



families commission
kōmihana ā **whānau**

> Giving New Zealand families a voice *Te reo o te whānau*

RESEARCH REPORT NO 2/09
MAY 2009

finding time

PARENTS' LONG WORKING HOURS AND TIME IMPACT ON FAMILY LIFE

A FAMILIES COMMISSION REPORT

The Families Commission was established under the Families Commission Act 2003 and commenced operations on 1 July 2004. Under the Crown Entities Act 2004, the Commission is designated as an autonomous Crown entity.

Our main role is to act as an advocate for the interests of families generally (rather than individual families).

Our specific functions under the Families Commission Act 2003 are to:

- > encourage and facilitate informed debate about families
- > increase public awareness and promote better understanding of matters affecting families
- > encourage and facilitate the development and provision of government policies that promote and serve the interests of families
- > consider any matter relating to the interests of families referred to us by any Minister of the Crown
- > stimulate and promote research into families, for example by funding and undertaking research
- > consult with, or refer matters to, other official bodies or statutory agencies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Families Commission and Dr Lindy Fursman appreciate and acknowledge the parents whose experiences form the basis of this research report.

This research was undertaken by Dr Lindy Fursman with input from the research team at the Families Commission – Karen Stewart, Karen Wong, Margaret Retter and Nita Zodgekar.

Families Commission
Public Trust Building
Level 6, 117-125 Lambton Quay
PO Box 2839
Wellington 6140

Telephone: 04 917 7040
Email: enquiries@nzfamilies.org.nz
www.nzfamilies.org.nz

Giving New Zealand families a voice *Te reo o te whānau*

ISSN 1177-3545 (Print)
ISSN 1178-1289 (Online)

ISBN 978-0-478-32838-7 (Print)
ISBN 978-0-478-32839-4 (Online)

families commission
kōmihana ā **whānau**

➤ Giving New Zealand families a voice *Te reo o te whānau*

finding time

PARENTS' LONG WORKING HOURS AND THE IMPACT ON FAMILY LIFE

A FAMILIES COMMISSION REPORT

CONTENTS

Preface 5

Executive summary 7

1. Introduction 11

- 1.1 Structure of this report 13

2. Long hours in New Zealand 15

- 2.1 What are long hours? 16
- 2.2 How many families work long hours? 16
- 2.3 Who works long hours? A profile of long hours workers in the 2006 Census 17

3. Methodology 19

- 3.1 Review of existing research 20
- 3.2 How the data was gathered 21
- 3.3 Analysis of the data 22
- 3.4 Demographic profile of families participating in the study 23
- 3.5 Families taking part in the qualitative research 24
- 3.6 Strengths and limitations of the research 26

4. Why family members worked long hours 27

- 4.1 Key reasons for working long hours 28
 - 4.1.1 Reasons for working long hours: Requirements of the job 28
 - 4.1.2 Reasons for working long hours: Income 35
 - 4.1.3 Reasons for working long hours: The rewards of work 38
 - 4.1.4 Reasons for working long hours: The impact of culture 39
- 4.2 Long hours: a symptom of many drivers 42

5. The impact of working long hours 43

- 5.1 Positive impacts 45
- 5.2 Adverse impacts on the long hours worker 46
 - 5.2.1 Sleep deprivation 47
 - 5.2.2 Stress 48
 - 5.2.3 General health and fitness 49
- 5.3 Impact on parenting 50
- 5.4 Time spent with children 51
 - 5.4.1 Parents working long hours have little time to spend with children... 51
 - 5.4.2 ...and their children's behaviour shows how they feel about this... 53
 - 5.4.3 ...but parents need to earn 56
- 5.5 Other impacts on children 56
 - 5.5.1 Impacts on children's other activities 56
 - 5.5.2 Quality time – in the car... 57

5.6	General impacts on the family	58
5.6.1	Lack of time as a family for special occasions	58
5.6.2	Feeling rushed	58
5.7	Impacts on the spouse or partner of the long hours worker	59
5.7.1	Impacts on couples' relationships	61
5.7.2	Lack of time as a couple	64
5.8	The gendered division of labour in the family	64
6.	Factors that influence the impact of long work hours on the family	67
6.1	The availability of extended family for support and childcare	70
6.2	Having control over work hours and flexibility	71
6.3	Satisfaction with hours and perceptions of overload	73
6.4	Making things worse: having no control over working hours, travel and health issues	74
6.4.1	Having no control over working hours	74
6.4.2	Work-related travel	75
6.4.3	The impact of health issues	76
6.4.4	Business viability	76
6.5	Income and education – the options these 'buy'	77
7.	Decisions and expectations about working hours	79
7.1	Sharing goals	81
8.	Overall impact – working hours as a single factor in family functioning	83
9.	Looking to the future	85
10.	Conclusions	89
10.1	Reasons for working long hours	90
10.2	Impacts of long hours	90
10.2.1	Factors that mediated the impact of long hours	91
10.2.2	Factors that exacerbated the impact of long hours	91
11.	Next steps: areas for further work	93
11.1	How do these findings fit with other Families Commission work?	94
11.2	Future policy development	96
	References	98

PREFACE

This report looks at how working long hours affects New Zealand families.

New Zealanders are known for working hard and also for working long hours. According to the 2006 Census, three out of 10 full time workers work 50 hours or more a week, which is very high by international standards.

Many parents with dependent children work more than 80 hours a week between them. Many of these parents are on low incomes which can put them under additional pressure. Overall, balancing family and work life places stress on individuals and families – especially when one, or both partners, are working long hours.

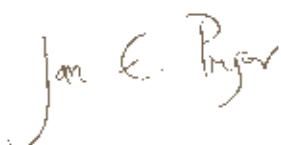
Caring for dependent children can be challenging under the best of circumstances. Finding an acceptable balance between work and family commitments is a task faced by most working parents. This report tells the stories of a range of families and captures the effects their long working hours have on their home life.

The parents interviewed said that the negative impacts included the lack of family and couple time, lack of involvement with children, the overloading of one partner with household and childcare duties, and fatigue and health issues. Many families mentioned that they were able to make choices around balancing their work and home life thanks to Working for Families tax credits, good quality affordable childcare, extended family/whānau/neighbourhood support, and supportive work arrangements.

However, stress and health problems among those who are working long hours seem to be exacerbated by a long list of additional factors including working shifts, being on call, employed in seasonal work, or setting up a new business. Others said their wellbeing was affected by lack of support from family/whānau, being a single parent, debt and an unsupportive workplace.

Long working hours is a critical issue for many New Zealand families especially as the current economic climate could result in more people being under pressure to work longer hours to make ends meet. Social policies and employment practices need to be scrutinised to ensure that they provide adequate support for families. For instance, employers in industries that commonly work long hours should be encouraged to examine the effect of the workplace culture on their staff and on productivity. There are known links between long working hours and workplace safety and road safety.

The Commission's aim is to help make sure that social policy developments reflect and take account of the needs of today's families where often both parents are in paid work. This report provides information that could be useful when developing such policies or when reviewing workplace practices.



Dr Jan Pryor
Chief Commissioner

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarises the findings from multi-method research on long working hours and family life. It draws on data from the New Zealand 2006 Census, a review of the literature, and a small qualitative study involving in-depth interviews with 17 couples with dependent children where at least one partner was working long hours.

The report adds to our understanding of the experiences of long hours workers, by including their voices and their partners', and their views on the impacts of working long hours on family life and on their relationships with partners and children. This research gives a New Zealand context to previous overseas studies and provides information which can be compared with international experiences.

Previous research has highlighted that working hours in New Zealand are amongst the highest in the world and that they affect a considerable number of families. In the 2006 Census, 415,641 or 23 percent of the workforce worked 50 or more hours a week, with this representing 29 percent of all full-time workers. The types of households long hours workers lived in were similar to those of the total workforce and indicated that people with dependent children did not tend to work less than those without. Workers living in couple households both with and without children were slightly over represented amongst long hours workers, and single parents were slightly under-represented but the differences between all workers across household type were small.

In 2006, 98,466 dual-earner couples with dependent children worked 80 or more combined hours, while 27,063 dual-earner couples with dependent children worked more than 100 combined hours. Dual-earner couples with more children were less likely to work more than 80 combined hours per week. Nearly a third of dual-earner couples with one child worked more than 80 combined hours a week while a quarter of those with three children worked these long hours.

Those in agriculture, management and road/rail were the most likely to work long hours. In terms of income, while workers with high incomes were the most likely to work long hours, the majority of long hours workers, in absolute numbers, were in lower income brackets (Fursman, 2008). Those living in rural areas were disproportionately represented amongst long hours workers – they comprised only 13 percent of the workforce but 21 percent of the long hours workers. This probably related to the high numbers of workers reporting long working hours in rural occupations and industries such as agriculture and fisheries.

The families whose views are reported in this paper all had a parent who fitted the census demographic profile of long hours workers.

The objective of this research was to gain an understanding of the impact of long working hours on family life and family wellbeing. We saw how working long hours affected the whole family. Those working long hours experienced fatigue and sleep deprivation, stress and other negative impacts on health and fitness, and reported having less energy to sustain relationships, including parenting. The spouse of the long hours worker could be overloaded with all the parenting and domestic duties, often while simultaneously working, while those spouses outside the paid workforce felt unable to take on paid work or training.

There were significant gender differences in those who work long hours, with 32 percent of men working 50 or more hours a week compared with 12 percent of women. Around 40 percent of females working more than 50 hours a week, earned more than \$50,000 while on average, men working 50 hours or more earned more with 50 percent earning more than \$50,000. These gender differences were also evident in the division of labour

in many of the families we interviewed, with women usually assuming much of the domestic work.

The research found that reasons why families worked long hours included income (maintaining a basic standard of living or being able to afford 'extras'); the requirements of the job (including the physical demands of the job, customer demand and having a high workload); the pressure of workplace and industry culture; and the desire to reap the more intangible rewards of work. Few workers worked long hours because of only one factor, with the exception of the workers in the lowest income brackets, who worked very long hours just to meet basic expenses.

Other impacts on families included not having family holiday time; an inability to spend special occasions together; children not being able to participate in activities such as after-school sports; quality family time spent mainly in the car; and a sense of life rushing by. Because the partner of the long hours worker could not depend on someone being there to take over the care of the children, this affected their ability to have time out and plan ahead.

Those working long hours also identified some positive effects of working long hours. These included earning extra money (for those on hourly wages); instilling a good work ethic in children; gaining satisfaction from work; and staying off a benefit. However, some of these factors could be attributed to engaging in paid work in general, rather than from working long hours in particular.

Some couples appeared to be under stress as a result of long hours of work; however, this was extremely variable, and appeared to be related to both partners' satisfaction with working hours and the perceived effect on their children. However, few couples spent any couples-only time together on a regular basis.

Few families engaged in active decision making about working long hours; rather, the hours seemed to creep up over time. For a number of long hours workers and their families, long working hours were never discussed. This may have been because, in some cases, long hours were viewed as an integral and taken-for-granted part of the job or industry the long hours worker was employed in.

There were a number of key factors that reduced the impact of long working hours on the family. These included the availability of extended family for childcare and support; having flexible work arrangements and control over hours of work (including both the number of hours and when hours were worked); and how satisfied both spouses were with the number of hours of paid work and the impact of these hours on the availability of the long hours worker to spend time with children and to do a share of the household chores.

Other factors exacerbated the impact of long hours of work. These included the amount and duration of work-related travel; poor health within the family; and having no control over working hours or arrangements. As such, long hours of work were only one factor among many that affected family functioning and wellbeing.

The role of income was complex. Families with higher incomes had the potential to ease the impact of long hours (through purchasing services such as cleaners, nannies and gardeners). However, higher incomes also acted as a trap with families feeling they needed to maintain long working hours to afford their current lifestyle. Some families were trapped in jobs with very long hours as they had few qualifications (and thus few occupational alternatives) and needed the income that the additional hours brought or the job entailed.

Many of the families interviewed used the possibility of change in the future to assist them in coping with the realities of their daily situation. All of the families in the qualitative research, bar one, had plans for the future which would enable them to reduce the hours of the long hours worker. However, in some cases, these plans were either unrealistic or vague.

This research raised broader concerns about how the long working hours and the work patterns of parents with dependent children are affecting family life. Working long hours affects the ability of families to achieve a good work-life balance. Policies relating to income support provision, paid parental leave, access to childcare and promotion of workplace practices (eg quality flexible work) are all an essential part of addressing this issue. The Families Commission believes there is significant room for improvement to policy and practice, particularly in the areas of:

- > parental leave
- > childcare
- > out of school services.

Policies in these areas, along with those related to family income levels, impact on the work-life balance of those working long hours.

Other findings from this research are of interest to both policymakers and employers, particularly with regard to fatigue, stress and productivity. These include:

- > Long hours work affects productivity. By addressing issues of working hours and job size, businesses can improve their bottom line and increase employee satisfaction and retention of skilled staff.
- > Long hours of work can be accompanied by fatigue and stress, having significant health and safety implications in some occupational areas.
- > Long hours of work are often driven by the culture of both workplaces and industries, influencing employees' perceptions of the feasibility of flexible work arrangements.
- > Employers need to be encouraged and supported to look at whether they have a long working hours culture. The attitude of individual managers has been shown to be important. Further work to explore strategies that ameliorate the impact of long working hours could have significant benefits that go beyond their impact on family functioning and wellbeing.
- > Our research participants saw educational qualifications as providing a wider choice so that they could move to occupations that did not require long hours. Further consideration should be given to how to support workers who have limited education to obtain qualifications and skills that support job mobility.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced world with a consumer economy that operates 24/7, finding a balance between work and other activities in our lives is not easy. One of the key factors that impacts on our ability to balance work and home is working hours, and as such, this report asks: "How do long working hours affect families?"

The Families Commission is interested in looking at the balance between paid work and family life, and aims to support families with care responsibilities to prioritise what is important to them. This research, combined with two related reports – *Give and Take: Families perceptions and experiences of flexible work in New Zealand* (Zodgekar and Fursman, 2008) and *Juggling Acts: How parents working non-standard hours arrange care for their pre-school children* (Moss, Hill and Wilson, 2008) – provides evidence to inform the Commission's work on promoting choice for families in how they balance their care responsibilities and paid work.

Families need to be strong and resilient to care for and nurture their members, and to contribute to and participate in society. Participation in paid work can contribute to this resilience. Resilient families are more able to cope with difficulties and change without adverse effects on individual family members, the family as a whole, or society. In addition, the economic circumstances of a family affect its ability to meet the needs of its members and to participate fully in community life. Economic disadvantage is a known risk factor for poor family functioning, and growing up in poverty is associated with poor health, education and employment outcomes.

However, balancing paid work and family life can place stress on individuals and families, and affect early childhood development, workplace productivity, employment equity and family living standards. The Families Commission has already focused on a number of activities to support work and family life, particularly in the areas of paid parental leave, after-school or out-of-school services, access to early childhood education and flexible work. A number of government agencies are carrying out policy development in the area of work-life balance.

This report looks at the impact long working hours have on families with dependent children, and draws on analyses of both New Zealand census data and a review of the literature. The Families Commission was interested in exploring the experiences of families who had a parent working long hours and had dependent children. A small qualitative project aimed at examining the empirical reality of combining long working hours and family life provided insight into these experiences, and allowed an in-depth consideration of parents' lives and experiences.

The objectives for this project included:

- > to gain an understanding of the impact of long working hours on family life and family wellbeing
- > to gain an understanding of the factors parents considered when making decisions about working long hours, including the hours worked, who worked them and the role of income(s)
- > to explore the trade-offs that working long hours involved, for both the family as a whole and the individual(s) working long hours
- > to explore the reasons family members worked long hours
- > to explore how external factors such as travel time impacted on the effects of long working hours.

We interviewed parents who worked long hours¹ and their partners to explore the effects that working long hours had on family wellbeing. Participants were selected for the study because they worked in the occupations where long hours were most prevalent in New Zealand. Some of the people we interviewed also worked non-standard work hours including on-call and seasonal work.

We interviewed 17 New Zealand families and took a snapshot of how they were dealing on a day-to-day basis with the impact of working long hours. Many of these families had organised their lives around the long working hours of one of the parents. Some of the families had taken on additional training or work hours to safeguard against having to be on a benefit.

The research confirms findings from the national work-life balance surveys undertaken by the Department of Labour (2008) that show it is harder for parents to achieve work-life balance, especially when one or both partners are working long hours. This is especially true where there is limited access to family-friendly working conditions.

The New Zealand parents interviewed in this study had a strong sense of pride in their work, but some were working long hours for sustained periods without adequate opportunities for rest. We found that this could have consequences for the health of the long hours worker and impact negatively on the rest of the family, especially in those families with younger children.

1.1 STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

This report is divided into a number of sections. In section 2, we present some data showing the extent to which long working hours are prevalent in New Zealand families and look at the profile of those who work long hours.

Section 3 describes the methodology used in the project and provides information about the families who participated in the qualitative stages of the study. This section also details how the data was collected and analysed.

Section 4 explores the reasons parents work long hours and notes that for most families, long hours are driven by a variety of factors. Section 5 considers the impact that long hours of work have on the worker and on their partner, on the time they spend with their children, as well as the impact of long working hours on the family as a whole and on the gender division of unpaid work.

Section 6 considers the factors that ameliorate or exacerbate the impact of long working hours on the family. Section 7 explores the degree to which families make conscious decisions about working hours, while Section 8 points out that working hours are just one factor that impacts on family functioning. Section 9 describes the plans the families in the study have for the future.

Sections 10 and 11 outline the report's conclusions and offer insights and suggestions for further work.

¹ Defined as 50 or more hours a week.



2. LONG HOURS IN NEW ZEALAND

2.1 WHAT ARE LONG HOURS?

The definition of long working hours differs according to country. In Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom, 48 hours or more per week is usually considered to be long working hours, with this also being the cut off in Europe under the EU Working Time Directive. In New Zealand, research by the Ministry of Social Development and the Department of Labour in reports relating to working hours (including the Department of Labour (2006) work-life balance survey and the Ministry of Social Development social reports (2006a, 2004)) have used 50-plus hours as the threshold for long working hours. This report follows the New Zealand precedent and considers 50 hours or more to be long hours.

2.2 HOW MANY FAMILIES WORK LONG HOURS?

Long working hours affect a significant number of New Zealand families. In the 2006 Census, a total of 415,641 people reported working 50 or more hours each week, with this representing 23 percent of the workforce (N=1,832,490),² and 29 percent of full-time workers (n=1,429,305).³ Amongst couples with children, 29 percent (or 98,466) of dual-earner couples with dependent children worked 80 or more combined hours, while eight percent (or 27,063) of dual-earner couples with dependent children worked more than 100 combined hours. Of the latter, there were 12,963 couples with dependent children where both partners worked 50 or more hours each.

The Ministry of Social Development's *Work, Family and Parenting Study* (2006) found that 34 percent of the parents in their sample worked 40–49 hours per week, and 27 percent worked 50 or more hours each week. This figure rose when considering only parents who worked full-time, with 36 percent of parents in full-time work spending 50 or more hours working.

Working hours in New Zealand are amongst the highest in the world. It has been known for some time that New Zealand has one of the highest proportions of long hours workers in the OECD. Messenger (2004) compared the working hours of employees in a variety of countries and found that only Japan topped New Zealand in proportions of employees working 50 or more hours per week. Similarly, Callister (2004) found that the long weekly hours worked by couples and individuals placed New Zealand at the high end of the international spectrum. He further noted that the proportion of employees working long hours had increased in the past 20 years, while the average hours worked had remained relatively stable. He used census data to show that this could be explained by the increasing polarisation of working hours, with the increase in proportion of employees working 50 hours or more accompanied by an increase in the proportion working less than 20 hours a week.

Census data shows that the largest group of long hours workers have no qualifications and those who work the longest hours are lower income earners (Fursman, 2008). As such, while there are significant proportions of long hours workers earning high salaries in management positions, some of the families working these hours are those least likely to be able to negotiate working arrangements conducive to family wellbeing.

A significant body of research suggests that many workers would prefer to work less, even if it meant earning less money. For example, the Department of Labour's work-

² The 2006 Census counts the total New Zealand workforce as 1,985,778 workers. However, only 1,832,490 people provided information on working hours. (The remaining people had their hours coded as 'Response unidentifiable' or 'Not stated'.) Because this project relies on reports of working hours (rather than 'full-time' or 'part-time' categories), the analysis included in this paper has been confined to those for whom working hours data was available. As such, this paper is based on a total population of 1,832,490.

³ Statistics New Zealand defines full-time work as 30 or more hours each week, and this figure is used in this report for calculations based on all full-time workers.

life balance survey (2006) found that 19 percent of employees in their representative sample worked 50 or more hours a week, with 28 percent of employees indicating that they would prefer to work fewer hours.

2.3 WHO WORKS LONG HOURS? A PROFILE OF LONG HOURS WORKERS IN THE 2006 CENSUS

Analysis of the 2006 New Zealand Census was carried out as part of a joint project between the Families Commission and the Department of Labour. This analysis (Fursman, 2008) examined the demographic profile of long hours workers across a range of variables, including gender, ethnicity, education, occupation, industry, income, location and family type.

The analysis found that three-quarters (74 percent) of those working long hours were men, and that 32 percent of men worked 50 or more hours a week compared with 12 percent of women. When only full-time workers were considered, these proportions rose to 36 percent and 19 percent respectively. Workers in the 40–54-year-old age bracket were slightly over-represented amongst long hours workers, as were those workers reporting ethnicity as ‘European’ or ‘Other.’

Analysis by education showed two trends within long hours workers. Those with the highest qualifications, such as masters’ degrees and doctorates, were significantly more likely to work long hours; however, the largest group of long hours workers were those who had no qualifications. Those with Level 2 certificate⁴ or lower (including no qualifications) made up 40 percent of those working long hours, similar to the educational profile of the total workforce.

