



economic Security4Women

www.security4women.org.au

Ph 1300 918273

A National Women's Alliance

Sally Jope Acting Executive Officer/Policy Advisor



The Australian Care Economy

economic
S4W

A gender perspective

- ***Counting on care work in Australia***
AECGroup 2012
- ***Scoping the Australian care economy :***
A Gender Equity Perspective
Valerie Adams 2010



economic
S4W



Association of
Women Educators

eS4W has 19 Member Organisations

Find out more re NWA's



Australian Federation of Graduate Women Inc.
The national voice of graduate women

APESMA

Priorities – 2010-2013

- ❑ Gender Equity: Pay, Conditions and Workforce Participation with focus on small business
- ❑ The Australian Care Economy
- ❑ Education and Training of Women and Girls
 - ❑ Non traditional industries and occupations
- ❑ Gender Statistics and Analysis
- ❑ Collaborations with other Alliances

Findings: unpaid care

- 21.4 billion hours unpaid care work undertaken in 2009-2010
- Equivalent to 11.1 million FTE positions, 1.2 times total Australian FTE workforce
- Imputed value \$650.1 billion; 50.6% GDP

Findings: unpaid care

- The imputed value of unpaid care work in Australia for 2009-10 is estimated at between
 - **\$601 billion** (replacement cost method)
 - **\$699 billion** (opportunity cost method)
- At the mid-point (\$650 billion) the unpaid care sector equated to **51%** of GDP in 2009-10
- \$29,120 per capita

Findings: paid care

- Income earned by care sector workers in 2009-10 was \$112.4 billion, equating to 8.8% of total GDP
- \$5,033 per capita
- 1.8 million EFT workers in care sector providing approx 20% all paid work in Australia

Paid care demographics

- Women are the primary paid care providers in Australia by three times
- Paid care sector workers earn 96 cents for every dollar earned by the average Australian worker
- Women in the paid care sector earn 84 cents for every dollar earned by their male counterparts

Findings: public investment

- The Commonwealth, State/Territory and local governments spent \$136 billion on care
- \$6,085 per capita in 2009-10

Informal care

- Informal carers are most likely women, older than the general population, and either working part-time or not in the workforce (Access Economics 2005)
- Almost half have caring responsibilities equivalent to a full-time job and over half experience some form of financial difficulty (ABS 2008)
- About half have no regular assistance with the care they provide and around one-third would like an improvement in their caring role including better financial support (Hales 2007).

Unpaid care

- Carers have the lowest subjective wellbeing of any group yet researched (Cummins & Hughes 2007)
- The government subsidy for informal care is much lower than other care streams (Access Economics 2005)
- There is a lack of affordable care options for many carers
- The future supply of informal care may fall short of the demand for family-based care.

Paid care

- Increased labour force participation of women has increased the demand for paid care services
- Paid care services suffer from a 'cost disease'
- Quality of paid care is difficult to specify in contracts or monitor
- Paid care tends to be undervalued in market terms wherever it is supplied
- Low wages result in workers feeling demoralised/high turnover/loss skills & experience.

Gender equity

- The provision of care is a highly gendered activity, which reproduces inequality between men and women
- Paid caring work attracts a 'wage penalty' and pays less than other occupations
- The personal costs of providing both paid and unpaid care are borne disproportionately by women and lead to inequality among women
- Gender norms play a key role in maintaining the gender division of labour in care work.

Considerations

- Workforce flexibility and the availability and responsiveness of community support services
- A prime consideration for an increasing number of mature age workers providing care to a frail parent or a spouse with a disability
- Many women's workforce participation is not resulting in adequate superannuation to fund their retirement
- Eliminating the gender wage gap in its entirety could be worth around an additional \$93 billion or 8.5% of GDP

Limitations

- Factors not captured in the research
 - Career progression and increased income opportunity costs
 - Emotional labour and stress
 - Financial stress
 - Cultural diversity

Informing government

- Impact on economic well being and impact on retirement savings
 - Policy roundtables
 - Care economy forum
 - Australian Human Rights Commission
‘Valuing unpaid care’
 - Report to OfW and Ministers and Opposition
 - Follow up meetings

Counting on Care Work

- First quantification of the Australian care sector, paid and unpaid, using both replacement and opportunity cost methods
 - Examining paid care work, unpaid care work and government investment in the care sector
 - Labour and resources devoted to the daily care of Australians
 - Developing categories, concepts and measures of care work to enable international comparisons

economic Security4Women

www.security4women.org.au

Ph 1300 918273

Sally Jope Acting Executive Officer/Policy Advisor