now and my [work-life] issues are being dumped from a ward after 17 years, and having no support.

Schedule control is critical



We can do better...