A similar dual trend was evident with regard to the income of long hours workers. Long hours workers were more likely to have higher personal incomes relative to the total workforce; however, the largest group of long hours workers were those on lower incomes. Slightly more than half (55 percent) of those working 50 or more hours a week had incomes below \$50,000 while the remaining 45 percent had incomes greater than this amount, with 12 percent of long hours workers earning more than \$100,000 per annum. More than a third (38 percent) of long hours workers had incomes of \$40,000 or less and 22 percent had incomes of \$30,000 or less. However, the census income data is yearly income from all sources not just from work in the labour market. This does create some problems in thinking about weekly hours and yearly income.

Occupation and industry were, not surprisingly, aligned with regard to the proportion and absolute numbers of long hours workers. Large numbers of long hours workers were found in occupations classified as ‘Specialist Managers’, ‘Farmers and Farm Managers’, ‘Chief Executives, General Managers and Legislators’, ‘Education Professionals’, ‘Hospitality, Retail and Service Managers’ and ‘Road and Rail Drivers’. These occupations not only contained large numbers of long hours workers, they also had high proportions of long hours workers and workers in these occupations made up a disproportionate share of the total group working long hours. In line with this, industries with both high numbers and high proportions of long hours workers were agriculture and road transport. High numbers of long hours workers were also found in professional, scientific and technical services, pre-school and school education and construction services.

⁴ Level 2 certificate is the qualification that has replaced Sixth Form Certificate, and is believed to illustrate that a student has acquired the foundation skills required for employment.

There were a high number of farmers and farm managers working long hours. Those living in rural areas were disproportionately represented amongst long hours workers.

Analysis was conducted to examine whether workers living in particular kinds of families were more likely to work long hours. However, while workers in couple and one-person families were slightly over-represented amongst long hours workers, differences between the groups were very small, with the family characteristics of those working long hours very similar to the profile of the total workforce.

The analysis also examined dual-earner couples with children (n=337,203). Of these, 29 percent (or 98,466) of couples with dependent children worked a combined 80 or more hours each week, and eight percent (or 27,063) worked 100 or more hours per week between them. In 2006, there were 12,963 couples with dependent children where each partner worked 50 or more hours a week.



3. METHODOLOGY

This project drew on a number of sources, in order to obtain a more complete picture of the impact of long working hours on New Zealand families.

3.1 REVIEW OF EXISTING RESEARCH

The project began with a literature review which canvassed recent research on the impact of long working hours on the family. New Zealand evidence related to this issue has included work such as the Department of Labour's work-life balance survey (2006) and the Ministry of Social Development's *Work, Family and Parenting Study* (2006) as well as a number of projects by the Families Commission (2005; Zodgekar & Fursman, 2008) and the work of independent researchers, including Callister (2004 and 2005). However, most of the New Zealand research has produced information about the impact of long working hours as a by-product of broader research questions. For example, the Ministry of Social Development's (2006) study of how paid work influenced family functioning and parenting found that significant numbers of parents worked long hours and often brought work home; however, the findings did not examine the specific impacts of long working hours on families.

The literature review highlighted that while there was a reasonable body of literature examining the impact of long working hours on various aspects of family life, the bulk of previous research tended to be large quantitative studies conducted outside New Zealand. The majority of these studies focused on just one aspect of family wellbeing (for example, the impact of long working hours on partner relationships), and measured outcomes as discrete variables that were then analysed using a variety of statistical methods. However, few studies provided a more holistic discussion of the range of impacts of long working hours on families, with even fewer including the voices of family members themselves.

The literature review shaped the way this research proceeded. A mixed method approach was selected for the project, one which included both quantitative data from the most recent New Zealand census, and qualitative data from a small but diverse group of families who had at least one parent working long hours. Findings from the literature review and the census data are embedded in each section of this report.



3.2 HOW THE DATA WAS GATHERED

In-depth interviews were conducted with both partners in 15 families with dependent children, and one interview was conducted with a long hours worker whose partner was unavailable. A further interview was conducted with a divorced father of dependent children. All of the long hours workers and families approached to be part of the qualitative research took part and were keen to tell their stories.

The results of the census analysis project already described were used to set the parameters for the selection of families for inclusion in the qualitative stage of the research. This ensured that the long hours workers included in the qualitative research were drawn from the groups who were most likely to be working long hours. This stage of the research was designed to elicit the voices of families across a range of different circumstances, and to illustrate the diversity of experiences families had with long working hours. It was not intended to be representative of all families with dependent children who had a parent working long hours, and nor did it claim to be representative of other families who appeared to be in similar circumstances. Rather, the qualitative research complements both the census data and the literature on long hours workers and their families.

Ethics approval for the study was granted by the Families Commission Ethics Committee. Participants for the research were recruited using research company UMR's participant database. Potential participants were called and asked about their working hours, family characteristics and if they would be willing to take part in the research. All participants were given information sheets outlining the aims of the study and what participation in the research involved. They had the opportunity to ask questions about the research and were advised of the voluntary nature of the study. Participants signed informed consent forms and were able to review the notes taken from their interviews. On completion of the interview, participants were given a small koha in appreciation of the time they made available to us for the interview.

Topics that were explored in the interviews were shaped by Milligan, Fabian, Coope, & Errington's (2006) model of family wellbeing. Wellbeing can be defined as "the quality of life of an individual or other social unit" (Benhke & MacDermid, 2004); however, there is no universal definition of wellbeing across disciplines or studies. Across definitions, most descriptions and measurements of wellbeing seem to contain both subjective and objective measures, with these commonly including physical, material, social, psychological and health factors.

Defining and measuring *family* wellbeing is complicated by the fact that there is no commonly agreed definition of *individual* wellbeing. Weston, Gray, Qu & Stanton (2004 p.4) note that family wellbeing indicators include subjective and objective indicators or gradations. Common indicators of family wellbeing include a family's financial and material circumstances, parental employment, family members' satisfaction with relationships with each other and their reports of behaviour that provide insight into parenting styles and the quality of 'family functioning'.

In a report on using census data to construct indicators of family wellbeing in New Zealand, Milligan et al (2006) adapted Hird's (2003) model of individual wellbeing to provide an analytical structure for exploring family wellbeing. In Milligan et al's model, the objective and subjective components that contribute to family wellbeing are teased out to include factors such as income, education and health, as well as the quality of relationships and family functioning. This model was used to ensure that a range of aspects related to wellbeing were included in the schedule on which the interviews were based.

3.3 ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The data used in the qualitative analysis came from transcriptions of selected passages of the interviews and from two interviewers' field notes. The transcriptions and notes were read many times to identify the emergent themes, with iterative coding taking place throughout the analysis. To improve reliability, at the completion of the field work the interviewers and note-takers involved in the interviews met and worked through each individual interview to allow comparison of dominant themes, and to compare and resolve any discrepancies in interpretation through discussion.



3.4 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF FAMILIES PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the families who participated. In the families chosen, the long hours worker was employed in an occupation or industry shown by the census to involve high proportions and numbers of long hours workers. The study targeted families where the long hours worker was employed in roading, in a management position, in education, as a hospitality or retail manager, or worked in agriculture. In addition, the study targeted families where the long hours worker was self-employed or held multiple jobs. As the majority of long hours workers nationally are male, the long hours worker was male in 12 of the 17 families selected.

The selected families included individuals with a range of ethnicities and different family compositions including children of different ages. Families in both rural and urban regions were included. The criteria of having dependent children meant there were natural age boundaries in the sample of parents. In addition, the study included families with a parent who worked long hours and had a relatively high income, and families where a parent worked extremely long hours for relatively little compensation.

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

OCCUPATION OR INDUSTRY OF LONG HOURS WORKER	LOCATION	GENDER	ETHNICITY	AGE	DUAL EARNER COUPLE?	# OF CHILDREN	AGE OF YOUNGEST CHILD
Self-employed	Rural	Male	NZ Euro	46	Y	3	4
Self-employed	Urban	Male	NZ Euro	46	Y	2	2
Self-employed	Urban	Male	NZ Euro	49	Y	2	2
Manager	Urban	Female	NZ Euro	46	Y	2	14
Manager	Urban	Male	NZ Euro	47	Y	2	10
Manager	Urban	Female	Māori	41	Y	3	12
Agriculture	Rural	Male	NZ Euro	36	Y	2	8
Agriculture	Rural	Male	NZ Euro	51	N	4	12
Education	Urban	Female	Pasifika/NZ Euro	33	Y	1	2
Education	Urban	Male	NZ Euro	47	Y	2	9
Hospitality/retail	Urban	Female	NZ Euro	35	Y	1	3
Hospitality/retail	Rural	Male	NZ Euro	–	N	2	2
Road/Rail	Urban	Male	Māori	35	Y	1	4
Road/rail	Rural	Male	NZ Euro	35	N	2	3
Road/rail	Urban	Male	NZ Euro	47	N	3	5
Multiple jobs	Urban	Female	Pasifika	34	Y	4	3
Multiple jobs	Urban	Male	Indian	32	Y	2	3

Because the families included in the qualitative research fit a general profile of long hours workers in New Zealand, their stories can be used to illustrate a range of impacts that long hours work may have on family life. However, the sample is very small and therefore cannot be considered representative of all long hours workers in New Zealand or their families.

3.5 FAMILIES TAKING PART IN THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

As discussed above, the qualitative research involved families with dependent children, where at least one parent worked long hours and had a similar profile to those highlighted in the census analysis.

Table 2 summarises the families and their working arrangements.

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF THE FAMILY MAKE-UP AND WORKING HOURS OF FAMILIES IN THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH			
PARENTS	CHILDREN	WORKING ARRANGEMENTS	
1	Graham and Jenny	Three children aged 19, 17 and 4	Run their own business; hours difficult to determine exactly, but they both work at least a 12-hour day.
2	Wayne and Melanie	Max, 3 ½ and Freddie, 2	Own their own business. Wayne works 9.00am–6.00pm, then works from home in evenings and weekends. Melanie works in the business for 10–15 hours a week.
2B	George and Polly	Ella, 6 and Maddie, 3	George is self-employed in the building trade. Normally works 6.00am–7.30pm, but then does paperwork in evening. Not uncommon for him to work 5.30am–10.30pm. Polly works 9.00am–3.00pm, three days a week.
3	Karen and Sam (only Karen interviewed)	Two boys aged 14 and 17	Works in the travel industry ... officially works 18 days out of 28, but in reality hardly ever has a day when not doing something for work. When in town, works 6.00am–7.00pm.
4	Alan and Sue	Sophie, 14 and Lizzie, 10	Alan works in financial services, works in another city two days a week (staying overnight), and when in home town, works 9.00am–8.30pm. Sue works in law, about 35 hours a week.
5	Anna and Rewi	Three children aged 12, 17 and 20 (20-yr-old not living at home)	Anna is senior manager in the public service, works 7.00am–5.00pm, plus travels a lot for work (up to five week stretches). Rewi is a painter – works 8.00am–4.00pm.
6	Hemi and Tessa	Tom, 4 Jenny, 20 and two boys from earlier marriage	Hemi is a truck driver, works a minimum of 70 hours a week, usually more. Tessa works as an administrator 8.30am–4.30pm.

7	Ron and Marian	Alice, 12 and Toby, 8	<p>Have their own agricultural business. Ron works seasonal hours: 5.00am–10.00pm in spring/summer (at least 100+ hours a week) and in slower season, works 7.00am–5.00pm.</p> <p>Marian works 5.00am–6.00pm, but takes breaks to do domestic work and childcare etc.</p>
8	John	<p>Four children aged 12, 15, 18 and 20</p> <p>Is separated and has custody one afternoon a week and one day/night in weekend.</p>	<p>Is in agriculture and works seasonally. In peak season, works 3.30am–6.00pm (at least 90 hours a week) but in slower season works 3.30am–noon. However, goes back to work at 6.00pm to close up.</p>
9	Kate and Ariki	Sasha, 2	<p>Kate is a teacher, works 7.45am–4.00pm. Ariki is a machine operator, works 6.00am–6.00 or 7.00pm.</p>
10	Paul and Andrew	<p>Josh, 9 and Leila, 13.</p> <p>Have shared custody of them week on/week off.</p> <p>Andrew has five other children, but doesn't see them.</p>	<p>Paul works as a teacher, 8.00am–5.00pm, then does work at home. Andrew is in retail, works 8.00am–5.00pm.</p> <p>Both have commutes of about an hour each way.</p>
11	Sarah and Trevor	<p>Molly, 3</p> <p>Three adult children living in another city</p>	<p>Sarah is a manager in a large retail store, manages 25 staff. Works 7.00am–3.30pm five days, then does around 10 hours of work at home.</p> <p>Trevor is a baker, works 3.30am–6.00pm three days a week, then a half shift on the 4th day.</p>
12	Reagan and Leslie	Emma, 5 and Hannah, 3½	<p>Reagan is a manager in hospitality, works 6.30am–5.00pm. Is on call 24/7.</p>
13	Doug and Abbey	Owen, 6 and Caitlin, 3	<p>Doug is on a roading crew, normally starts 6.30am and works 12 hours shift six days, but sometimes will start as early as 5.00am and not finish until 10.00pm. Averages 80 hours a week.</p>
14	Craig and Barbara	<p>Phillip 11, James, 9 and Jasmin, 5.</p> <p>James has significant special needs.</p>	<p>Craig is a truck driver. He works 10-14 hours a day in summer, commonly from 6.30–7.00pm. In winter he works around nine hours a day, 7.00am–4.00pm. Does paperwork at home in evenings.</p>
15	Lani and Tino	Four children aged 3, 5, 9 and 10	<p>Lani is a caregiver at a hospital. Works standard night shift 11.00pm–7.00am, then takes extra casual shifts 3.30-10.00pm.</p> <p>Tino is a bus driver, works 3.00pm–11.00pm.</p>
16	Ajit and Maya	Two children aged 5 and 2½	<p>Ajit is an accountant, but also has second job as a merchandiser. He works 8.30am–5.00pm Mon–Fri in his accounting role, then Saturday mornings and Sunday mornings and evenings merchandising.</p> <p>Maya is nearing completion of early childhood training.</p>

3.6 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

A particular strength of this project was the mixed method used to explore the issue of long hours. Analysis of census data provided the most complete picture of the degree to which long weekly working hours were prevalent in New Zealand, and this was complemented by qualitative data which explored in depth the impact of long hours of work. As already noted, the qualitative research was designed to elicit the voices of families across a range of different circumstances and to illustrate the diversity of experiences families had with long working hours.

The major limitation of this research was the size of the sample. While the profile of the participants matched the national profile of long hours workers, the small sample size meant that the participants could not be considered representative of all families with dependent children who had a parent working long hours. Nor does this study claim that the results reported here can be generalised to describe other families who appear to be in similar circumstances. Rather, the findings in this report provide information on the range of impacts that may be experienced by families who have at least one member working long hours.

4. WHY FAMILY MEMBERS WORKED LONG HOURS

Key findings:

- > Key reasons why parents worked long hours included the requirements of the job (including completing the tasks involved, customer demands and having a high workload); income (both maintaining a basic standard of living and being able to afford 'extras'); the pressure of workplace and industry culture; and to reap the more intangible rewards of work. Parents who were self-employed worked long hours to build up or keep their businesses afloat.
- > Few workers worked long hours because of only one factor, with the exception of the workers in the lowest income brackets, who worked very long hours just to meet basic expenses. The remaining workers were driven by a combination of factors.
- > A number of workers felt that their long hours were, at least in part, a choice they made, over which they had some control. Others had no choice and could not have reduced their hours to a standard 40-hour week, even if they could have afforded to do so financially.

4.1 KEY REASONS FOR WORKING LONG HOURS

A recent review of theories of long hours work (Fursman, 2007) outlined four main theories explaining why people worked long hours. These included the need to work long hours in order to meet the demands of the job; giving in to cultural pressure to work long hours; working long hours to maintain a standard of living; and working long hours because work was enjoyable and a source of satisfaction.

Within the families we interviewed, the reasons long hours workers gave for working their hours aligned with the long hours theories. This section of the paper explores each of these drivers in turn.

4.1.1 Requirements of the job

All but two of the 17 long hours workers we interviewed attributed their hours in part to their workload or the requirements of their job. The two who did not cite workload, Lani and Ajit, were the two workers interviewed who were holding down more than one job. Similarly, a significant body of research attributes long working hours to work demands. A survey conducted by the Department of Labour in 2006 found that 39 percent of workers worked extra hours in their own time in order to get the job completed, with 67 percent of employees agreeing that deadlines and schedules made it harder to achieve work-life balance. Similarly, an Australian report by the Relationships Forum (2007) found that people worked unpaid overtime because they had too much work to complete within a normal working week, and research in the United Kingdom found that 61 percent of those working overtime (both paid and unpaid) attributed doing so to having too much work to finish in their normal working hours (Department of Trade and Industry, 2007).

In the qualitative research, the demands of work played out in different ways for families in different circumstances and workers in different occupations. For some, work hours were dictated by a physical task or set of tasks that could not be left incomplete, or that had to be finished within an available window which was often limited by weather or season. For others, particularly those in management positions, overall workload drove

working hours up by requiring the worker to work beyond 'standard' hours simply to keep up with all the necessary tasks.

Families were selected for participation in the qualitative research by a number of criteria, including having a family member who worked 50 or more hours each week in an occupation that the census identified as having a high number and proportion of long hours workers. The qualitative research illustrated that many of the long hours workers we spoke with considered their long hours a standard part of working in a particular occupation. This was particularly evident for workers whose tasks were affected by weather or the seasons.

Seasonal or weather-related work

For workers in agricultural-related occupations, the demands of work are often seasonal, and require long hours when conditions are suitable. Work that has to be done in particular weather or seasons means workers in these occupations must work as much as necessary to complete their work within a limited window of time. This is also true for workers in non-agricultural occupations such as truck drivers, whose clients may work outside and prefer that their goods are unloaded in dry weather. This means that their work is also subject to factors outside their control. However, it was clear from a number of respondents in the study that long hours weren't confined solely to the 'busy season' but continued throughout the year. The peak season represented a dramatically intensified workload, but the off-months were also far from easy.

The qualitative research illustrated the extremity of actual working conditions for some workers, a reality that is somewhat obscured by a percentage total summarising the number of "workers putting in more than 50 hours a week". Ron (Family 7), a farmer who also took on contract driving work, worked up to 130 hours a week for the six months between August and January, sometimes working right through the night without a break in a 36-hour block. Ron told us about a time earlier in the year when he had worked a five-day stretch, during which time he had a total of only seven hours of sleep. Because his driving work could only be done in fine weather, Ron felt he had to make the most of the periods without rain, even if this meant missing meals and sleep.

Ron: Some mornings you might not get breakfast, you just keep on going ... we don't have to eat...

Marian: At that time of year, you're relying on real packaged stuff, those kids bars and stuff that you can stuff in your pockets and you just eat as you go if you've got five minutes. (Family 7)

Ron: Then it will be lunchtime but some days you might not get lunch ... if you've got a bit of time, you eat a bit of lunch, but there's no down time, definitely no down time...

Ron: You just keep the lights on and drive all night ... we just can't leave it until the next day. It doesn't work like that.

During this period, Ron hoped for rain so he could catch up on sleep.

Ron: Yeah, it's all weather dependent. There are some times where you pray for a rainy day. And it never comes, never comes. (Family 7)

For the other six months of the year, Ron worked a 10-hour day starting at 7.00am and breaking for lunch at 1.00pm, then working until around 5.30pm. He used this time to catch up on maintenance work that he didn't have time for in the drier months.

Analysis of the census data showed that Ron worked in the occupation with the highest proportion and the second highest number of long hours workers. The census analysis divided occupations into 43 categories, then ranked each according to the proportions and absolute numbers of workers who reported working long hours. As Table 3 shows, 'Farmers and Farm Managers' ranked first as the occupation with the highest proportion of long hours workers (56.7 percent – shown in columns A and B), and as the occupation with the second highest absolute number of long hours workers (33,474 long hours workers – shown in columns C and D).

OCCUPATION (ANZSCO)	A	B	C	D	E	F
	% OF OCCUPATION WHO WORK 50+ HRS	RANKING BY PROPORTION OF 50+ HRS WORKERS IN OCCUPATION	ABSOLUTE NUMBER OF 50+ HRS WORKERS IN OCCUPATION	RANKING BY ABSOLUTE NUMBER OF 50+ HRS WORKERS	% OF ALL 50+ HRS WORKERS	% OF TOTAL WORKFORCE
Farmers and farm managers	56.72	1	33,474	2	8.28	3.31
Chief executives, general managers and legislators	49.18	2	32,118	3	7.94	3.67
Road and rail drivers	48.65	3	19,959	6	4.94	2.30
Mobile plant operators	47.10	4	7,863	16	1.94	0.94
Hospitality, retail and service managers	35.45	5	23,514	5	5.82	3.72
Specialist managers	33.17	6	45,069	1	11.15	7.63
Education professionals	31.56	7	27,129	4	6.71	4.82
Construction and mining labourers	30.54	8	4,647	25	1.15	0.85
Farm, forestry and garden workers	29.55	9	12,963	9	3.21	2.46
Protective service workers	27.04	10	6,174	20	1.53	1.28
Design, engineering, science and transport professionals	25.53	11	12,693	10	3.14	2.79
Automotive and engineering trades workers	25.27	12	13,182	8	3.26	2.93
Business, human resource and marketing professionals	19.40	22	15,687	7	3.88	4.54

The table also shows that farmers like Ron are disproportionately more likely to work long hours. In the census, farmers made up more than eight percent of workers putting in long hours, but were only just over three percent of the total workforce.

Despite his hours, Ron loved his work and was keen for his son to follow in his footsteps. While Marian wanted Ron to cut back to what she perceived as a more reasonable 80 hours a week, Ron himself was not unhappy with his work or its demands on his time. With the exception of the impact on his time with his children, Ron spoke very positively about his work.

Ron: I just love driving tractors and I enjoy what I do. (Family 7)

Ron was not the only respondent who talked about the requirement to work long hours to make the most of certain conditions. John (in agriculture), Craig (a truck driver) and

George (a builder) also described working very long hours to make the most of a dry spell.

Having to finish the job

Similar to the pressure to complete work during particular weather conditions was the need to stay on the job until a particular task was completed. Doug (Family 13) was in the latter category, but unlike Ron, he was significantly less enthusiastic about his work. Doug had no control over his working hours and couldn't just pack up and leave at the end of a standard eight-hour shift. This lack of control over finish times was evident for both self-employed workers and employees in a number of manual occupations.

Doug, married to Abbey and with two young children aged three and six, worked as a supervisor on a road crew laying down bitumen. He normally began work at around 5.30am and worked a 12-hour shift, six days a week. However, he calculated that he averaged about 80 hours of work a week, and it was not uncommon for shifts to start at 5.00am and not be finished until 10.00pm. Doug said he could not leave his work until the job his team was working on was finished. To leave before the job was complete would mean the end product was not up to standard.

Doug: Generally once you start the job, you don't sort of just start then stop at five o'clock, you start and you go until it's finished, generally, so, you could start at five in the morning and work through until 10 at night, or whatever, basically. ... It's also about the finish of the job. If they were to stop half way through that means there would be a join to nip, a cold join, so it all impacts on the finished product, at the end of the day. So they keep going until they finish or they get to a stage where they stop. (Family 13)

Similarly, George, a self-employed builder, noted:

George: In my job, you just can't leave. You can't say you are going to finish at five, and go home, because people's houses would be left wide open, open to the wind and rain. (Family 2B)

Customer and client demands

In addition to the fixed demands of the task at hand and the seasons or weather, a number of workers also spoke about the demands of their customers or clients as directly increasing their working hours.

Doug: At the end of the day, I think it's just about keeping the client happy. (Family 13)

While this was true for employees like Doug, the relationship between keeping clients satisfied and long working hours was particularly evident amongst those in the study who were self-employed. Because sole traders with their own businesses did not have anyone else who could manage client requests, they felt they had to be available whenever clients wanted them, even if this meant working much longer hours than they'd ideally like to. In line with this, the census analysis showed that nationally, those who earned no income or carried a loss were also more likely to work long hours, with these most likely being people who run their own businesses.

Ron: Do it now, yesterday. (Family 7)

Craig: There's people there that want stuff done, on the day, "we want it done now" and they're "where are you?", and you're just going, you're going flat out from the time that you start to the time that you finish... I have to do this to take business forward.

Barbara: Well, you do, but then the family suffers because the hours are long.
(Family 14)

Those who were self-employed and had no staff also found themselves working long hours to deal with the administrative work of running a business.

Barbara: It doesn't stop at the 14 hours [of driving]. He has to come home and do all the paperwork, then the paperwork starts, and then the phone starts.

Craig: And then people ring me up at home and ask me to do jobs, and stuff like that.
(Family 14)

Others, like Jenny (Family 1), put in place limits to the times when customers or clients could call.

Overall workload

Like Ron, George and Doug, workers in management positions in the study also worked long hours to cope with the demands of their jobs. However, unlike those in manual positions, Alan, Anna, Sarah and Reagan worked their hours to cope with an overall workload, rather than specific tasks. While this meant they had more control over when they worked, it also meant there was no natural end or break in sight.

Work demands that exceed a standard 40-hour week are disproportionately found in highly skilled and highly paid management positions. Maume and Bellas (2001) found that being a top manager or professional increased the length of the average work week by more than six hours compared with other workers. Similarly, Callister (2004 p.7) found that "the largest increase in average hours worked appears to have come about within the higher educated and, generally, higher income couples" and Fursman (2008) showed that those working long hours were disproportionately found in management-level occupations. As Table 3 shows, New Zealand census data also indicates that managers of various kinds ranked highly in both the proportions and the absolute numbers of long hours. Long hours and demanding work characteristics of management level positions may translate to poorer work-life balance, with the Department of Labour work-life balance survey finding that work-life ratings were particularly low for managers and professionals.⁵

Anna (Family 5), a senior manager in the public service, attributed her hours to the overall workload and responsibilities her job carried.

Anna: My hours are demand driven by just events that have occurred over the day, because when you've got people making decisions [in my area] there is a lot of risk management that needs to be wrapped around that. There's all the normal management stuff, you know, your business planning, your financial management, you driving new initiatives, that's the stuff you focus on ... but something happens and you spend days doing damage control, so there are those sorts of things that just drive your hours up and drive your day. (Family 5)

Other managers in the study noted they wouldn't be able to do their jobs in fewer hours.

Why do you work that number of hours?

Sarah: Because the job I'm doing now, I probably wouldn't be able to do it with less hours. (Family 11)

⁵ The DoL work-life balance survey ranked occupations by overall work-life balance score (a composite indicator made up of work-life balance rating and difficulty in achieving work-life balance). In this ranking, 'Business Manager or Executive' was ranked ninth out of 10 occupational groupings (10th was 'Teacher, Nurse, Police or Other Trained Service Worker').

Reagan: It's a requirement, to do my job. My general manager does more. (Family 12)

Alan: I feel like, with my job, it's a little bit like riding a bike uphill and you have to pedal hard, and if you stop or don't pedal hard enough you fall over. (Family 4)

The need to work long hours in order to manage all the work associated with the job meant that most of the managers in the study worked some non-standard hours that fell outside their official contracted hours. Reagan (Family 12), a hospitality manager, started much earlier than his official shift start time, leaving home before 6.00am each morning in order to start work by 6.30am.

Reagan: I start quite a bit earlier than I should... A lot of managers do similar. My food and beverage manager is doing 70 [hours] at the moment... It just comes with the territory. I got out of there about 5-ish, she [the food and beverage manager] would have started there at half past five [in the morning], and as far as I know, she was there until 6.00[pm] ... last week she started at the same time as me, and didn't finish until 9.00pm. At least I can sort of manage my time. (Family 12)

To some degree, Reagan had discretion about his hours and he started work earlier than contracted so he could deal better with his workload.

Reagan: Sometimes, starting a bit later would be good, but at 6.30am it's a good time to be there because I get to talk to my night staff. I see night [staff], and morning [staff], and that way I get to see all three shifts. And I can make decisions and deal with them, and it's good for them, I probably get a bit more out of them. (Family 12)

Reagan's wife, who was a stay-at-home mother to their two young daughters, was less than happy with Reagan's hours.

Leslie: He's looking at me because I say you're doing too many hours and you don't get paid for it. (Family 12)

Other managers in the study started at a standard time, but then worked at night, either staying late at the office, working at home after the children were in bed, or catching up on work at times when most workers were in bed.

Sarah: I can sit and do my paperwork while I'm watching TV, so that 10 hours [that I work at home each week] it doesn't really feel like, it's still work that I would have to do at work, but because I'm doing it at home, it doesn't feel like work. (Family 11)

Sue: I would like to work a bit less, because I find I don't have enough time in the day ... so I end up not getting as much sleep as I would like...

Is that because you're catching up on things at night?

Sue: Yes. It's not unusual for me to go back to the office at 10 o'clock at night, and come back at midnight, just because something urgent has come up. (Family 4)

Melanie: You've had quite a few days when you've gone in at 2.00am and stuff like that, to get stuff done.

Wayne: If I wake up at night, I'll get up and go to work. I just can't sleep, so... And it just makes it easier for the rest of the week.

Melanie: And that's five hours that you've done, that you don't have to find.

Wayne: It just means that you don't feel guilty knowing that work is piling up behind you, but you're having dinner with the kids. And it's hard to enjoy that, when you know that

work is really piling up, is piling up behind you. So it's easier just to, if you get a break, or you're awake, there's no point staring at the roof. You might as well be doing something. (Family 2)

Having a choice about workload and working hours

A key factor in determining the impact of long working hours was the degree to which workers could choose whether to put in long hours at work. Most of the workers we interviewed did have some degree of choice about the total number of hours they worked, and as such, choice needs to be included as one of the reasons behind their hours. For example, Alan noted that he sometimes worked longer than necessary if he was engaged in something that interested him. Similarly, Ron admitted that while the weather and client demands drove his working hours, it was still ultimately his choice whether he took on the extra work that pushed up his hours. This was also the case with Wayne, who worked long hours in his financial services business and stated that his hours were crucial in the current stage of his business. However, both he and his wife Melanie recognised that the hours he worked were part of his larger choice to run his own business.

It appears there is a difference between self-employment and being a wage earner when it comes to having choices about working hours. Doug did not have the ability to choose to do fewer hours. Not only were the hours – normal and overtime – a compulsory part of his job, but his lack of education and other skills meant that he had no choices around finding alternative employment. The impact of the degree of choice about working hours is considered in sections 6 and 7.



4.1.2 Income

The relationship between income and working hours in the qualitative research was complex. Many of the families we spoke to were driven to work longer hours in order to make more money; however, there were significant variations in the income levels of the families who cited money as a motivation for their long hours, and significant differences in what the money earned in these hours was spent on.

Before considering the varied situations of the families taking part in the qualitative research, it is useful to consider the national picture of the relationship between long work hours and income. As noted, analysis of the census data showed two trends with regard to income and working hours: firstly, that as income increased, the proportion of employees working long hours increased; and secondly, that most of those working long hours were on lower incomes. The differences in these trends was due to the first being concerned with the *proportion* of workers working long hours, while the second examined the *absolute number* of long hours workers in each income group.

The census data showed that as income increased, the proportion of employees working longer hours increased. For example, of those who had income in the \$25,001–\$30,000 bracket⁶, less than 20 percent worked more than 50 hours, while more than half of those who had income over \$100,000 worked these hours.

Nationally, those who worked long hours were more likely to earn higher incomes than those working fewer hours. Almost a quarter (24 percent) of those working 50 or more hours each week had annual incomes above \$70,000 while only 11 percent of the total workforce reported having this level of income. Similarly, 39 percent of those working long hours had incomes of \$40,000 or less, compared with 60 percent of the total workforce.

However, while those on higher incomes were more likely to work long hours, this did not translate to long hours workers being predominantly higher income earners. Of all those working 50 or more hours a week, more than half (55 percent) had incomes below \$50,000 while the remaining 45 percent had incomes greater than this amount. In line with this, because those with incomes under \$30,000 were a significantly larger group than those with incomes over \$100,000, the absolute numbers of long hours workers with low incomes were much greater than those with high incomes. More than 90,000 low-income workers worked 50 or more hours each week, compared with just over 51,000 workers with incomes greater than \$100,000.

Previous analysis has argued that those working long hours fall at each end of the income spectrum (Callister, 2004; 2005). This suggests that those working long hours do so for one of two reasons: either a) because they need to make ends meet; or b) because of some combination of meeting the demands of challenging (and highly paid) jobs and maintaining a particular lifestyle.

However, the families in the qualitative research did not show this polarisation in terms of income. Only two of the families in the qualitative research were very high earners, with most families falling into the middle income brackets. Similarly, analysis of long hours workers in the 2006 Census showed less of a polarisation and more of a spread across the income spectrum. Of the 45 percent of long hours workers earning more than \$50,000, almost half had incomes between \$50,001 and \$70,000. This suggests that rather than a polarisation of hours between very high- and very low-income earners, long hours workers were divided into a relatively large number of low-income workers, and two almost even groups of middle (\$50,001–\$70,000 – 21 percent) and upper (over

⁶ Note that this was yearly income from all sources, not just from weekly earnings from employment.

\$70,000 – 24 percent) earning groups. Only 12 percent of those working long hours had annual incomes above \$100,000, while 38 percent had incomes of \$40,000 or less, and 22 percent had incomes of \$30,000 or less.

While income was a driver for most families in the study, there were three distinct groups of families, delineated by how essential the money earned by working long hours was for them. To some extent, these groups matched the spread of long hours workers across the income spectrum identified in the census and discussed earlier; however, there were notable exceptions, especially where families did not appear to be working long hours for financial reasons.

The first group of families had members who were working long hours simply in order to meet the basic costs of living. These included Lani and Tino (Family 15) and Doug and Abbey (Family 13). A second group of families had members who worked long hours in order to maintain a particular standard of living. This group of families (of which there were at least six) were working long hours in order to afford 'extras', which ranged from small treats such as family trips to the movies to a luxury house and private school tuition. Most of these families were far from wealthy, but neither did they seem to struggle with paying basic expenses.

The final group of families did not appear to be working long hours for income-related reasons. This group was spread across the income spectrum and included Graham and Jenny (Family 1), Ron and Marian (Family 7), Craig and Barbara (Family 14), Paul and Andrew (Family 10) and Karen and Sam (Family 3). Long hours workers in these families attributed their working hours to other causes, such as workload and requirements of their jobs as discussed earlier, and the intrinsic rewards they received from their work.

Making ends meet

Two of the families in the qualitative research had at least one member who was working very long hours in order to be able to meet basic living expenses.

Lani, a 34-year-old Pacific Island woman with four children, was working an average of 75 hours a week as a caregiver in two different hospitals. Her main permanent shift was at night, and she would begin her work at 11.00pm and work through until 7.00am. After stopping on her way home to pick up food for the children's school lunches, Lani would arrive home in time to wake the children, give them breakfast, pack their lunches and get them off to school. She would come back from the school drop-off in time to answer a phone call from a nursing agency, who would be calling to find out whether she could work a casual afternoon shift, an offer she almost always accepted. Lani would then wash the dishes and do the laundry, prepare an evening meal for the children to eat later and then sleep for maybe three or four hours until she left to pick the children up from school. Dropping the children at her mother-in-law's, she would then go to work for a 3.30pm–10.30pm shift, which would finish with just enough time to allow her to travel to her normal permanent shift at 11.00pm.

Despite the fact that secondary tax greatly reduced her earnings from the additional hours, Lani rarely turned down the extra agency shifts, explaining;

Lani: It's just the extra money, because our rent is going up, and power bills, telephone, and petrol as well, the children's school things, everything is going up so, school is going up as well so, uniforms ... [if the extra shifts come up] if I feel I can go do it, I go do it because it's good money. (Family 15)

Lani reported her total income, extra shifts included, as between \$30,000–\$35,000.⁷ Her husband Tino worked six days a week as a bus driver on a fixed 3.00–11.00pm shift, for a total of 48 hours. Neither Lani nor Tino held any formal qualifications.

Lani's situation illustrates a trend evident in the census data, namely that those who worked the longest hours were often low income earners. In the census, the trend of income rising as hours rise did not continue for those who were working very long hours. As working hours rose to 60 or more per week, increases in working hours were associated with decreases in average income. As such, while 47 percent of workers working 50–54 hours each week had annual incomes over \$50,000, only 37 percent of workers working 75–79 hours each week and 31 percent of workers working 85 or more hours each week had incomes over this amount. More than half of those (54 percent) who reported working the longest hours (85 or more each week) had incomes of \$40,000 or less each year, and 65 percent had incomes of \$50,000 or less each year.

In line with this, the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions study of 30 families (2002) found that a key reason for working long hours was that employees needed the money. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, the Department of Trade and Industry (2007) found that of those working overtime, 25 percent said their extra hours were from 'personal choice' to make more money.

Doug (Family 13) was also working long hours for the money, and because of his lack of formal schooling he had little option but to remain in the same industry. Doug, described in the earlier discussion on the relationship between the requirements of the job and long working hours, indicated that he earned a salary of between \$50–70,000 before tax. Doug noted that some of his team, who were on hourly wages, would earn more than he did.

Doug: Once you take the salary and divide it by the amount of hours you're actually doing, you're really on below minimum wage. (Family 13)

Doug had tried to get other work in the past, even starting his own business at one point, but found that his lack of qualifications meant he wasn't really equipped to take on a role in any industry other than the one he was already in.

Doug: We tried, we tried to change jobs, it's just the money, the lack of qualifications. (Family 13)

Having the nicer things in life

A second group of families in the research had members who worked long hours in order to maintain the lifestyle or income they felt they needed. This group of families (including Hemi and Tessa, Sarah and Trevor, Kate and Ariki, Anna and Rewi, and Alan and Sue) were working long hours in order to afford 'extras'. In many cases, these extras were relatively small treats such as family trips to the movies. These families (with the exception of one) were far from wealthy, but at the same time, did not appear to struggle to pay basic living expenses. Rather, they spoke about needing to earn enough money to sustain a particular standard of living.

Sarah, a supermarket manager, noted

Sarah: For me it was the money ... and to be able to go ten pin bowling and go to the pictures and do things. And to do that, I did need to go up a few more hours each

⁷ Lani completed a questionnaire asking about income before tax; however, we assume that the income she gave as reported here was after tax as, based on minimum wage, she would have earned at least \$45,000 gross per annum.

week. And if you want SKY [TV], and you want to be insured ... if you want all that, I had to work the extra hours really. (Family 11).

Another couple, Hemi and Tessa, had jointly decided that Hemi would take any extra hours he could, in order to be able to pay for the bigger house they had bought to accommodate their growing family.

Tessa: Just lately, because we bought this house, since then it's been quite a struggle to keep up with mortgage repayments. So, he's been taking as many hours as he can, so, yeah, if the hours are there, he'll take them. (Family 6)

Alan and Sue were at the top end of the income spectrum. They worked a combined total of about 95 hours a week in order to be able to pay for private schooling and numerous after-school activities as well as their central city lifestyle. Alan worked in another city two days a week, and worked 12- or 13-hour days on the remaining three days. Sue said she worked part-time, but as a lawyer this meant that she still put in 35-hour weeks. While overwhelmed by having to juggle demanding work while maintaining the family, Sue realised that their hours were a product of their lifestyle choices.

Sue: But if we were starting from scratch, it would be quite nice to think of a different pattern perhaps. Partly because we have quite high income expectations, because we couldn't afford to have the kids do all these different things and go to private schools and so on, if we didn't have the income. But if we scrapped all that and started again, we could probably, in theory, live somewhere cheaper and have a lower expectation ... we could have the kids in a local school, and have more time... (Family 4).

Alan and Sue were in what Schor (1991; 1999) describes as the 'work-and-spend' cycle. Schor argues that long working hours are driven by employees who have come to consider a particular range of goods or a standard of living as 'normal' and then have to work longer hours to purchase or support these. Mainly affecting families in the top half of the income distribution, the 'cycle' sees individuals and families seeking higher incomes in order to purchase commodities. In most cases, the additional income translates to longer working hours which then have to be sustained over time to maintain expenditure patterns and to service the resulting debt (Schor, 1991).

Interestingly, Alan, who worked the long hours in their family, did not himself attribute his hours to income. It was his wife Sue who repeatedly made this causal link, while Alan talked more of his workload as driving his need to work the hours he did. As such, it is likely that both income and workload were factors driving Alan's hours.

4.1.3 The rewards of work

Like Ron, who attributed his long hours in part to his enjoyment of his work, a number of the workers interviewed spoke about the non-tangible rewards of their work being a reason for their working hours.

Wayne: I mean, I like working, you know... I have no intention of retiring.

Melanie: He'll be the person who at 65, will still be working a full week, and not telling people how old he is because he's still going to keep working.

Wayne: It would be nice if the days were a bit longer at times, 30-hour days, to fit everything in. (Family 2)

Similarly, Alan noted that he spent more time than strictly necessary at work.

Alan: There have been times where from a work point of view I could leave a bit earlier, but often there was something that I wanted to do, or something that was interesting, so I'd maybe do a little more of that. (Family 4)

The impact of the intrinsic rewards of work is documented in the literature, much of which finds empirical evidence to support the theory that professionals and managers may work long hours due to the sense of pride and satisfaction gained from achieving in the workplace. Employees in these positions are perhaps the best placed to negotiate flexible working and/or reduced hours positions should they want or need to, but it is clear from census data that this group is among those who work the longest hours. Like the occupational profile of long hours workers in the New Zealand Census 2006, Weston et al's (2004) Australian analysis found that, as the number of hours increased, the proportion in upper white-collar occupations increased (from 41 percent of those working 35 to 40 hours, to 60 percent of those working 60 or more hours). They argued that this indicated that those employees working long hours probably had jobs that offered substantially different conditions from those working shorter hours, including enhanced task variety and self-direction, factors that have been found to be very important in determining the impact of jobs on personal and family wellbeing.

Similarly, Brett and Stroh (2003) found that psychological rewards were a primary reason for long hours at work by male managers. They discovered a significant correlation between hours worked and job involvement and intrinsic satisfaction, even when financial rewards held constant. However, they noted that the 99 percent of male managers working the longest hours had wives who did not work. It is also worth noting that before having children, in many couples both partners work long hours.

4.1.4 The impact of culture

Workplace and industry culture

A number of families interviewed cited the culture of their workplace as a major reason for working long hours. This was particularly the case for managers working long hours and for workers in particular industries where long hours were the norm.

A significant body of literature identifies workplace culture as a major driver of long working hours. Key to this is the norm of the 'ideal worker' – an employee who is 'unencumbered' by responsibilities outside the workplace. Williams (2000) argues that a major characteristic of the workplace is:

...(the) organisation of market work around the ideal of a worker who works full time and overtime and takes little or no time off for childbearing or child rearing. Though this ideal-worker norm does not define all jobs today, it defines the good ones... high-level executive and professional jobs for the middle class and above (Williams, 2000 p.1).

Similarly, Drago et al (2005) note that:

A variety of researchers have argued that an ideal worker norm has spread among professionals such that relevant individuals expect themselves and others in similar positions to work long hours, with few breaks for holidays or vacations, for periods of years or even decades at a stretch... the structures of our corporations and major institutions reward the most ideal of ideal workers with promotions to positions of power; decision-makers are those who demonstrate ideal worker performance and expect it of others (Drago et al, 2005 p.6).

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (2007) noted that the right to request flexible working arrangements legislation in the United Kingdom has had little or no impact on long work hours, arguing that the prevalence of long hours cultures may be why men find it harder to both request flexible work hours and have their requests accepted. Similarly, Department of Trade and Industry research in the United Kingdom found that the influence of workplace culture on long work hours was considerable, with 15 percent of those working overtime citing “organisational demands” as the reason for their hours (Department of Trade and Industry, 2007).

A number of managers in the study identified the cultures of their workplaces as a significant influence on their own hours.

Why do you work those hours?

Alan: It's the culture ... I think that the workplace culture isn't too bad ... but there are a number of people who are really busy and they're typically people who are maybe at my level, the kind of general manager level, and they kind of feel responsible for doing the job, so there's also a culture of people being responsible and doing their job well, and that means hours. (Family 4)

Sue: I definitely work in a place where the culture is working long hours.

What contributes to that?

Sue: I have to work those hours to meet the expectations of the people around me, particularly the people that I would call my bosses, although they're really my colleagues, and also, the expectations, the way the accounts are done within the firm. (Family 4)

The culture of the workplace was not only a top-down phenomena shaped by the attitudes and actions of senior management, but was also a product of the attitudes of those at other occupational levels. This finding was evident in the Department of Labour (2006) work-life balance survey which found that 59 percent of employees reported that the attitudes of colleagues and workmates made it harder for them to achieve work-life balance.

Anna: [Using flexible hours is] not frowned upon [by the employer]. It's probably more frowned upon by the staff. It's quite strange. They think, you know, because you're the boss, you should be there 24/7, before them and after them, and you usually are, but they always remember the one incident, or the three or four incidents when you get in late, or you have a long lunch hour, or you bugger off early in the afternoon. No-one has ever said anything to me at management level, about leaving early... (Family 5)

Some of the workers we spoke with expressed strong views that long hours were an integral part of the industry they were in. This finding is supported by other research by the Families Commission on flexible work (Zodgekar & Fursman, 2008) and research by the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions (2002), which found that many employees worked extra hours because of “the nature of the job”. Many of the workers we spoke with were less than happy with their working hours, but felt they had no choice but to accept them as part of the industry they had chosen. As such, the issue of culture in individual workplaces overlaps with the culture and taken-for-granted working patterns of particular industries, as discussed above.

What would happen if you asked for shorter hours?

Reagan: That would be unreasonable in the job capacity I have that that would ever happen... That sort of arrangement is completely unrealistic in the industry I'm in. That's

just a fact of life with those positions – they can't have someone part-time, they need someone full-time... Two of my team are only four days a week and that is a pain in the neck actually. (Family 12)

Hemi: We've got a couple of young guys start with us who want to get into trucks and that, and they thought it was a job from eight until five. (roars with laughter). (Family 6)

Ron: That's the downside of farming I suppose. (Family 7)

Craig: When you're a truck driver, you get used to it. (Family 14)

New Zealand's long hours culture?

None of the respondents in the study mentioned New Zealand as a country of long working hours. However, given that New Zealand ranks amongst the countries with the highest proportion of people working long hours, it is worth noting that there is a body of literature that suggests that national culture plays a role in determining working hours.

Reynolds (2004) argued that working hours are shaped not only by individual workplace cultures, but also by broader social, political and economic environments. His research examined differences between actual and preferred working hours across a number of countries and found that there were national differences in preferences for work hours and opportunities to fulfil those preferences. Reynolds contended that while mismatches in preferences and hours were generated by diverse worker characteristics and environments (ie individual characteristics of workers and jobs), mismatches also existed because the supply of working hours and the rewards associated with them were heavily influenced by organisational, economic, governmental and cultural forces that constitute the larger institutional environment. For example, cultural norms may:

... encourage work as an end in itself, or as a means to acquiring other things, including consumer products; (they) may also affect working time indirectly through the emphasis on family or leisure activities (as a result, workers from different countries, for instance, vary in their willingness to work hard even if it interferes with the rest of life) (Reynolds, 2004 p.96).

Similarly, the OECD (1998:166) noted "Countries in which average hours of work per person are already low tend to be those in which the average preference for fewer hours is relatively strong, and that for higher earnings weak". If this is the case, van Wanrooy and Wilson (2006 p.365) argue: "the 'imposition' of long working hours will find least resistance in a working time regime where such hours are already commonplace, and in which there are few barriers to choosing longer hours". New Zealand may be the perfect example; that is, a country where the average hours of work and preferences for increased earnings are high.

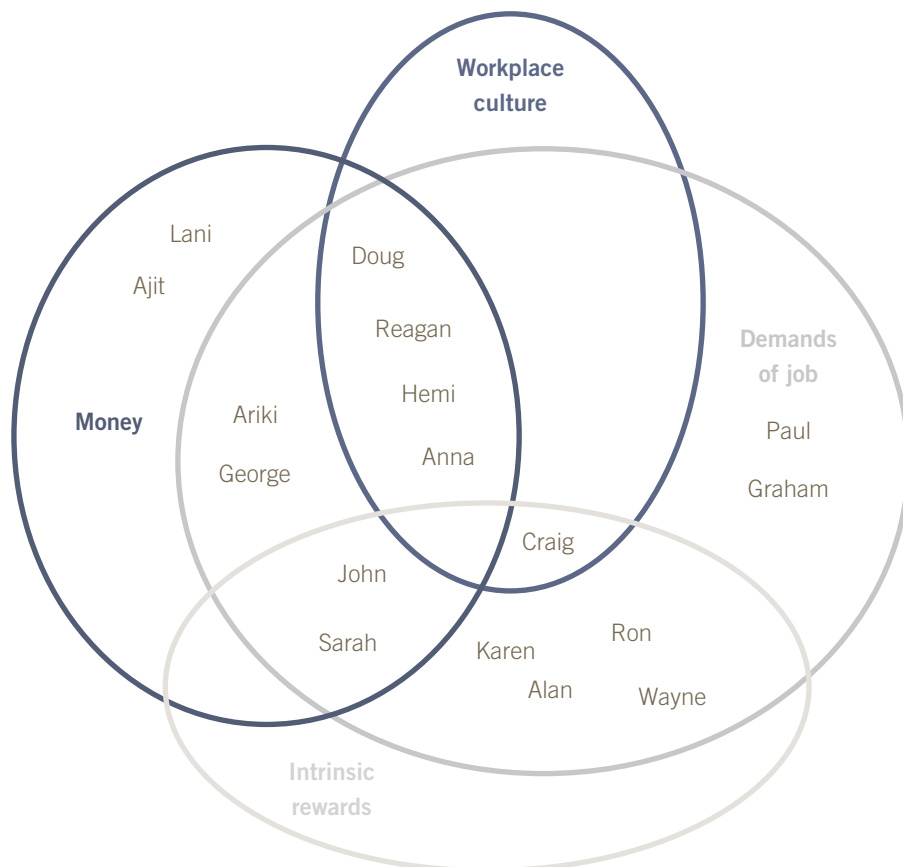
Wharton and Blair-Loy's (2002) study of cross-national working hours and preferences found that employees' views of work and work-family issues were strongly conditioned by the country in which they lived. Their study examined professionals doing very similar work within one division of one company, and found that the broader national culture around working hours significantly influenced employees' attitudes to long hours.

4.2 LONG HOURS: A SYMPTOM OF MANY DRIVERS

As the discussion above illustrates, most of the family members interviewed indicated that there was more than one reason behind the long hours worked. As such, few workers could be classed as working long hours as a result of just one of these drivers, with some families citing all four reasons for their working hours.

Figure 1 shows the four main reasons the families in this study worked long hours, with the long hours worker in each family sited according to the reasons they gave for their working hours. Interestingly, these were not necessarily the reasons given for their hours by their spouses. For example, Alan attributed his hours to both the demands of his position and the interest he had in his work, while his wife Sue referred to the need to maintain income at a level high enough to accommodate their lifestyle choices. While both these reasons may be accurate, this figure sites the long hours worker according to the reasons they personally gave.

FIGURE 1: REASONS GIVEN FOR LONG HOURS WORK



5. THE IMPACT OF WORKING LONG HOURS

Key findings:

- > Long hours workers and their families identified some positive impacts when asked about working long hours, including earning extra income and building up a business.
- > However, some of the positive benefits of working long hours, such as staying off a benefit and instilling a good work ethic in children, were factors that resulted from being in paid work generally, rather than from working long hours in particular.
- > Negative impacts for many long hours workers included fatigue and sleep deprivation, stress, negative impacts on health and fitness, and having less energy for parenting.
- > A key impact of long hours work on the family was the reduction in time available to spend with children. Parents cited examples of their children's negative reactions to insufficient time with parents, but many parents were unable to change their working patterns. However, in some families, it was not clear whether the parent working long hours would have spent more time with their children even if their hours were less.
- > Other impacts for some families included not having family holidays together (especially for those whose long hours were seasonal), children being less able to take part in other activities, an inability to spend special occasions together, a faster pace of life, and much of the family 'quality time' being spent in the car.
- > There were significant impacts on the spouse of the long hours worker, including being overloaded with all of the parenting and domestic duties, often while simultaneously working full-time, while those spouses outside the paid workforce felt unable to take on paid work or training. There were gender differences in the division of labour in the families we interviewed, with women taking on much of the domestic work and childcare, even when they were also working.
- > Some couples appeared to be under stress as a result of long hours of work; however, this was extremely variable, and appeared to be related to both partners' satisfaction with working hours. However, few couples spent any couples-only time together on a regular basis.

The relationship between working hours and family life is complex. In some cases, earnings from longer working hours relieve stress and strain in family life that flows from financial difficulties. Research about children's views suggests that they value the things that their parents' earnings can buy. But they also want time with their parents, particularly time where their parents are focused upon them. The weight of international evidence suggests that long working hours create negative consequences for families. This effect is especially pronounced where jobs are demanding and pressure and extended hours exist in combination – as the literature suggests they frequently do (Pocock, 2001 p.3).

This section explores the impact that working long hours had on both the individual worker and their family. There is a significant body of evidence suggesting that work has a number of positive impacts on families, but considerably less research suggesting

that long work hours are good for either families or the individuals who work the hours. The couples who took part in this study spoke mainly about the negative impacts of long working hours, such as tiredness and fatigue, missing out on family time and time with children, feeling constantly rushed, not spending enough time with their partner, and negative impacts for their personal health. This section discusses each of these in turn.

5.1 POSITIVE IMPACTS

Pocock (2001) noted that long work hours may reflect shared goals (such as getting ahead in the organisation, earning overtime wages, or working a second job to bring in extra income) and thus both the long hours worker and their partner may view the hours worked positively. During the interviews, we asked the long hours workers who took part in the qualitative study about the positive impacts of their hours of work. There were a number of common themes evident, with these including increased income for those earning wages, satisfaction from work, and instilling a good work ethic in children. However, some of the positive impacts discussed were in fact positive aspects of engaging in full-time paid work, rather than a direct impact of long or extended work hours.

These positive impacts were more common for the self employed and those in management roles. For example, Wayne spoke optimistically about his work as giving him a sense of creating something out of nothing, with the end result being a sellable business. He was also positive about the degree of control over his time that owning his own business allowed him. However, none of these aspects were a result of his working long hours each week. Rather they were a product of the fact that he had started, and was working in, his own business.

Can you tell me about some of the positive impacts of working those hours?

Wayne: I guess it's control, of your day ... it's having the ability to control that ... one of the other big things that I get out of it is creating value. What we do has, or will have, a value. It started out as a clean sheet of paper, and in 10 years time, it will be something somebody will want to buy. And I like knowing that your day, to some extent, can be measured in the creation of value. You're leaving the place better than you found it, kind of thing. That's what turns your wheels really, that's what keeps you going. But sometimes it takes longer than it should, and you make a lot of sacrifices. So you have to have a holistic view of what you're doing. (Family 2)

Ron and Marian also saw a number of positive impacts for their family, particularly with regard to work ethic and the trade-offs of working and earning. However, again these weren't specifically about long hours of work per se, but more about Ron being a role model in teaching the children that you have to work hard in order to succeed.

Have your hours had any impact on the kids?

Ron: Definitely it's impacted on them, but I think it's in positive ways and in some negative ways as well. They see that we work hard, and the results of what you work hard for.

Marian: He's a role model. In order to get anywhere in life, you have to work, and they learn that ... they also realise that when everything's really intense, like in those contracting and calving times, they see that it's busy now but the payoff is later on, when it eases off, they get to do good things ... like maybe he's not here now, or he's in a tractor now, but next week, on Saturday, we might go here, or Friday afternoon, he might

be out there kicking a ball around when everyone else's Dad is at work ... so they can see the trade-off. (Family 7)

5.2 ADVERSE IMPACTS ON THE LONG HOURS WORKER

A number of studies have found an association between poor physical health and long working hours, with Grosch, Caruso, Rosa & Sauter (2006) noting this was particularly the case for employees working extremely long hours (70 or more a week). Similarly, Caruso's (2006) meta-review of long hours studies found that working long hours were associated with increased stress, poor mood, poor recovery from work, less sleep, increased fatigue, decrements in neuro-cognitive functioning and physiological functioning, increased odds for unhealthy weight gain, higher alcohol use, smoking, a significant decrease in physical exercise and poorer perceived general health. Long hours can have a significant negative influence on the health and wellbeing of individuals who work them (White & Beswick, 2003). The New Zealand Council of Trade Unions (2002) study of the impact of long hours showed that many employees lacked time for anything but work, with this having major implications for the individual's general health and wellbeing. Employees described the pressure of long and difficult work hours and related a number of health and other events that resulted, including depression and anxiety.

Similarly, families in this study also spoke about work dominating their lives.

Abbey: Doug basically works, eats, sleeps and that's kind of his life. (Family 13)

Marian: I feed him, clothe him, push him out the door.

Ron: I don't come in the door! So yeah, I sit in a tractor a lot, a real lot. (Family 7)

Hemi: Most of the time I'm just like a boarder, aren't I. I come in, have dinner, go to bed, wake up, gone again. (Family 6)

Karen: Just me time? There's not a lot, but who gets that? I mean, really? (Family 3)



5.2.1 Sleep deprivation

Caruso's (2006) meta-review of research on the impacts of long working hours found that there was a significant body of evidence linking long working hours with less sleep and increased fatigue. One of the key patterns evident in the families we spoke with was the degree to which work impacted on the amount of time they had to rest and sleep. Ron and Lani were the workers most affected. Both averaged three to four hours a night, with this the case for Ron for the busy six months of the year. For Lani, however, these hours were standard, with the exception of Sundays, when she 'caught up' with a block of sleep of about five hours. Ron used rainy days to catch up.

Lani: Maybe you get used to working, not used to sleeping, you know? Once I have a day off, and get busy with cooking, and once I sit down, that's the time I sleep. Only about five hours. ... during the week, I got to bed for two hours, you get used to working nights... I'm really tired by the weekend, by Sunday, because I know that's the only day I have to relax, sit down, but sometimes I'm too busy with the children. Yeah, it's really hard to get time for sleeping... Because it's night shift, it's really hard for me to sleep during the day. (Family 15)

Ron: It will be from five in the morning until 12 at night, one o'clock in the morning.

Marian: Easily.

Ron: So, stuff like that.

So not much sleep?

Ron: No. I had seven hours sleep in five days there a few months ago, so it's just, yeah... Coffee and V⁸ are the two priorities at that time. It's a very intense time.

Marian: And as soon as it rains, he'll sleep the entire day, because he needs it and because he's got to catch up.

Ron: It's only sleep. You just keep on going. (Family 7)

Workers with less extreme hours also spoke about feeling tired.

Are you pretty tired most of the time, then?

Hemi: I am, ay?

Tessa: Uh huh. And Jenny has noticed that you've aged a lot recently.

Hemi: I probably have... I usually get five or six [hours of sleep].

Tessa: You can go to sleep anywhere and anytime. (Family 6)

Ariki: I come home real tired... She normally does [Sasha's] bath because I'm pretty tired. (Family 9)

The lack of sleep experienced by many of the workers we spoke with meant their fatigue put them, and others, at significant risk, especially as many of the workers were employed in relatively dangerous environments, with Ron, Hemi and Craig driving very large vehicles.

Ron: It's just the concentration, keeping those eyes open. Lots of coffee and V.⁹ (Family 7)

⁸ V Guarana Energy Drink

⁹ V Guarana Energy Drink.

Lack of sleep combined with driving is a risk not only for the long hours' worker but for other road users. There are regulations to prevent this risk for road transport workers but not for those who are driving after shift work or long hours at work. Many of these workers are travelling at times or in areas where there are no affordable alternatives.

Dembe, Erickson, Delbos & Banks (2005) showed that working more than 12 hours a day was associated with a 61 percent higher injury hazard rate compared with jobs without overtime, and working 60 or more hours a week was associated with a 23 percent increased hazard rate, even after adjusting for occupation and industry. In addition, they found a clear association between the number of hours worked each day (over eight) and an increased risk of workplace injury, with this increased risk also associated with long weekly working hours (over 40 per week). They concluded that working in jobs with schedules that routinely involved overtime or extended hours increased the risk of suffering an occupational injury or illness, even after taking account of the entire amount of working time spent 'at risk' for injury¹⁰, and that their results were consistent with the hypothesis that long working hours indirectly precipitated workplace accidents by inducing fatigue or stress in workers. In addition, their analysis also indicated that increased injury risks were not the result of longer work hours being concentrated in riskier occupations or industries.

5.2.2 Stress

For the parents interviewed, working long hours was associated with high stress levels. *The Work, Family and Parenting Study* (Ministry of Social Development, 2006b) reported that higher hours were correlated with higher unwanted stress, with 40 percent of those who worked 50 or more hours per week experiencing a large amount of unwanted stress.

Many of the respondents in the qualitative research spoke about stress as an integral part of their work. However, for some, such as Ron and Marian (Family 7), the stress could be severe and ongoing.

Marian: [We need] to get someone who can take the pressure off. Because I don't think you can work under that kind of pressure forever. Because it's not good ... it's like a car gearbox, you know, you want to be in second gear, at this point I think he's in third gear, on the timescale thing, and he's just about ready to change into fourth gear, and when he does that, and brings someone else in, it will take the pressure off. Otherwise the gearbox is screaming. (Family 7)

Paul (Family 10) had had two heart attacks, which he firmly believed were brought on by stress associated with his work. These had resulted in a reprioritisation of work and now he and his partner Andrew were looking at ways to move from the city to less pressured jobs and a more relaxing lifestyle. Anna (Family 5) had similarly recognised that the stress she was under was affecting her health and had made changes to her job as a result.

Anna: I was going through burn-out, I think. I was getting sick, just wasn't able to concentrate, just was, was feeling the pressure basically. Had to take a step back and think, no, this is not good for me ... it was my own sanity, really... I had ulcers in my mouth, and down my throat. (Family 5)

¹⁰ For example, workers who work longer hours can be expected to experience more injuries than those who work shorter hours, even if the underlying risks to both groups are the same, because the former group spends more time 'at risk' for injury. This study took account of the time spent at work and found that risk of injury was still greater for those working long hours.

5.2.3 General health and fitness

Workers who had little time to sleep reported that finding time for exercise was almost impossible. Even taking care of more specific health issues was a struggle, with a number of workers operating under circumstances that were far from ideal for their health. A number of the respondents spoke about chronic health problems such as high blood pressure, but few had enough time to make the changes needed to lead a more healthy lifestyle.

Craig: Yeah, I wouldn't mind cutting down the hours, but the way I look at it, the older you get, the harder it gets.

Barbara: And he's got high blood pressure now.

Craig: And yeah, health reasons now. (Family 14)

Wayne: [Exercise] is one thing where I do miss out ... but my excuse that I'd just have to make up the time, if I did an hour a day ... it just means that that hour of work has to be picked on Thursday night, or on Saturday night, and I do enough of that anyway. (Family 2)

John: Then I had heart surgery, a valve replacement, so I had to work right through that, had a week off in hospital and then pretty much back into it... (Family 8)



5.3 IMPACT ON PARENTING

Lack of sleep and time for anything other than work meant that many workers had less energy when they did get to spend time with their families.

Alan: But what I think [my hours do] though is shrink the amount of time each day apart from the weekends. And I'm probably more tired when I come home in the evening when I come back from [the other city] on a Tuesday or Sunday, I'm sort of scrambling to get ready to go, so I'd probably be, I'm certainly more relaxed on holiday. (Family 4)

Not surprisingly, this meant they were not able to interact with other members of their families in an optimal way, especially their children.

Kate: [He comes home] Tired, grumpy.

Ariki: When you get tired, you don't want people, kids, bugging you all the time ... [I'm] physically tired. You're lifting about 10 tonnes a day, molds ... every day, six days. I get really tired, so come home, sore body, I get real stiff sometimes. (Family 9)

Barbara: Craig gets edgy or something, and says "Go to your room," and I'll say something to him later, say "Craig, you know, he only wanted to spend five minutes with you, if you had just spent that five minutes, and not brushed him off, things would have been fine." ...And the phone rings when he is trying to get Jasmin to bed, then he's lost that window. But he doesn't understand that window... I'd be saying to him, "Just don't answer the phone, don't answer the phone, let the phone ring, it's only five minutes," but that five minutes now, because you answered the phone, has turned into 45 minutes. But it's taken a long time for you to figure that out. And sometimes you still don't. Like, when we lived in [the other house] when Phillip was a baby, and Craig would come home, and pull up in the drive, and Phillip, two years old, he'd be looking out the window, "Dad's home, Dad's home" and then Craig would pull up in the drive and go straight into the garage to work... And I'd say "You just don't get it, you just don't get it." You've got to give them the five minutes, because all they want is you to sit on the floor with them for five minutes, and they're happy. And that's all it takes, and you've got all night working out in the garage if you want. (Family 14)

Craig: It would be nicer, you know, if I had more time with the kids... (Family 14)

Barbara, Craig's wife, was very conscious of the way Craig's work had impacted on his ability to be a good parent; however, it was unclear whether this was a result of Craig's long hours per se, or his tendency to put work ahead of the children's needs to spend time with him. Crouter, Bumpus, Head, & McHale (2001) pointed out that issues of causality needed to be considered, and that it was impossible for many studies to determine whether long hours jeopardised family relationships in certain ways, or whether men whose family relationships were less positive were more inclined to work long hours. Similarly, Weston et al (2004 p.24) noted that "Some of those [fathers] who were working standard rather than extended hours may spend little of their non-work time with their families," making it difficult to examine the link between long hours and their impact on wellbeing and relational issues such as parenting. Craig was an example of this, in that he appeared to be somewhat removed from his children's daily lives, but it was unclear how much this was due to the demands of his business.

5.4 TIME SPENT WITH CHILDREN

Quantitative evidence examining the impact of long hours of work on time spent with children shows mixed findings, and tends to be focused on men, as men are significantly more likely than women to work extended hours. Baxter (2007) used data from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children to analyse the time fathers spent with their children. She found that fathers' involvement decreased when working long hours (55 or more hours a week), but that the reduction in time spent together was only small. Baxter highlighted the variability in the amount of time men spent fathering, noting even among those working standard hours, there were some fathers who were less involved in children's activities. Similarly, amongst those working long hours, there were fathers who were heavily involved with their children's activities. Baxter concluded that very little of the variation in time spent with children was explained by fathers' work hours with considerably more explained by other factors, suggesting that there might be other characteristics of fathers or families that were more closely associated with differing degrees of father involvement.

This point was highlighted in Lani's family. While Tino, Lani's husband, was home in the mornings when the children woke up, it was Lani who got them up, made breakfast and packed their lunches, and got them off to school, despite the fact that it was likely that she would have just finished a double shift. As such, it was not working hours which dictated time spent with children: while Tino worked an eight-hour shift and presumably had significantly more time available than Lani who often worked a double shift, it was still Lani who spent more time with the children. It is likely that gender ideologies played a significant part in this family, an area which is explored further below.



5.4.1 Parents working long hours have little time to spend with children...

Despite Baxter's (2007) claims that long working hours did not necessarily have a significant impact on the time parents spent with children, it was clear that for many of the families taking part in the study, one of the most significant impacts of working long hours was that the long hours worker spent very little time with his or her children, and, in most cases, felt the absence of this time keenly.

Have your hours had an impact on the family?

Karen: Yeah, they have, because I haven't had that amount of time just to chill out with the kids ... just haven't been as available to them, which is really hard, because you don't get the time back... (Family 3)

Ron: Some days I don't even see them at all. I'm gone early in the morning and back late at night, so some days I don't even see them, you know? And sometimes I only see them for an hour a day. (Family 7)

Ariki: Sometimes I just miss that little monkey to be honest. At work, I've got all the photos lined up. (Family 9)

Polly: He'd be gone at six in the morning, didn't see him until seven at night. I used to keep the kids up until 7.30pm so he could see them for half an hour. Then they were off into bed. That was the norm during the week, gone at six and back at seven. (Family 2B)

Reagan: If I don't see them at dinner, I don't see them... (Family 12)

Barbara: The kids don't really see him... During the summer, it's usually, it might go probably four or five days and the kids don't see him at all, except Phillip. Phillip (the oldest) will be the only one to see him, but the other two don't see him at all. (Family 14)

Lani: Hanging out with the kids, yeah, homework, that's the most thing I miss out on, doing their home work and doing their reading at bedtime. And I know it's my responsibility and I have to do that, but I miss that. (Family 15)

Ajit: I'm missing out on spending time with the kids ... like going to their school and study wise, what the teachers told them, and playing with them and stuff ... as they're getting older, they're more demanding, like they want us to play with them and talk with them. (Family 16)

Having little time to spend with their children meant that some of the long hours workers knew little about their children's lives.

Polly: [Since he's been at home more] he's been a bit more involved with Ella at school, meeting and having more to do with the teachers, things like that. And also daycare, because he wouldn't have known who her teacher was, would have walked past her, and the same with her daycare, he wouldn't have even known where it was. (Family 2B)

In Lani's case, she worried that this meant she wouldn't get to know her children, nor they her.

Lani: The only thing I think about is the time I spend at work affects my family life. Like, spending more time working and not enough time here with family, to get to know them... I am afraid that I am not going to know my children, that they are not going to listen to me, or sometimes, they will ... they might be "I'm not very close to my Mum or Dad". (Family 15)

This was exacerbated when separated or divorced parents were sharing the custody of children. When he and his wife separated, John had to limit his custodial time with his children so he could continue to be available for work.

John: Tania has the kids the rest of the time, sort of mainly because of the business really. A lot of the time I have to take stuff to the markets at four in the morning, and so it's not practical (to have the kids).

So you worked out the custody mainly around the business?

John: Yeah. We worked it as practically as we could... (Family 8)

Hemi had custody of his two older boys from a previous relationship on alternate weekends, but because of his work, was often away from home at the times when his boys were there.

Tessa: Some months they can go without, go for long periods without really having much quality time with you.

Hemi: Mainly if its, if its my weekend with the boys, then I think, "Oh god," because they're always upset when they come and I'm not here, they give me grief when I'm not here ... yeah, or if I was supposed to take Tom to his swimming on Saturday mornings. (Family 6)

5.4.2 ...and their children's behaviour shows how they feel about this...

As Hemi's statement shows, the lack of time he had to spend with his children was also felt keenly by his children. A number of families spoke about how their children expressed their sadness and anger that one or both of their parents weren't around more.

Paul: Josh has, for a long time, he was a very unhappy little boy ... and I think a lot of it stemmed from him actually not getting enough attention... I was quite concerned about him, because I wasn't having much chance to spend time with him. I was picking him up at half past five, we'd get home and I've got dinner to cook, and the rest, you know, and by the time ... you've cooked the dinner, you've supervised the homework, you've got them showered, and got them into bed, you are so exhausted that you just sit and you don't actually talk to your children. And that really worried me ... and it was the hours, because there wasn't that time to get past the news and the stuff. So yes, I do think the hours have a very serious impact. (Family 10)

Lani: I know [the children] they miss their relationship with us, because most of the time we spend at work. It's really hard. (Family 15)

Hemi: Well, Tom probably doesn't see me as much as he would want to, and...

Tessa: He really missed you last week, when you were away for over a week, he really missed you but it's probably not him who is suffering as much as the other boys... They're older and they just don't see him as much, and his hours are impinging on his time in the alternate weekends, and it's probably just been happening this year because of the financial squeeze ... but they do understand what is going on. They're pretty experienced with the ways of the world already I guess.

And Tom?

Hemi: Some nights he can get really naughty, can't he?

Tessa: Yeah, definitely, and even before, when you come back, he thinks he can get away with a lot, because, he deserves to because you've been away, so it's quite hard keeping control of him... (Family 6)

Tessa: So he kept asking for Hemi and "when is Daddy coming home?" and I tried to explain how far away he was and he would be home tomorrow, and "No! Now! Now! I want him home now!" so it is pretty hard trying to explain how long it is going to take you to get up from Christchurch... (Family 6)

Doug's son also expressed how he felt about the absence of his father.

Abbey: Owen gets frustrated. He gets quite cross that Daddy's always at work, and he'll cry sometimes. He can get angry, "why is Daddy always at work?", and it's quite hard sort of explaining well he just has to be there, and explaining about the money. But he shouldn't be having to worry about money and costs and food and what-not, so that's probably the hardest thing, just keeping him happy. (Family 13).

Reagan's daughters also missed spending time with him, and became more demanding when he was around, refusing to let Leslie care for them. This was evident even in our interview with them, with their five-year old daughter constantly seeking his attention.

Leslie: A lot of the time when Reagan is home, the girls don't really want to have anything to do with me, it's all "Daddy Daddy Daddy!" so he does do a lot for the girls in the weekends. It gets to the stage where I can't even get them out of the car sometimes... I can't even get them dressed because it's "Daddy Daddy" which is quite nice ... for him... (Family 12)

Ron's children, who were older, could also go for days without seeing him.

Ron: It's not much of a life for them, but, they like it, but they don't see me that often.

Marian: It's probably the fact that they don't see him as much as they probably should overall. (Family 7)

Lani's children felt they spent more time with their grandmother than they did with her or their father Tino.

Lani: Oh, they always complain about working. They say "Oh you guys, why do you have to work? Are you working tonight?" And they try to find out if I am working or he's working. They ask about the hours that we're working and "What time you're home and what time are you going?" and yeah. I say "I need to get to work" but they say "Oh that's sad, because we always go with Nana, we always watch TV. Why do you guys have to work?" But we say "Oh we need the money." So we need the hours to pay. And they're always complaining about seeing us and us not around all the time. So that's why we try to do what we can on our day off with them on the Sunday. That's a good day for them to see us around here all day, and night time they go to bed, but when they look forward to the Monday, they say "Oh, here we go, another week." And start complaining again. (Family 15)

Some children dealt with their feelings about the lack of time with their parent(s) by disengaging. Karen had been a single parent for some time before remarrying and had continued to travel extensively for her work. Karen's sons were so used to her not being there they had become very self-sufficient.

Karen: They are two incredibly independent young men ... they get up in the morning, they set their own alarms, they get their breakfast, they put the dishes in the dishwasher ... they do that, they make their lunches, they jump on their bikes and go to school ... then they'll ride home, and if one of us is home then that's great, we'll make dinner together ... but quite often they'll be here on their own ... and they'll cook their own dinner and clean up their mess and do their homework ... and yeah, put themselves to bed.

And how often would it be that no-one's home?

Karen: It happens quite a lot. (Family 3)

Similarly, Anna's daughter had stopped asking whether she was going to be around.

Anna: I think my daughter resented it for a long time, ay? She was always going "Where are you going now?" " ... But I don't know, I mean, the kids don't say anything now. I mean, I've been doing it for years. (Family 5)

In Craig's case, his children had got used to not having him around and didn't notice if he wasn't there.

Barbara: But the sad part is, he will go away and the kids don't even notice. Don't even notice, because they don't see him anyway, so they don't notice that he's actually gone away for a couple of days. They don't ask. I'm like, "Craig, the kids didn't even ask when you were away." (Family 14)



5.4.3 ...but parents need to earn

The need to earn income took priority over the desire to spend time with children, especially for families such as Lani's which needed the money she earned in her extra shifts.

Lani: A lot of time they are complaining about work and so maybe they want us not to work all those hours, be around with them ... but if we don't work we can't live. (Family 15)

Due to societal norms, many men believe that being a good breadwinner is the most positive contribution they can make to their family. Bianchi, Robinson, and Milkie (2006 p.13) argue that parents, particularly men:

...see their paid work as a powerful way to become more involved with their children. Paid work hours 'count' as good parenting for them. This pushes men to work more, not fewer, hours outside the home when they first become fathers ... to the extent that providing is the essence of good parenting for men, and to the extent this has not changed as the 'ideal' for them, it is very difficult to cut back on one's role as a provider and still be a 'good father'.

George expressed a similar sentiment.

How has it been, being able to go to school and do those things?

George: Oh, yeah, it's something that's a change for me to be able to do, which is probably good for the kids seeing me do that, but it's not an income producer, so I've got to be out there producing the income, otherwise we all go down the gurgler. (Family 2B)

John said that he was working for his family, but in reality, his long work hours had contributed to the break-up of his marriage and the subsequent family dissolution.

John: I was doing 80 to 100 hours, probably more hours than I am now... I wasn't actually home a lot, I was working seven days trying to make this place work, thinking I was doing it for the right reasons, I sort of felt like I was still in touch with my kids, but you'd had to say it was a factor in the breakup ... it must have an impact, but I was oblivious to it, because I just thought, as you do, I'm working for the family, working for our future." (Family 8)

5.5 OTHER IMPACTS ON CHILDREN

In addition to a parent spending little time with their children, the long hours that parent worked had other impacts on the children's lives.

5.5.1 Impacts on children's other activities

A common theme was that children did not get to spend school holidays with their parents, either at home or away from home. This was especially the case for children whose parents worked seasonally, or who were self-employed.

Wayne: We don't really take holidays. We talk about wanting to take holidays. It just doesn't really happen, does it. Not yet. We keep saying we're going to take four weeks off because we haven't had a break for so long, but for one reason or another, it doesn't seem to happen. (Family 2)

John: The kids have got used to having no real holidays. We did in the past when they were younger, and the business was, we had a few more core staff, and the business was a bit bigger, so I was able to go on holiday for about a week usually ... but it was always a winter holiday, never a summer holiday. Summer they realise that their life basically sort of gets manipulated around the business basically. They don't seem to really mind too much. They'd all like a holiday, like a camping holiday, so, yeah... Just holidays, I think, would have been nice. They all miss the fact that they would have liked to have some holidays ... it wasn't quite as full on, but summers were... (Family 8)

The more routine daily activities were also sacrificed, even when parents would have liked to do more with their children.

Ariki: That is the thing I am working on, because I'm pretty slack on that bit. I just want to do every Sunday, take her to the park, go for walks, to the playground, ducks, because last time, the last time was that I took her out, we went to the park, then to McDonalds. But I really enjoy doing that.

How long ago was that?

Ariki: Four or five weeks ago. I really enjoy doing that. So it was good.

Kate: It comes down to if he works a Saturday.

Ariki: Because if I'm tired, I can't, you know? But I just want to do it more often. It's the most important thing, spending time with your family. (Family 9)

Maya: At the moment, we don't get time to take them to parks and stuff. (Family 16)

Ariki: Not much time for anything except work during the week... (Family 9)

Karen's long working hours meant that her sons had not been able to play school sports, as she could never commit to being at home in the weekends to drive them to games.

Karen: I think they miss out, because playing sports is just really, really hard [for us to manage]. Neither of them has really tried to, but I haven't really encouraged it either. They did as little kids when we had nannies, but for them to get into a sports team would be just a nightmare, an absolute nightmare. We'd be calling on favours from people all the time. (Family 3)

5.5.2 Quality time – in the car...

The time that parents who worked long hours did get to spend with their children was often time in the car, either early in the morning or in the evening driving to and from work and school or crèche, or ferrying children to weekend activities. A number of parents in the study spoke of this as their key 'quality time' with their children.

Sarah: ...we have good quality time in the car as well. We sing and carry on you know, and it's quite good quality time that you're travelling. You don't sort of realise it, but you're talking, "how was your day at kindy?" you know? It's quite good. (Family 11)

Alan: A lot of time in the car. I actually think it's really good time because I get a chance to talk to her and find out what she's up to and I also feel really good about supporting her and what she's doing, her interests. (Family 4)

Paul: One thing I've found ... we now actually have the time in the car every morning and afternoon, is making a huge difference to how we're relating to each other, because, for 50 minutes a day, we actually have uninterrupted time together, and actually, we

were discussing that on the way home, he was saying “It’s just so cool” and he likes it, because we can just talk about anything, talk about school, and I know more about some of the computer games that I ever wanted to, believe me, but that, I think, that’s great, I’ve sort of been able to reconnect with my son. (Family 10)

Paul: It has made the difference ... every time I see him, his head’s up and he’s smiling ... and he’s just happy. But I do honestly believe the attention is, is necessary.

Andrew: I reckon that a lot of the change in him is that 50 minutes a day in the car when you’re talking. (Family 10)

5.6 GENERAL IMPACTS ON THE FAMILY

5.6.1 Lack of time as a family for special occasions

The Department of Labour work-life balance survey found that those who worked the longest hours were less likely to be able to participate in other activities such as spending time with family. Of those employees who worked 50–59 hours each week, 38 percent said work ‘often’ had an impact on getting home on time and 20 percent said work ‘often’ had an impact on spending time with family. These impacts were worse for those employees working more than 60 hours a week (five percent), with 57 percent reporting work ‘often’ had an impact on getting home on time, and 39 percent indicating work ‘often’ had an impact on spending time with family (Department of Labour, 2006).

A number of respondents we interviewed spoke about their lack of time together as a family. Often this was felt most keenly when there were expectations about having time to celebrate or attend special events together.

Karen: We don’t do a hell of a lot as a family. We used to do more ... school holidays, we always make a big effort to do, there are certain things we do every holidays ... always sort of dinners together, that’s probably our big time together – every evening in the holidays. I haven’t had a Christmas with my kids for I don’t know how long. (Family 3)

Abbey: He’s missed out on morning teas, afternoon teas, dinners...

Doug: My dad came up one time and I had to work so I missed out on that...

Abbey: And he only comes up once a year.

Doug: I suppose we don’t sort of plan a lot...

Abbey: There’s no real point to plan, I mean, I only plan if I intend to go alone, because chances are, yeah. There’s been birthday parties and stuff that you’ve missed... (Family 13)

5.6.2 Feeling rushed

Respondents also spoke about how the time they did have together felt rushed. This was true for both the long hours worker and their spouse, who was often juggling all the domestic load with their own (more standard) working hours.

Marian: I think, and this is from my point of view, you do tend to do things faster, a lot faster. You trade off, um, shopping is a good one. I go grocery shopping and I’ve got it down to half an hour, and that’s in the supermarket door, and out. I mean, we make a game of it, if the kids come with me, we make a game of it ... and we’re pretty much speed shopping, because you do everything faster, and you don’t go shopping for the

fun of it. Toby will look at his watch and he says, “look mum, we did it in 17 minutes this time.”

Ron: So, yeah, there are trade-offs.

So, a lot of your life is at that fast pace?

Ron: Yeah, you've just got to get to that next job. Just got to get to that next job.

Marian: Intense ... a lot of it is at a million miles an hour, you do it a lot faster, you don't have that mucking around.

Ron: Haven't got time to muck around.

Do the kids sense the pace?

Marian: When Alice feels that she's being rushed ... she tends to stress and do that. She reduces back until she's got one task and she'll do that and do that thoroughly. (Family 7)

Lani: If I go out – I can't really go out – every time I go out it's “Oh, only half an hour to go” so I have to rush, so there's no time to do it. If I do it, I want to take more hours to relax and walk around in the mall, so it's really hard to get that, I have to rush everywhere. A lot, rushing a lot, and it's lucky there's no police on the road ... sometimes the police stop me, ‘you're speeding’ ... because I have to rush ... yeah, it's a really busy life. (Family 15)

The sense of constantly rushing sometimes flowed through into a sense that the years were also rushing by, with little time to savour family life.

Alan: Our weeks kind of tumble past and ... these are the family years and they just, they're spinning fast... (Family 4)

Wayne: The logical setup would be the guy works 60 or 70 hours a week, and Mum keeps things going, and then, all of a sudden the kids are at university! And you look back and you go, “Shit, what happened?” (Family 2)

Ron: Yeah, it was, it was quite hard, when the kids were little, they grow up so quick. (Family 7)

5.7 IMPACTS ON THE SPOUSE OR PARTNER OF THE LONG HOURS WORKER

It was clear from all the interviews that the long hours one partner worked had significant implications for the other partner in the family. Some of these impacts included the spouse having to carry all the domestic load, often as well as working a full-time job themselves, with resulting fatigue, stress and feelings of constantly juggling everything. The spouse often had little or no time to take care of themselves, and some were unable to enter paid work or training because their partner's hours meant that they had to be home. Many partners of long hours workers said they were lonely because of the lack of time spent with their partners.

Abbey: I get frustrated, and, and tired, because, little kids, they are hard work, and to have them from the moment they wake up until the moment they go to bed with no other adult around, it is long, and quite a lonely day. It is different now Owen is at school because I get to chat with the other mums, but a lot of the other mums do work, and

they work during the day so we can't get together ... so it can be a bit conflicting, and I'd like to go back to university and be a teacher, but it would be a bit of a struggle... Because he does such extreme hours and there's no consistency, I can't really go and get a job, because I need to be here. The kids need one consistent figure... (Family 13)

Tessa: It does get annoying at times, it does get annoying because the burden of everything, I mean, I can squeeze my [work] hours in to a shorter day, but then the burden of everything else is on me, and the sick days and dropping off and picking up from pre-school and going to the doctors and taking them to swimming on Saturday mornings and doing all the shopping, so Saturdays are just as stressful as a work day really, because it's full on. (Family 6)

Barbara: Well, I'd like to go, go back in and work part-time or something, but I mean, in order for that to happen too, the hours have to be cut. His hours have to be cut. I mean, I can't go back into work if he's still going to work 12 hour days. (Family 14)

Polly: I don't normally have a lot of time out ... it's a struggle to go to the hairdressers normally... I don't normally have that much time out. (Family 2B)

Barbara: It's got to the point now where I've just set systems up myself, because I've had to. (Family 14)

Sue: I'm not writing and I'm not having any down-time ... like going to see a movie or reading a novel.

Alan: You very seldom sit down and...

Sue: I very seldom sit down full-stop! (Family 4)



5.7.1 Impacts on couples' relationships

A number of studies have focused on the impact of long work hours on partners' relationships and marital quality. Because men are significantly more likely to work long hours than women, most of these studies have focused on families where the male works long hours.

Many of the reviews and studies have found somewhat contradictory results as to whether long work hours have a negative impact on couple relationships. Pocock (2001), in her review of the impact of long work hours on family and community life, found significant negative effects of long hours on marital relationships. Coverman (1989) found that working longer hours was positively linked to marital satisfaction for husbands and wives, but for men, 'role conflict' had a negative impact on marital satisfaction. Hughes, Galinsky & Morris (1992) found no direct association between extended work demands and marital tension or companionship, with similar findings in Pittman (1994) who examined husbands' work hours and marital tension.

Crouter et al (2001) analysed 197 dual-earner families with adolescent children and found that while husbands who spent more than 60 hours a week in work-related activities spent less time in shared activities with their wives, the couples did not evaluate their relationships less positively. Instead, husbands' long work hours had no impact on their partners' subjective evaluations of their marital relationships. However, there were consistent associations between husbands' role overload and subjective reports of marital quality; when husbands experienced higher overload, couples felt less loving, saw themselves as less able to take their spouse's perspective and reported more conflict.

In addition, a number of researchers have argued that it is essential to look at satisfaction with working hours, which has been shown to mediate between long working hours and their negative impacts, for both the long hours worker and their spouse or partner. For example, in a study examining long working hours and marital quality, Crouter et al (2001) argue that "A common theme in the handful of studies that have assessed links between husbands' long work hours and the quality of the marital relationship is that examining work hours is not enough; researchers must also take into account the subjective experience of the employed husband and his wife." (p.405). They cite a number of studies that indicate that husbands' work hours were linked to marital tension through wives satisfaction with their husbands' hours and wives' view of the overall fit between their husbands' work demands and the needs of the family.

Weston et al (2004) found that long work hours per se did not appear to have a direct adverse effect on relationship wellbeing. Weston argues that "It is likely that the impact of work hours on relationship wellbeing depends on the way such work hours are interpreted by each partner. While some wives may object to their husbands working extended hours, others may accept this practice as an important means of achieving mutually accepted goals (such as financial security or promotion)". (Weston, Qu & Soriano, 2002 p.24)

Both the Crouter et al (2001) and Weston et al (2004) studies distinguish between hours per se, and feelings about or perceptions of those hours. Both studies note that factors other than long work hours may mask the link between long hours and relationship quality. These factors include satisfaction with hours worked, feelings about over-work, and role overload. These factors are discussed further in Section 6.

Long work hours may reflect shared goals (such as getting ahead in the organisation, earning overtime wages, or working a second job to bring in extra income) and therefore

may be interpreted positively by spouses or partners. Satisfaction with working hours was higher for couples where the long hours worker was employed in a management role or was self-employed, or where the long hours were being worked to reach particular family goals. This was the case for Hemi and Tessa, Anna and Rewi, and Sarah and Trevor. These couples had decided that the best way to afford the lifestyle they wanted was for Hemi, Anna and Sarah, respectively, to work long hours.

However, many of the couples interviewed made telling statements indicating that long hours work had put significant stress on their relationship, with those couples where the spouse was unhappy with the partner's working hours exhibiting the most tension. While the interviews did not specifically ask the respondents about the quality of their relationship and the impact long working hours had on them, it was clear from some of the exchanges that took place in front of the interviewers that there were some couples under considerable stress.

This was the case with Alan and Sue. Like the partners in Crouter et al's (2001) research, Sue was clearly unhappy with Alan's hours and his input into family life. When we asked Sue whether she was satisfied with Alan working so many hours, she replied that she could not even conceptualise the concept of 'satisfaction' when thinking about his work. There was also tension about whether he attended special events that the children were involved in.

Sue: I juggle things around.

Alan: I've got a lot of flexibility too ... if I need to do something, they're hugely flexible, it's just that I have a lot of work to do...

Sue: The reality is that you don't actually go to any of the kids things during the day, do you?

Alan: I don't tend to, I have...

Sue: You wouldn't take time out to go to, um, Sophie's singing in a choir concert next Friday morning for example. You wouldn't take the time out...

Alan: I have been to some of the school things ... I probably go to a handful a year kind of thing. So I'm certainly not a regular but I have, and can.

Sue: You could if you were really keen but you tend not to.

Alan: I tend not to, but I...

Sue: Too busy. (Family 4)

Sue and Alan couldn't agree on the number of hours Alan actually worked, a common theme with the couples interviewed. Usually this took the form of the long hours worker underestimating the hours they worked.

Reagan: I start work probably at about 6.30am, and finish between four and six.

Leslie: Four?

Reagan: I said, four, between four and six.

Leslie: Yeah right.

Reagan: Sometimes it is around about four, but more likely to be five. I generally try to get home by 5.00pm.

Leslie: It's normally between 5.00pm and 5.30pm.

Barbara was similarly unhappy with Craig's long hours. As discussed above, Barbara felt that Craig did not put the children's needs before his work and described having to parent her three children, one of whom had significant special needs, essentially on her own.

Barbara: He'd go out and say I'm just going to work for a couple of hours and I'll be home at lunchtime, and he'd show up at four o'clock. So I just don't even ask anymore... I just think, "Yeah, whatever". Just move on. Because you're never when you say, ever, ever. So I just kind of go, [shrugs] yeah. And then I'll say to him the next week, but you worked all day Saturday.

Craig: Only half a day.

Barbara: Yeah, but you finished at four Craig. How do you consider that a half a day?

Craig: Well, I started at 10.

Barbara: You know, its like, uugh, a couple of hours work turns into eight, you know? (Family 14)

Other families talked about the pressure of long working hours on their relationship.

Karen: Initially it put a huge amount of pressure on us, because, Sam was sort of like, like all the partners of all the people who took on the job, just going "I just want to pick up that bloody computer and I want to chuck it." (Family 3)

Abbey: It's a source of, um, it can be major conflict at times ... I get frustrated, and, and tired. (Family 13).



5.7.2 Lack of time as a couple

Regardless of whether the partner and couple were happy with the hours worked or experiencing tension about those hours, almost all respondents said that the long hours of one partner meant that they had little time together as a couple. Time at home was limited and once parents had spent time with children, there was little left for adult-only time.

Do you have much time together, just the two of you?

Wayne: We don't go out like we used to, at all ... we don't go and see music or movies like we used to.

Melanie: We won't ever organise something just for us. It's our fault, we're just useless at it. We're always thinking about, it would be really nice to go out just us ... we don't tend to, we definitely don't have our own time out together, ever. (Family 2)

Alan: And we don't have a lot of time ... we very seldom go out just the two of us. (Family 4)

Hemi: Not really.

Tessa: No. I think we're too tired to go out. (Family 6)

Leslie: Just the two of us not very often, probably zero. (Family 12)

Lani: We haven't gone out ... and yeah, no time, no time, we have no time ... that's the thing we really miss, our own time. Now we spend our time working, we hardly see each other. (Family 15)

5.8 THE GENDERED DIVISION OF LABOUR IN THE FAMILY

Long hours of paid work have significant implications for the participation of women in the workforce and for their unpaid work in the home (Pocock, 2001). New Zealand evidence has indicated that long hours tend to be worked more frequently by men, but as Callister (2005) notes, and as evidenced in the families participating in the qualitative research, fathers' long hours have considerable impact on mothers' opportunity to engage in paid work given that women typically are also responsible for running the household and organising arrangements for children.

Numerous studies have found that a) women tend to work shorter hours than men, particularly when they have children; b) men who work very long hours (well over 50 hours) tend to be more likely to have a spouse who does not work; and c) women are consistently found to do more unpaid housework and childcare than men, although the total hours worked, paid and unpaid, tend to be equal (for example, Brett and Stroh, 2003; Callister, 2005; Jacobs & Gerson, 2001; Hochschild, 1989; Hochschild, 1997; Pocock, 2001; Department of Labour, 2006; Ministry of Social Development, 2006; Department of Trade and Industry, 2007; Bianchi et al, 2000; Lee & Waite, 2005). Furthermore, Pocock (2001) notes that "Gender equity is undermined by long hours of work because it is women who are most likely to give up their careers for the sake of their children" (p.8).

Pocock (2001) also notes the impact of gender on the distribution of unpaid work and its interaction with long hours in the paid workforce.

Women especially are affected by long hours in paid work – whether they work them or live with a partner who works them. The load of domestic work falls more to women, regardless of household patterns of paid work. However the intensification of paid work exacerbates tension about the inequitable sharing of domestic work, contributing to relationship tensions. Alongside this the increasing prevalence of long hour jobs in a wide range of workplaces makes the working lives of carers more problematic. If the only way to get ahead is to work long hours then equal opportunity for women retreats further (p.26).

Furthermore, Pocock (2001) argues:

Long hours place particular stress on women with families who must work double shifts in paid work and domestic labour. Extended hours at work undermine relationships with partners through loss of time spent together and loss of intimacy. Long hours at paid work may result in role conflict, work overload and exacerbate awareness of inequities in the division of housework. The presence of children further exacerbates these processes because of the need to juggle responsibility for caring and nurturing children with more paid hours (p.27).

There was considerable evidence of long hours resulting in significant gender differences in unpaid work in the families we spoke to.

Polly: I normally run the whole house, groceries, housework, getting the kids up and fed and off to school and all that, I do, cooking our dinner, doing the dishes, washing, it's pretty much me... (Family 2B)

Doug: Occasionally I do dinner and bath and whatever, depends if I'm home or not. I did cook dinner last night.

Abbey: That's the first time in months, geez!

Doug: I said, occasionally...

Abbey: He very seldom bathes, does dishes or dinner, that's me. (Family 13)

Alan and Sue (Family 4) had a significantly gendered arrangement, with Sue taking care of everything on the home front, while also working an almost full-time job. Alan attributed this partly to what was 'natural' according to personality.

Sue: The impact of his working long hours on the family? Well, he's not really involved in any of that side of things, do you know what I mean? So, if he was, if he, for example, if Alan came home every day at 5.30pm, then he would, I would get him involved in running the kids around. He would have to immediately slot in to their routine and find out who had to be where, what had to be done, da da da da. Because he doesn't get home normally until half past eight or later...

Alan: I might pick up the girls...

Sue: But you're not actually aware of, you don't sort of have it in your head that every Tuesday or Wednesday or whatever that she has to come home at nine o'clock. So I have to organise you. (Family 4)

As the discussion indicates, Alan did not know – or need to know – what his children were doing on a daily basis. This was a symptom of his lack of involvement in their daily lives. This was similar to George (Family 2B) who did not know where his child's daycare centre was until he had a break in his workload. When Polly's mother won a cruise and took Polly away with her, George's parents looked after their children, despite George not

working at the time. Even when not working, George did not participate in the daily care of his children. It was clear that for George, as with Craig, the long hours worked were not the reason for the lack of time they spent with their children.

Polly: Tonight I'm having a girls dinner, a potluck dinner at a friends house ... we girls sort of plan it around the kids and the husbands, it doesn't start until 7.30pm so we can feed the kids, get the kids off to bed, and the husbands just have to babysit. (Family 2B)

There were only two families in the group of 17 with a more egalitarian arrangement for childcare and housework. Sarah and Trevor shared the care of their four-year-old daughter, Molly, who was in childcare from Monday to Wednesday. Trevor worked four 12-hour shifts Sunday to Wednesday each week, which meant he was home from Thursday to Saturday, so he had sole care of Molly on Friday and Saturday. Sarah arranged her hours so her free days were Thursday and Sunday, to allow the family to have one day off together (Thursday) and so she could look after Molly on Sundays. Both Sarah and Trevor cooked and did housework on their days off, and Molly seemed equally engaged with them both during the interview.

Anna and Rewi had a more unusual arrangement. Anna worked very long hours and travelled a lot for her work. Rewi worked full-time, but was also solely responsible for the care of their children and the housework. Anna noted that it was only because Rewi took on all of the domestic work that she could work the hours she did.

Anna: He's the wife, he does all the home stuff, so it makes it that much easier. (Family 5)

6. FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE IMPACT OF LONG WORK HOURS ON THE FAMILY

Key findings:

- > The literature suggests that factors such as satisfaction with hours worked, spousal perception of hours, feeling overloaded and the timing and quality of the work performed mediate the impact long hours of work have on family wellbeing.
- > The qualitative research found key factors that reduced the impact of long working hours on the family were:
 - having extended family support and assistance with childcare
 - having flexible work arrangements and control over hours of work (including both the number of hours and when hours were worked)
 - both spouses being satisfied with the number of hours of paid work and the impact of these hours on the availability of the long hours worker to do unpaid domestic work generally and spend time with children in particular.
- > The role of income was complex, with higher incomes having the potential to ease the impact of long hours (through the purchasing of services). However, higher incomes also acted as a bind where families needed to maintain long hours to be able to afford their current lifestyle.
- > Other factors acted to exacerbate the impact of long work hours, some of which were ‘tipping points’ pushing the family into an extremely difficult situation. These included:
 - having no control over hours or timing of work
 - the frequency and duration of travel
 - the poor health of family members
 - for those who were self-employed, the health of their business.
- > Some families were trapped in jobs with very long hours as they had few qualifications and needed the income the additional hours brought. For others, education represented a future strategy for reducing working hours.

A number of studies have found that direct relationships between long work hours and impacts on family functioning are negligible (Baxter, 2007; Dermott, 2006; Bianchi et al, 2006; Crouter et al, 2001). However, many have identified factors that act as mediators between long hours and the family. These include satisfaction with hours worked; spousal perception of hours; role overload; and the nature of the work being performed, both in terms of when it is performed and the quality of the work itself.

Weston et al (2004 p.5) noted that:

the impact of long hours on wellbeing is likely to vary according to the reasons that people have for working such hours and the way they view them. For instance, negative personal repercussions seem particularly likely for those who are reluctantly putting in extra hours through coercion or because they feel overwhelmed by an unwanted heavy workload. Positive repercussions are likely to apply for those who have adopted this lifestyle through choice rather than coercion, who find their work intrinsically rewarding

and beneficial to clients or the community, and who have the support of their spouse in working long hours.

As such:

...it seems reasonable to suggest that the impact of extended work hours on enjoyment of life is likely to be complex, and would depend partly on the way such work hours are experienced, the extent to which they generate a sense of time pressure, and their impact on the quality of the spousal relationship (Weston et al, 2004 p.22).

There were a number of factors that reduced the impact of long work hours on the families of those participating in the qualitative study. These included having the support of extended family, control over the number and timing of working hours, and a perception of sufficient income. Whether or not the partner of the long hours worker was also employed, and the number of hours they were employed, also made a difference to the impact of long hours work on the family. Because of the small sample size and the qualitative nature of the project, it was not possible to determine from the interviews a causal link between long hours and family wellbeing, or to ascertain the relative roles of factors which acted as mediators in the causal chain.

Factors that exacerbated the impact of long work hours included the health of both the long hours worker and other family members; the amount of time spent travelling for work; and, for those who were self-employed, the state and viability of their business.

For some families, the combination of factors 'tipped' the family into an extremely difficult situation for all family members. For other families, the positive influence of factors, such as extended family assistance, compensated so that long hours did not take as great a toll on family life.

This section considers each of these factors and explores how they exacerbated or ameliorated the impact of extended working hours on both the long hours worker and on their family.



6.1 THE AVAILABILITY OF EXTENDED FAMILY FOR SUPPORT AND CHILDCARE

A number of the families in the research had work arrangements that could not have been sustained without the ongoing and routine assistance of their extended families. This was particularly the case in families where both parents worked although it was not limited to these families. Those with one partner at home also relied on informal care, albeit less routinely.

Kate and Ariki (Family 9) lived with Kate's parents and her mother was heavily involved in the care of their two-year-old daughter Sasha, taking her to crèche four days a week and looking after her at home on the fifth day. Similarly, Ajit and Maya (Family 16) lived with Ajit's parents and Ajit's mother dropped their oldest boy at school and picked him up each day, as well as caring for their younger son full-time. Lani (Family 15) who worked extremely high numbers of hours each week relied on Tino's mother to care for their four children after school each day until Tino returned home from his shift at around 11.00pm.

Other families had less scheduled arrangements with extended family, but still found their willingness to care for children invaluable. Ron and Marian (Family 7) often left their children Alice and Toby with Ron's parents who lived next door, and Polly's (Family 2B) parents routinely looked after their two children.

Polly: My mum's been really good too, if I was really sick. Normally, when George is at work, he can't take a day off work, so there have been times when, like I was sick and couldn't look after the kids, and my mum has taken a day off work, to come and look after the kids so I could go to bed or go to the doctor or do what I need to do, so, yeah the family support ... the family support is crucial really. (Family 2B)

Anna and Rewi (Family 5) relied on one of their older children (aged 17 and 19) to care for their youngest son who was 12, with John (Family 8) and Hemi and Tessa (Family 6) also using older children as babysitters for their youngest sons.



6.2 HAVING CONTROL OVER WORK HOURS AND FLEXIBILITY

Previous research suggests that having control over working hours is a key mediator on the impact of long hours on family life. This control includes being able to choose when hours are worked, and if they are worked (ie that long hours aren't compulsory) (Weston et al, 2002; 2004).

Alexander & Baxter (2005) argue that the nature of work itself and the flexibility and schedule control a worker has over their tasks may be more important than actual hours worked when considering the impact on the family, noting that work hours that involve less family-friendly work schedules (evening work, weekend work, shiftwork, or excessive overtime) are associated with greater work-to-family strain (also Barnett, 1998).

Similarly, Fagnani & Letablier (2004) in their study of the impact of the 35-hours working week in France, found that it is not only how many hours are worked but also when these hours are worked that matters for relationships and family life. Their study concludes that a reduction in overall working time is not sufficient to improve work-life balance, but that other factors, such as the organisation of working time, are also required.

Strazdins et al (2004, 2006) also argue that it is *when* parents work that is particularly important to family life. They cite “a consistent body of evidence (that) shows that working evenings, nights and on the weekends can affect workers’ social relationships because they miss out on shared family events, routines and outings” (2004:1,518). Strazdins et al (2004) used a Canadian longitudinal study of children to examine the impact of parental work patterns on child wellbeing for 6,361 children in 4,433 families. They found that the odds of children having any emotional or behavioural difficulties were 29–43 percent higher when parents worked non-standard schedules, compared with those whose parents both worked standard schedules. This finding was particularly relevant to families with younger children (Strazdins et al, 2004). These effects were not confined to children – parents working non-standard times were more likely to report worse family functioning, more depressive symptoms and less effective parenting (Strazdins et al, 2006).

Healy (2000), in a study using data collected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, argues that working extended hours is often involuntary and perhaps coercive, particularly among older men who have reached the age when the labour force participation rate for men starts declining and the threat of retrenchment increases. Similarly, Golden and Wiens-Tuers (2006), in a study of overtime, found that overtime work was a cause of greater work-family imbalance, with this significantly exacerbated when the overtime was mandatory.

Weston et al (2002) provide dual reasons for working non-standard hours, which vary according to occupational status. They argue that men in professional or managerial occupations who adopt such practices do so because their work is intrinsically rewarding, while men in lower status occupations feel they have little choice in the hours they work. However, McPherson (2004) found that not all professional and managerial workers worked long hours by choice, but rather were driven by workplace cultures of long hours which were enforced through a lack of career progression or promotion and negative comments about those who didn't conform.

Amongst the families we interviewed, those with control over their hours showed the most positive impacts and the fewest negative impacts from long hours work. Sarah (Family 11) had complete control over the hours she worked, and she and Trevor were

amongst the couples who were most satisfied with their working hours. Because of this control, Sarah would sometimes get a babysitter overnight and start work at 3.30am when Trevor left to work his shift. This meant that the babysitter was mostly there while their daughter Molly was sleeping. Sarah would then be able to spend time with Trevor and Molly when Trevor had finished his shift and Molly was awake. Sarah worked from home at least 10 hours a week, but also had the flexibility to change her days off to accommodate family outings and trips. Because Sarah worked in a retail environment, Friday and Saturday were her busiest days, so she chose to have Thursday as one of her free days which meant the family had a day off together.

Sarah: [I like] to break up your week too. You go three days then you've got this day off again, so sometimes it doesn't seem like you're working as much as what you actually are. I don't really feel like I work that long hours. But I chop and change, have Friday and Saturday off if we are going [away]. (Family 11)

Sarah: I think that the flexibility to work around what we're doing is probably the biggest thing. (Family 11)

Wayne, who also spoke positively about his work, also had complete flexibility about when he worked, sometimes getting up in the night to make up hours he spent with his children during the day.

Wayne: [I have] total flexibility. Yeah, I did kindy the other day with the boys, parent help. (Family 2)

Similarly, Ajit was able to minimise the impact of his two jobs on family life because he had complete flexibility over when he did the hours of his second weekend job. He also had a considerable amount of flexibility in his weekday job.

Ajit: Yeah, it's quite flexible. Like if you work extra hours, like at the month's end, then you can take a day off. (Family 16)



6.3 SATISFACTION WITH HOURS AND PERCEPTIONS OF OVERLOAD

New Zealand research indicates that those working long hours are not satisfied with their hours and would prefer to work less. There is a significant body of evidence that people's preferences for paid work hours are not being met, including, in New Zealand, the Department of Labour (2006) work-life balance survey and the Ministry of Social Development (2006b) *Work, Family, and Parenting Study* (also, Reynolds, 2004; Department of Trade and Industry, 2007). More than a quarter of the sample in the Department of Labour (2006) work-life balance survey indicated they would like to work less, even if it meant earning less money, with men slightly more likely to say they'd prefer to work fewer hours (30 percent).

However, one study cautions against basing policy decisions on preference data. Reynolds (2004 p.100) argues that survey questions that ask whether respondents want to work fewer hours for less money elicit hypothetical answers and:

...do not reflect the complex trade-offs workers actually make. The simple and direct connection between work hours and pay ... encourage(s) respondents to ignore how new work hours might affect benefits, job security, family life or other outcomes ... even employees who want to continue working the same hours may simultaneously wish that circumstances would allow them to do otherwise.

The need to consider the complexity of gathering information about working hours preferences is important. Satisfaction with both the job generally and working hours specifically are key mediators in the impact long hours have on both individual and family wellbeing. Reynolds and Aletaris (2007), in their study using Australian HILDA data, found that both men and women are less likely to desire a decrease in work hours as their job satisfaction increases. For men, a one-unit increase in job satisfaction was associated with a 9.9 percent decrease in the odds of wanting fewer hours. Similarly, MacInnes (2005), in an analysis of the British Social Attitudes Survey, found that workers who were satisfied with their current job were far less likely to prefer fewer hours.

Alexander and Baxter (2005) found that working long hours was significantly associated with more work-to-family strain for working mothers than for fathers. The authors also found the level of work-to-family strain depended on the extent to which parents could or couldn't work the hours they preferred. Those who preferred to work less but couldn't had considerably higher levels of work-to-family strain than those who had their preferences met, with this having more impact than the actual number of hours worked.

Weston et al (2004) found that satisfaction with hours worked was a key moderator in the impact working hours had on wellbeing. Their study of fathers' work hours found that while fathers' satisfaction with work hours decreased as working hours increased, fathers' wellbeing did not decline as the number of hours increased. As such, satisfaction with hours was very important to the relationship between work hours and wellbeing. Those working very long hours and expressing satisfaction with their work hours had higher levels of wellbeing on virtually all measures compared to fathers who indicated low satisfaction with their long hours.

Weston et al (2004 p.18) note:

Although satisfaction with work hours declines sharply with increases in work hours, there is considerable variability in satisfaction ratings. For example, one-quarter of fathers working 60 or more hours report a high level of satisfaction with these hours.

These fathers have higher levels of wellbeing for virtually all measures as compared to the larger group (45 per cent) of fathers who indicate low satisfaction. On the other hand, for fathers working 35 to 40 hours, there are much smaller differences in wellbeing between those who have high as opposed to low satisfaction with their work hours. For fathers working 41 to 48 hours and 49 to 59 hours there are some differences in wellbeing according to satisfaction with work hours, although the number of dimensions for which there are differences is smaller than that for fathers working 60 or more hours.

While satisfaction with working hours declined as hours increased, the lower satisfaction with working hours was reflected in lower levels of wellbeing for only two of their 13 measures of wellbeing. In addition, there were no statistically significant differences in the majority of measures of wellbeing for fathers working 35–40 hours and those working longer hours. However, there were significant differences between low and high satisfaction with working hours within hours groupings with regard to wellbeing. Finally, Weston et al found that the proportion of fathers who preferred to work fewer hours, taking into account the impact on income, increased with the number of hours worked. They conclude:

Overall, the links between fathers' work hours and subjective wellbeing vary according to how fathers appraise these hours. However, the link between the fathers' appraisal of their work hours and wellbeing is much stronger for fathers working long hours. The minority of fathers working very long hours who indicate high satisfaction appear to be coping well with life, and in some areas seem to be better off than those indicating high satisfaction with their 35–40 hours of work. Furthermore, there was no evidence that fathers who indicate low satisfaction with long hours are pervasively worse off in terms of these various wellbeing measures than fathers who indicate low satisfaction with working 35–40 hours (Weston et al, 2004 p.19).

6.4 MAKING THINGS WORSE: HAVING NO CONTROL OVER WORKING HOURS, TRAVEL AND HEALTH ISSUES

As discussed, having control over the number of working hours and having flexibility over when those hours are worked has significant impact in lessening the effects of long working hours on family life. However, the reverse was true for those without such flexibility or control.

6.4.1 Having no control over working hours

Amongst the families we interviewed, there was a definite theme of a lack of control over hours worked where the impacts of long working hours appeared the most pronounced. This was most obvious for Doug and Abbey (Family 13). Doug's hours fluctuated daily and often he did not know when he would be working each week, which made it impossible to plan for any family events.

Doug: Start time is normally pretty standard, it is the finish times that fluctuate.

Abbey: And what days ... there's no planning family events or anything like that ... it is really tough to plan anything actually. We just have to wait until generally the day before, and yeah, which is a bit hard on the kids, especially Owen now, he is six, and he wants to do such and such in the weekend, like go to the museum or movies ... and we just can't plan... (Family 13)

Doug: The biggest problem is, they won't let us know, on a Thursday, what's happening over the weekend, it's always Friday night they'll tell us. As frustrating as it is for her, it's as frustrating for me, because we're in there going, what's happening on the weekend...

Abbey: And then he gets it from me when he gets home, and the kids. (Family 13)

Hemi (Family 6) had some control over whether he accepted extra shifts. However, he had no control over the core hours he worked, or where he would be day to day.

Hemi: I never know what I'm doing from one day to another ... I know I'll be staying there the night, but I don't know if I will be coming back up or going down to Invercargill or Dunedin ... some days we'll know what we're doing but other days...

Tessa: He often doesn't know until the night before where he is heading. (Family 6)

6.4.2 Work-related travel

Travel was also a key factor that exacerbated the impact of long hours of work on the family. A number of families we interviewed had one member who travelled routinely for work, including Karen (Family 3), Alan (Family 4), Anna (Family 5) and Hemi (Family 6). For these families, nights spent away from home were, of course, nights spent not seeing family, and the workers involved adapted to this in a range of ways. Both Karen and Anna frequently travelled internationally, while both Alan and Hemi travelled to different cities in New Zealand every week.

As a truck driver, Hemi worked five 14-hour shifts each week, for a total of 70 hours driving. However, his total working hours were usually higher than this, as he spent time travelling on the inter-island ferry, with more hours back at the yard where he did paperwork and where his truck was kept. While he was away, Tessa was, for all intents and purposes, a single parent.

Hemi: Most of the time I'm just like a boarder, aren't I. I come in, have dinner, go to bed, wake up, gone again.

Do you agree Hemi is like a boarder?

Tessa: Sometimes it seems like that, yeah... (Family 6)

Anna noted how difficult the travelling made parenting, and noted that her travel within New Zealand was also hard on her family.

Anna: But it did gut me when something has gone wrong down here, and you're elsewhere. Like your children have been misbehaving, like our boy hasn't been going to school and all I can do is sit there and talk to him about why, you know. That sort of stuff is really frustrating. (Family 5)

Rewi: Those are the killers, those day trips.

Anna: Those day trips, early morning plane, late back. (Family 5)

However, periodically, Rewi was able to accompany Anna on her international trips, allowing them quality time away from their children. This was also the case for Karen and Sam. (Family 3).

Travel time within cities also influenced the impact of long working hours. Sue (Family 4) noted that their busy lifestyle was only possible because they lived very close to the city centre, while Andrew (Family 10) travelled an hour by train each way to work, adding two hours a day to his already long hours at work. For George (Family 2B), the distance

he had to drive to work added to the significant amount of time he spent away from home each day, and meant that he started work earlier than he might have otherwise.

George: Shorter hours would be good, but, of course, the traffic, and everything, you've got to be on the road early, especially if you work towards the city, you've got to be on the road early to be in there, and on the road early to get out again. The nine to five thing doesn't work so... (Family 2B)

6.4.3 The impact of health issues

The physical and mental health of family members also exacerbated the impact of long working hours on family life. Some of the families most negatively affected by long working hours were also caring for a family member with ongoing health problems. For example, Graham and Jenny were caring for Jenny's parents, who were suffering from cancer and stroke-related conditions, Doug's wife Abbey was suffering from a stress-related illness, and Craig and Barbara were caring for a child with significant special needs. These added care responsibilities brought extra stress and additional hours of unpaid work to families who were already coping with high levels of both.

6.4.4 Business viability

A final factor influencing the impact of long work hours for those who were self-employed was the state of their business. A number of family members who worked long hours did so either to build up a fledgling business or to try and keep their business afloat in difficult economic times. Workers in these situations had the added stress of maintaining the business in addition to their actual hours worked, and the health of the business determined, in some cases, whether their long hours impacted negatively on their relationships. For example, Wayne worked long hours to build up his successful financial services business, with his wife Melanie supporting this goal. By contrast, John had realised that his business was unsustainable and was working long hours simply to keep the business afloat until its capital assets could be sold. He attributed his marriage breakdown to his long working hours.



6.5 INCOME AND EDUCATION – THE OPTIONS THESE ‘BUY’

For many families in the research, a trade-off was made between extra hours of work and income. For example, Sarah (Family 11) chose a position with more responsibility and a higher income, knowing that she would be required to put in extra hours of work. However, the higher income she received meant she could pay for a babysitter overnight, allowing her to ‘buy’ more family time. Similarly, Hemi and Tessa (Family 6) had jointly decided that having a bigger house that gave each family member some space was worth Hemi’s extra hours away from the family.

While income had the potential to mediate the impact of long hours on family life, it was not necessarily the case that families with higher incomes coped better with long hours. For a number of families there were significant contradictions between the hours and the income level they wished to sustain, in particular for Alan and Sue (Family 4), the highest earning family in the study. However, higher levels of education did give families choices about their working hours.

From the outside, Alan and Sue were the best placed of the 17 families in the study, to manage the impacts of long work hours on their family. They had the financial resources to be able to easily purchase the services of a nanny, who cared for their two children after school and in the school holidays, thus easing the childcare crunch times that working parents often find difficult to manage. The nanny also did jobs around the home such as laundry and grocery shopping, easing the domestic burden on both Alan and Sue. They also paid for a gardener and housekeeper to minimise their need to undertake domestic work. Sue felt unable to leave her law firm job to do the work she truly enjoyed, because of the reduction in income this would entail. However, she was clear that their situation was a product of their own choices.

Sue: I think our lives could be very different, but I think it would be a very big drop in pay, any job that I could think of that would be nine to five. And so, we’d have to re-think what the implications of that would be... We’d have to shift gears to keep our spending down, and the implications of that would be quite profound. (Family 4)

Both Sue and Alan were highly educated professionals and this had assisted them to obtain high-skilled, highly paid work. Those workers with few or no qualifications – and low-paid work – were trapped and had to continue to work long hours in jobs because of a need for income and an inability to secure work in a different field.

Doug fell squarely in this category. When asked about the reasons for his extremely long hours, he noted that he had few alternatives.

Why do you work these hours?

Doug: Some of it is my schooling, I didn’t stay at school very long so, I actually fell into the industry, and it’s kind of stuck with me for so long, it’s become my trade... (Family 13)

Hemi also noted his lack of qualifications, which meant he was not qualified to do anything other than his current job.

Hemi: I love the job, it’s just the sacrifices you have to make that come with it. That’s probably the only downside.

You mean the hours?

Hemi: Yeah, well, not seeing the family, being away from home so much. But I don't really know how to do anything else. (Family 6)

The 2006 Census analysis highlighted the role of education and its relationship to long working hours. Those with the highest qualifications were more likely to work long hours. However, not surprisingly, education showed the same pattern as income: as those at the top were a relatively small group, when absolute numbers were considered, the largest group of long hours workers were those at the bottom of the scale.

For those in the qualitative research, education – and the increase in income that accompanied it – while not necessarily reducing the effects of long work hours, allowed families choices about their working hours. For some families, these choices resulted in longer hours of work and a higher standard of living while for others, education represented a future escape from long working hours. Ajit (Family 16) was working seven days a week in two jobs to make extra money while his wife Maya completed her training as an early childhood teacher. Ajit had just finished post-graduate qualifications in his field and he anticipated that as time passed he would rise up the salary scale to a point where his income would be high enough to allow him to give up his second job. In addition, Maya finishing her training and taking on full-time work would also bring in more income, and thus give the family more choices about Ajit's working hours. As such, Ajit spoke hopefully about having more time in the future to spend with his two young sons.



7. DECISIONS AND EXPECTATIONS ABOUT WORKING HOURS

Key findings:

- > Few families engaged in active decision making about working long hours; rather, the hours seemed to evolve over time.
- > For a number of long hours workers and their families, long working hours were never discussed as they were viewed as an integral and taken-for-granted part of the job or industry the long hours worker was employed in.

One of the goals for this project was to gain an understanding of the factors parents consider when making decisions about working long hours. However, a key finding of this and other recent research by the Families Commission (Zodgekar & Fursman, 2008) is that many families don't make conscious decisions about their working arrangements. Instead, arrangements evolve without discussion or active decision making, with little planning or conversation about working hours.

A number of the workers interviewed believed that their hours were an unavoidable part of working in their industry, a finding mirroring research on flexible work conducted by the Families Commission (Zodgekar & Fursman, 2008). Families with workers who perceived long hours as an integral part of their work were unlikely to make active decisions about reducing or maintaining working hours. For example, both Craig and Ron made comments indicating that their expectations about what a normal day involved had shifted significantly away from the eight-hour day and 40-hour week.

Ron and Marian had never made a conscious decision about Ron's hours, and Ron's expectations were clearly for long hours. The only conversations they had about future decisions were when they were planning for the future and when Marian occasionally complained about the hours Ron was putting in.

Ron: Oh, sometimes she goes off her rocker. Sometimes she says 'you shouldn't be working all those long hours.' (Family 7)

Marian: I'd like to see decreased hours for Ron. Slow down, take a bit of time out.

Ron: Can't see it.

Marian: You're allowed to work an 80-hour week, you don't have to work any more than that.

Ron: I don't know how people can only work 40 hours. 40 hours is only two days work, isn't it? Two and a half days work. I just don't know what they do with the rest of the time. I just couldn't go to work for 40 hours. (Family 7)

Craig, a truck driver, expressed a similar sentiment.

Craig: The hours, I feel that eight hours is half a day. (Family 14)

Anna and Rewi (Family 5) never discussed their respective working hours, despite Anna having a job that required a lot of international travel. Similarly, Kate and Ariki had never discussed their hours either.

Did you talk much as a couple about your hours at that point?

Anna: No, no. We're quite, sort of, we just make our own decisions and we sort it out later. We don't actually do any planning around things like that. (Family 5)

Kate: No. Ariki has always worked the way he works, so we don't expect anything different from that. (Family 9)

In some interviews there was a sense that this was the first time some families had articulated their feelings about working hours, with this definitely the case for Alan, who remarked on this as we left the interview, saying that it was good to have "an opportunity to reflect on things".

7.1 SHARING GOALS

There were some exceptions to the 'no-discussion' theme amongst the families in the qualitative research, with these being either in families where a worker was taking on extra shifts over and above the 'norm' or in families that had hit some kind of stress.

Hemi and Tessa (Family 6), like Alan and Sue (Family 4), both worked full-time, with Hemi working very long hours each week, and Tessa almost solely responsible for caring for the home and children. Like Alan, Hemi travelled for work, and like Sue, Tessa had a demanding and sometimes stressful job. Tessa and Hemi (Family 6) had made a conscious and joint decision for Hemi to take on as many hours as he could.

Tessa: It is a conscious thing, and we are constantly talking about where we're going and what plans... (Family 6)

However, unlike Alan and Sue, Hemi and Tessa seemed significantly more in agreement about Hemi's long hours, even while they spoke of the negative impacts these had on their family life.

Hemi: We just make it work.

Tessa: It does work, and we know it's not forever, and there'll be breaks and we will take holidays. We look forward to the holidays... With Tom in pre-school, it's costly, so our holidays are few and far between ... but we're planning one for this Christmas... So times like that sort of make it worthwhile ... and we were really quite pleased with the progress (of having a bigger house) so we have to remind ourselves that it does, we are working towards something. (Family 6)

As such, while the hours Hemi worked had a significant impact on their family life, in particular on the time Hemi spent with his two sons from an earlier relationship and Tom, his four-year-old son with Tessa, Hemi and Tessa seemed much more positive as a couple.

Similarly, after experiencing some family difficulties after the birth of their second child, Wayne and Melanie (Family 2) had discussed Wayne's hours, and jointly worked out a solution that would enable Wayne to at least see the children each day.

Melanie: I think we also sat down and really tried to work out how best to manage everything as well, didn't we, because we never used to have it that you did the boys in the morning, and that, so we just tried to get a bit more of a balance.

What was the catalyst for that?

Wayne: Having no life, you're just wondering what is going on.

Melanie: It was when Freddie was born, he was probably about three or four months, and suddenly it all got a bit hard, didn't it. We had to sit down and go, now how are we going to make it work, didn't we.

Wayne: It just took a bit of figuring out ourselves what was going to suit us. At that point I was working easily 60 hours a week ... with lots of weekends and at night, until midnight.

Melanie: I would have thought it was closer to 70 at that time ... I mean, most nights, you would have dinner then start work again at eight, and I'd go to bed, and you'd get to bed at midnight. We had a three month old with reflux, and that helped with the "oh my god, where are we going!" (Family 2)



8. OVERALL IMPACT – WORKING HOURS AS A SINGLE FACTOR IN FAMILY FUNCTIONING

This report highlights the complex impact of long working hours on family life, with a number of factors influencing and mediating whether, and the degree to which, long hours positively or negatively impact on family wellbeing. However, even while they felt the negative impacts of long working hours on time together and with children, families who had made a joint decision for one partner to work extended hours in order to fulfil shared goals, appeared to show greater wellbeing than those lacking such agreements.

In some families in the research, a variety of factors converged to exacerbate the impact of long working hours, with the result that these families were under greater stress. For example, families on a very low income had little or no flexibility in their working hours, had few or no educational qualifications with a resulting lack of occupational choices, and were without apparent choices regarding their working hours.

Doug and Abbey (Family 13), who have been quoted extensively throughout this report, are an example of how long hours can combine with other factors to push the family into a fragile state. Doug worked very long hours in an industry with a culture of long hours, and he had no choice about the number or timing of his hours and no flexibility in his working arrangements. Neither he nor Abbey were satisfied with his hours. He earned a relatively low salary (below minimum wage if he calculated his earnings per hour), and his lack of qualifications and other experience left him with limited options for changing jobs. He and Abbey had two young children, and because of his long hours Abbey essentially had the sole responsibility for their care. This was a major source of stress for her and contributed to the stress-related health issues she suffered from. They had little extended family support.

Doug and Abbey's family situation illustrates that care must be taken not to attribute family stress solely to long working hours. The variety of factors at play in this family highlight that long working hours are one factor amongst many that may strengthen or threaten family functioning, and as such, the impact of working hours cannot be considered in isolation.

9. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Key findings:

- > All the families in the research, bar one, had plans for the future which would enable them to reduce the hours of the long hours worker; however, in some cases, these plans were either unrealistic or vague. As discussed in the literature, families used the possibility of change in the future to assist them to cope with the realities of their daily situation.

Some research and literature suggest that long hours workers maintain their extended hours of work by imagining future leisure time. Hochschild (2007) argues that 'deferrers' tell themselves that their long hours are only temporary, and that in the future they will be able to have the life – and the leisure time – they desire. Similarly, Heidmarsdottir (2002) found that long hours workers in her study kept themselves going by imagining their 'real life' after they retired.

The theme of deferral came through in the interviews. One of the most telling things about the impact of long work hours on the families taking part in the research was that almost all the families had plans for change in the future. Many families expressed hopes for change and a reduction of working hours and there was very much a sense of 'things will be better when...'. Most couples talked about their plans for how to achieve this, with some of these plans being more realistic and concrete than others.

Table 4 lays out the future plans for each of the families. Only Anna and Rewi (Family 5) did not have plans involving a way to reduce Anna's working hours. All the other couples had plans to cut their working hours and improve lifestyle either by moving (to earn more or reduce costs – Families 6, 10 and 12); by securing a greater income or better working conditions (either through a change in job or additional training resulting in a better income – Families 1, 2B, 3, 13, 15 and 16), spreading the division of paid work more evenly between the couple (Families 2, 9, 13 and 16), or hiring more help (Families 4, 7 and 14).



TABLE 4: FUTURE PLANS OF LONG HOURS WORKERS AND THEIR SPOUSES

	COUPLE	PLANS FOR THE FUTURE
1	Graham and Jenny	Hope to be paid enough to work less.
2	Wayne and Melanie	Wayne and Melanie will both be working, which will bring in more income. They plan to stagger start and finish times to accommodate children at school.
2B	George and Polly	Hope that the economy starts to pick up so Polly can work less.
3	Karen	Will reach her anniversary with her employer in a few years, then change to a job where she doesn't have to travel.
4	Alan and Sue	Alan is currently hiring more staff, so hopes that will ease the pressure on him.
5	Anna and Rewi	Not much change other than increasing asset base.
6	Hemi and Tessa	Thinking about moving, maybe to Australia where Hemi would be paid more.
7	Ron and Marian	Buy bigger farm, and bring someone else into business to take the pressure off Ron.
8	John	Will sell agricultural assets so doesn't have to work as many hours.
9	Kate and Ariki	Kate will work full-time (she rises up pay scale every year) and Ariki will give up job or be part-time and look after the children.
10	Paul and Andrew	Thinking about moving out of the city so their costs are lower and they can have a better lifestyle and work less.
11	Sarah and Trevor	Trevor might take early retirement and be a house dad.
12	Reagan and Leslie	Reagan will look for a live-in position which means that, while his hours will still be long, he will be able to see his children during the day and pick them up from school etc
13	Doug and Abbey	Abbey plans to study to become a teacher, Doug hopes to step up to be a supervisor, which means he will earn more and have more control over his hours.
14	Craig and Barbara	Trying to work smarter. When trucks are paid off, Craig will hire another driver which will mean he has to work fewer hours.
15	Lani and Tino	Hopes (vaguely) for a change in career which would mean fewer hours and better money; would like to work in the community.
16	Ajit and Maya	When Maya becomes qualified as an ECE teacher, Ajit will drop his second job, which means they will have weekends together.



10. CONCLUSIONS

This report describes the findings from a multi-method study on long working hours and their impact on family life. It draws on data from a small qualitative study involving in-depth interviews with 17 families with dependent children where at least one partner was working long hours. The data has been supplemented by analysis of the 2006 Census and a review of the literature.

Long working hours are a major issue for many New Zealand families. Analysis of 2006 Census data showed that those working long hours were most likely to be male, and that the majority of those working 50 or more hours each week earned lower incomes and had few or no qualifications. Long hours workers were likely to be employed in industries such as agriculture and road transport, with large numbers of long hours workers also found in occupations classified as 'Specialist Managers', 'Farmers and Farm Managers', 'Chief Executives, General Managers and Legislators', 'Education Professionals', 'Hospitality, Retail and Service Managers' and 'Road and Rail Drivers'. High numbers of long hours workers were also found in professional, scientific and technical services, pre-school and school education, and construction services.

There were also a significant number of couples with dependent children where both parents worked long hours. Almost a third (29 percent) of couples with dependent children (n=98,466) worked a combined 80 or more hours each week, eight percent or 27,063, worked 100 or more hours per week between them. In 2006, there were 12,963 couples with dependent children where each partner worked 50 or more hours a week.

This research shows that not only do many New Zealanders work long hours, but that at least for the families interviewed in this research, working long hours comes at a cost to their wellbeing, particularly with regard to time spent with children and partners.

10.1 REASONS FOR WORKING LONG HOURS

The study found that parents' working hours were driven by:

- > the requirements of their jobs (including the physical demands of the job, customer demands and having a high workload)
- > income (both maintaining a basic standard of living and being able to afford some 'extras')
- > the cultures of their workplaces (both individual workplaces and within industries)
- > the satisfaction work provided.

10.2 IMPACTS OF LONG HOURS

The impacts of working long hours included:

- > positive impacts, such as earning extra income and building up a business
- > negative impacts for the long hours worker, including stress and fatigue, having less energy for parenting and negative impacts on health and fitness
- > negative impacts for families, such as parents having little time to spend with children, not having family time together for holidays or other special occasions, and children not being able to take part in other activities

- > negative impacts for the spouse of the long hours worker, including being overloaded with all of the parenting and domestic duties, often while also working full-time and not being able to take on paid work or training.

Long hours workers told us that they were missing out on quality time with their children, important milestones and family events. Another concern was that they had no time to nurture their own relationship as a couple. Common themes from the interviews were tiredness and stress. Parents had little time to devote to hobbies or sport and in some instances even basic household tasks were suffering.

Despite believing that their hours had a variety of negative impacts on family life, many parents felt unable to reduce their hours for a variety of reasons, including their reliance on the income additional hours brought, and the culture and requirements of their industries or positions.

10.2.1 Factors that mediated the impact of long hours

A number of factors mediated the impact of long hours of work, including:

- > the availability of extended family for childcare and support
- > having flexible work arrangements and control over hours of work (including both the number of hours and when hours were worked)
- > how satisfied spouses were with both the number of hours of paid work and the impact of these hours on the availability of the long hours worker to spend time with children and to share the household chores.

10.2.2 Factors that exacerbated the impact of long hours

Other factors exacerbated the negative impacts of long hours, including:

- > poor health of one or both spouses
- > travel time
- > a lack of educational qualifications which left the long hours worker without alternatives.

Few families engaged in active decision making about working long hours; rather, hours often seemed to creep up over time. For a number of long hours workers and their families, long working hours were never discussed as they were viewed as an integral and taken-for-granted part of the job or industry the long hours worker was employed in.

Long work hours are just one element amongst many which affect family functioning and wellbeing, and as such, it is important to consider the range of factors that both ameliorate or exacerbate the impact of long hours, as well as the independent impact of these factors.



11. NEXT STEPS: AREAS FOR FURTHER WORK

11.1 HOW DO THESE FINDINGS FIT WITH OTHER FAMILIES COMMISSION WORK?

This research on working long hours is a key component of the Families Commission's work-life balance programme. This programme coordinates a number of strands of work with an overall objective of ensuring that families are supported to have real choice in how they balance their caring responsibilities and paid work.

Finding a balance between work and family commitments is a challenge faced by all working parents with dependent children. The Families Commission has undertaken research into a variety of work-life issues for parents, with the results of this work reported in:

- > *When School's Out: Conversations with parents, carers and children about out of school services*
- > *It's About Time: Towards a parental leave policy that gives New Zealand families a real choice*
- > *Give and Take: Families' perceptions and experiences of flexible work in New Zealand*
- > *Juggling Acts: How parents working non-standard hours arrange care for their pre-school children.*

The findings of this research project on long working hours are consistent with these other recent studies, which also suggest that many families are experiencing a 'time squeeze' as individuals struggle to find time for themselves and their families. Some families, including single parents, those working non-standard hours and those on low incomes, are most likely to experience difficulties. The findings of this report are also consistent with a large body of New Zealand research and consultation evidence.

Many of the participants in this research talked about wanting to spend more time with their family. One factor that allowed some of them to do this was access to flexible work. Research on work-life balance was undertaken by the Families Commission and others (EEO Trust, 2005; UMR Research, 2003)¹¹ also indicates that parents appreciate the ability to influence the timing and total hours of their participation in paid work.

This research has shown that those with control and flexibility over their hours experienced the greatest positive impacts and the fewest negative impacts from working long hours. Similarly, the Families Commission's recent study (Zodgekar & Fursman, 2008) on flexible work found that of those who reported a lot of flexibility in their work, 88 percent declared they were satisfied with their work-life balance, compared with 52 percent who had little or no flexibility. Of those who worked 20 hours or less per week, 91 percent were satisfied with their overall work-life balance, compared with 58 percent working more than 50 hours.

Flexible work arrangements can strengthen family life as well as enable family members to have fulfilling careers and this seems to be particularly important for parents who are working long hours. Allowing families to spend more time together and attend special family events has many advantages for all family members. Those lacking access to flexible work are more likely to report feeling as if they were juggling, that they had missed out on family activities and that their family time was stressed and pressured (Zodgekar & Fursman, 2008).

¹¹ The challenges of reconciling paid work and family responsibilities was also one of the strongest themes in the Family Commission's *Focus on Families* research and *What Makes Your Family Tick?* consultation.

There is a growing trend in OECD countries to introduce policies which allow parents of small children to change working hours.¹² In the United Kingdom, for example, legislation places a duty on employers to consider seriously any request from qualifying employees for reduced working hours, flexible hours and part-time work. This legislation served as the inspiration for the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Amendment Act in New Zealand.¹³

This research suggests that further work is needed in the following areas:

- > an investigation into the strategies that could assist families to mitigate the negative impacts of long work hours work
- > research with workers and employers who manage to work 'standard hours' in occupations or industries where long hours are prevalent. This work could provide insight into how some employers manage without long hours and into the key factors that enable parents and other family members to 'resist' cultural and financial pressures to work long hours, as well as offering potential solutions and strategies for families such as those participating in this project
- > research on the degree to which the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Amendment Act has impacted on parents' work hours, and the consequences of this for family life.

While this research was based on a small qualitative study, analysis of the census shows that the impacts experienced by these families are potentially widespread. Quantitative research on the degree to which these impacts are experienced by other New Zealand families would further inform the debate in this area.



¹² The details of these schemes vary – from an entitlement to 'a right to request' change that must be considered seriously by employers (OECD, 2005).

¹³ However, the data for this project was completed before the implementation of the Act.

11.2 FUTURE POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Working long hours affects the ability of families to achieve a healthy balance between work and family life. Policies relating to income support provision, paid parental leave, access to childcare and promotion of workplace practices (eg quality flexible work) are relevant when addressing this issue. The Families Commission believes there is significant room for improvement to policy and practice in these areas, particularly with regard to access to paid parental leave and flexible childcare arrangements.

The Families Commission has been advocating for significantly increasing the duration and payment level of paid parental leave. Introducing 'use it or lose it' entitlements for new fathers would provide some New Zealand families with a greater ability to realise their paid work and family care preferences in the period following the birth of a child. It would also help to ease some of the financial burdens faced by young families who feel they need to work long hours to earn an adequate income to support their family.

Greater efforts to increase access to high-quality, affordable and appropriate early childhood care and out of school services (OSS) can provide families who work long hours with greater choices about how to balance their paid work and childcare commitments. The Families Commission's research on OSS and access to early childhood education and care for those working non-standard hours, found that for parents with children, lack of access to available, high-quality and affordable childcare was a major barrier to participation in paid work (Bellett & Dickson, 2007; Moss, Hill & Wilson, 2008). In turn, as this report has illustrated, participation in paid work and raising educational qualifications can also be an important route out of low living standards for families.

Other findings from this research are of interest to both policymakers and employers, particularly the impact working long hours has on fatigue, stress and productivity. These include:

- > Long hours of work can affect productivity. By addressing working hours and job size issues businesses can improve their bottom line and increase employee satisfaction and retention of skilled staff.
- > Long hours of work are accompanied by fatigue and stress. This may have significant health and safety implications in some occupational areas.
- > Long hours of work are driven, in many cases, by the culture of both workplaces and industries, with this influencing employees' perceptions of the feasibility of flexible work arrangements.
- > Employers need to be encouraged and supported to look at whether they have a long working hours culture. The attitude of individual managers is also crucial. Further work to explore strategies in the workplace that ameliorate the impact of long working hours could have significant benefits that go beyond their impact on family functioning and wellbeing to improve workplace performance.
- > Our research participants saw educational qualifications as providing access to wider occupational choices allowing them to move to occupations that did not require long hours to make ends meet. Further consideration should be given to how to support workers who have limited education to obtain qualifications and skills that support job mobility. Upskilling workers may also impact positively on workplace productivity.



REFERENCES

- Alexander, M., & Baxter, J. (2005). 'Impacts of work on family life among partnered parents of young children'. *Family Matters* 72 (Summer): 18–25.
- Barnett, R. (1998). 'Toward a review and reconceptualization of the work/family literature'. *Genetic, Social and General Psychology Monographs* 124: 125–158.
- Baxter, J. (2007). 'When Dad works long hours: How work hours are associated with fathering 4–5-year-old children'. *Family Matters* 77: 60–69.
- Behnke, A., & MacDermid, S. (2004). *Family Wellbeing. Sloan Work-Family Network*. Retrieved 12 March 2008 from http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/encyclopedia_entry.php?id=235 &area=All
- Bellett, D., & Dickson, M. (2007) When School's Out: Conversations with parents, carers and children about out of school services. Research Report 01/07. Wellington, New Zealand.
- Bianchi, S.M., Robinson, J., & Milkie, M. (2006). *Changing Rhythms of American Family Life*. Russell Sage Foundation, New York.
- Brett, J.M., & Stroh, L.K. (2003). 'Working 61 plus hours a week: why do managers do it?' *Journal of Applied Psychology* 88(1): 67–78.
- Callister, P. (2005). 'Overworked families? Changes in the paid working hours of families with young children, 1986 to 2001'. *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand* 24: 160–184. <http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/publications/msd/journal/issue24/24-pages160-184.pdf>
- Callister, P. (2004). 'Changes in working hours for couples, 1985 to 2001'. *Journal of Employment Relations* 30(2): 51–64.
- Caruso, C.C. (2006). 'Possible broad impacts of long work hours'. *Industrial Health* 44: 531–536.
- Coverman, S. (1989). 'Role overload, role conflict, and stress: Addressing consequences of multiple role demands'. *Social Forces* 67: 965–982.
- Crouter, A., Bumpus, M., Head, M., & McHale, S. (2001). 'Implications of overwork and overload for the quality of men's family relationships'. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 63 (May): 404–416.
- Dembe, A.E., Erickson, J.B., Delbos, R.G., and Banks, S.M. (2005). 'The impact of overtime and long work hours on occupational injuries and illnesses: New evidence from the United States'. *Occupational and Environmental Medicine* 62: 588–597.
- Department of Labour. (2006). *Work-Life Balance in New Zealand: A snapshot of employee and employer attitudes and experiences*. Department of Labour, Wellington.
- Department of Labour. (2008). *Work-life balance and flexibility in New Zealand: A snapshot of employee and employer attitudes and experiences in 2008*. Department of Labour, Wellington.
- Department of Trade and Industry. (2007). *The Third Work-Life Balance Employee Survey: Main findings*. Employment Relations Research Series 58. <http://www.dti.gov.uk/files/file38388.pdf>
- Dermott, E. (2006). 'What's parenthood got to do with it?: Men's hours of paid work'. *The British Journal of Sociology* 57(4): 619–634.
- Drago, R., Black, D. And Wooden, M. (2005) *The Existence and Persistence of Long Work Hours*. Paper presented at the 2005 HILDA Survey Research Conference, University of Melbourne, 29–30 September http://melbourneinstitute.com/hilda/conf/conf2005/confpapers/Session%206B_Lifestyle/Wooden,%20Mark.pdf
- EEO Trust. (2005). *Parenting and paid work – online survey analysis*. <http://www.eeotrust.org.nz/content/docs/reports/EEO%20Trust%20Working%20and%20Parenting%20Report.doc>
- Fagnani, J., & Letablier, M. (2004). 'Work and family life balance: The impact of the 35-hour laws in France'. *Work, Employment and Society* 18(3): 551–572.

- Families Commission. (2005). *Focus on Families: Reinforcing the importance of family*. Wellington.
- Families Commission. (2007). It's About Time: Towards a parental leave policy that gives New Zealand families real choice. Research Report No 3/07. Families Commission, Wellington, New Zealand.
- Fursman, L. (2008). *Working Long Hours in New Zealand: A profile of long hours workers using data from the 2006 Census*. Department of Labour and the Families Commission, Wellington.
- Fursman, L. (2007). *Long Working Hours in New Zealand: Evidence and research gaps*. Department of Labour, Wellington.
- Golden, L., & Wiens-Tuers, B. (2006). 'To your happiness? Extra hours of labor supply and worker wellbeing'. *The Journal of Socio-Economics* 35: 382–397.
- Grosch, J.W., Caruso, C.C., Rosa, R.R., & Sauter, S.L. (2006). 'Long hours of work in the U.S.: Associations with demographic and organizational characteristics, psychosocial working conditions, and health'. *American Journal of Industrial Medicine* 49: 943–952.
- Healy, E. (2000). 'The shift to long working hours: A social and political crisis in the making'. *People and Place* 8(1): 38–50.
- Heidmarsdottir, R. (2002). *Retirement fantasies and other coping strategies of employees experiencing work-life conflicts*. PhD dissertation, University of Texas, Austin.
- Hird, S. (2003). *Individual wellbeing: A report for the Scottish Executive and Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics*. Retrieved 12 March 2008 from <http://209.85.173.104/search?q=cache:c7r26Xdeap4J:www.scotpho.org.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp%3FIID%3D2629%26sID%3D1757+susan+hird+wellbeing+a+brief+review&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=3&gl=nz>
- Hoschschild, A. (1989). *The Second Shift*. New York: Avon.
- Hoschchild, A. (1997). *The time bind: when work becomes home and home becomes work*. Metropolitan Books, New York.
- Hochschild, A. (2007). 'Through the crack of the time bind: From market management to family management'. *Anthropology of Work Review* XXVIII(1): 1–8.
- Hughes, D., Galinsky, E., & Morris, A. (1992). 'The effects of job characteristics on marital quality: Specifying linking mechanisms'. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 54: 31–42.
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. (2007). *It's About Time: Women, men, work and family*. http://www.hreoc.gov.au/sex_discrimination/its_about_time/index.html
- Jacobs, J., & Gerson, K. (2001) 'Overworked individuals or overworked families: Explaining trends in work, leisure, and family time'. *Work and Occupations* 28:1: 40–63.
- Lee, Y. and Waite, L.J. (2005) 'Husbands' and Wives' Time Spent on Housework: A Comparison of Measures.' *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 67(2):328–336.
- Maume, D.J. and Bellas, M.L. (2001) 'The Overworked American or the Time Bind? Assessing competing Explanations for Time Spend in Paid Labor.' *The American Behavioural Scientist*. 44(7): 1137–1156.
- MacInnes, J. (2005). 'Work-life balance and the demand for reduction in working hours: Evidence from the British Social Attitudes Survey'. *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 43(2): 273–295.
- McPherson, M. (2004). *Paid Work and Personal Relationships*. EEO Trust. http://www.eeotrust.org/nz/content/docs/literature_review.doc
- Messenger, J.C. (2004). *Finding the Balance: Working time and Workers' Needs and Preferences in Industrialized Countries – A summary of the Report and its Implications for Working Time Policies*. Paper presented at the 9th International Symposium on Working Time. 26–28 February, Paris. <http://www.cnam.fr/griot/ComSITT/messenger.htm>
- Milligan, S., Fabian, A., Coope, P., & Errington, C. (2006). *Family Wellbeing Indicators from the 1981–2001 New Zealand Censuses*. Statistics New Zealand, The University of Auckland and the University of Otago. Retrieved 12 March, 2008 from <http://www.stats.govt.nz/NR/rdonlyres/118675A4-7F7C-45CB-AAEB-FC019392FC4E/0/FamilyWellbeingReport2006.pdf>

- Ministry of Social Development. (2006a). *The Social Report 2006: Te Pūrongo Oranga Tangata*. Ministry of Social Development, Wellington.
- Ministry of Social Development. (2006b). *Work, Family, and Parenting Study: Research findings*. <http://www.ms.govt.nz/work-areas/social-research/families-whanau/work-family-and-parenting.html>
- Ministry of Social Development. (2004) *The Social Report 2004: Te Pūrongo Oranga Tangata*. Ministry of Social Development, Wellington.
- Moss, J., Hill, R., & Wilson, K. (2008). *Juggling Acts: How parents working non-standard hours arrange care for their pre-school children*. Research report 6/08. Families Commission, Wellington.
- New Zealand Council of Trade Unions. (2002). *Thirty Families: Interim report of the Thirty Families Project: The impact of work hours on New Zealand workers and their families*. http://www.nzctu.org.nz/policy/1027290655_21731.html
- OECD. (1998). *OECD Employment Outlook*. Paris: OECD.
- OECD. (2005). *Policy Brief: Babies and Bosses: Balancing work and family life*. Paris: OECD.
- Pittman, J. (1994). 'Work/family fit as a mediator of work factors on marital tension: evidence from the interface of greedy institutions.' *Human Relations* 47: 183–209.
- Pocock, B., & Wilson, L. (2001). *The Effect of Long Hours on Family and Community Life: A survey of existing literature*. Report for the Queensland Department of Industrial Relations. <http://www.sapo.org.au/pub/pub1241.html>
- Relationships Forum. (2007) *An Unexpected Tragedy: Evidence for the connection between working patterns and family breakdown in Australia*. www.relationshipsforum.org.nz
- Reynolds, J. (2004). 'When Too Much is Not Enough: Actual and Preferred Work Hours in the United States and Abroad.' *Sociological Forum*, 19:1, 89–120.
- Reynolds, J., & Aletaris, L. (2007). 'Work-family conflict, children and hour mismatches in Australia'. *Journal of Family Issues* 28(6): 749–772.
- Reynolds, J. (2004) 'When Too Much is Not Enough: Actual and Preferred Work Hours in the United States and Abroad.' *Sociological Forum*, 19:1, 89–120.
- Schor, J. (1999). *The Overspent American: Why we want what we don't need*. Perennial, New York.
- Schor, J. (1991). *The Overworked American: The unexpected decline in leisure*. Basic Books, New York.
- Strazdins, L., Korda, R.J., Lim L., Broom, D.H., and D'Souza, R. (2004). 'Around-the-clock: parent work schedules and children's wellbeing in a 24-h economy'. *Social Science and Medicine* 59: 1517–1527.
- Strazdins, L., Clements, M.S., Korda, R.J., Broom, D.H., and D'Souza, R. (2006). 'Unsociable Work? Nonstandard Work Schedules, Family Relationships, and Children's Well-Being.' *Journal of Marriage and Family* 68 (2): 394–410.
- UMR Research. (2003). *Perceptions and Attitudes Towards Work-life Balance in New Zealand*. Report prepared for the Department of Labour, Wellington.
- van Wanrooy, B., and Wilson, S. (2006) 'Convincing the toilers? Dilemmas of long working hours in Australia. Work,' *Employment and Society*, 20(2), 349–368.
- Weston, R., Gray, M., Qu, L., & Stanton, D. (2004). *Long Work Hours and the Wellbeing of Fathers and their Families.*, Research paper 35. Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.
- Weston, R., Qu, L., & Soriano, G. (2002). 'Implications of men's extended work hours for their personal and marital happiness'. *Family Matters* 61 (Autumn): 18–25.
- Wharton, A., and Blair-Loy, M. (2002) 'The "Overtime Culture" in a Global Corporation: A Cross-National Study of Finance Professionals' Interest in Working Part-Time.' *Work and Occupations*, 29(1): 32–63.
- White, J., & Beswick, J. (2003). Working Long Hours. Health and Safety Laboratory, *WPS/02/10*. http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/hsl_pdf/2003/hsl03-02.pdf
- Williams, J. (2000) *Unbending Gender: Why Work and Family Conflict and What to Do About It*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Zodgekar, N., & Fursman, L. 2008. *Give and Take: Families' perceptions and experiences of flexible work in New Zealand*. Research report 4/08. Families Commission, Wellington.

Families Commission research reports

- | | | | |
|------|---|------|--|
| 1/05 | <i>Review of New Zealand Longitudinal Studies</i> , May 2005. | 1/08 | <i>Elder Abuse and Neglect: Exploration of risk and protective factors</i> , January 2008. |
| 2/05 | <i>Review of Parenting Programmes</i> , June 2005. | 2/08 | <i>Putting the Kids First: Caring for children after separation</i> , April 2008. |
| 3/05 | <i>Beyond Zero Tolerance: Key issues and future directions for family violence work in New Zealand</i> , August 2005. | 3/08 | <i>The Kiwi Nest: 60 years of change in New Zealand families</i> , June 2008. |
| 4/05 | <i>Focus on Families: Reinforcing the importance of family</i> , October 2005. | 4/08 | <i>Give and Take: Families' perceptions and experiences of flexible work in New Zealand</i> , September 2008. |
| 5/05 | <i>Methodologies for Analysing the Impact of Public Policy on Families: A conceptual review</i> , October 2005. | 5/08 | <i>Reaching Out: Who New Zealanders turn to for relationship support</i> , September 2008. |
| 1/06 | <i>What Makes Your Family Tick?</i> , March 2006. | 6/08 | <i>Juggling Acts: How parents working non-standard hours arrange care for their pre-school children</i> , September 2008. |
| 2/06 | <i>Review of the Empirical Literature Assessing the Impacts of Government Policies on Family Form</i> , April 2006. | 7/08 | <i>New Kiwis, Diverse Families: Migrant and former refugee families talk about their early childhood care and education needs</i> , December 2008. |
| 1/07 | <i>When School's Out: Conversations with parents, carers and children about out of school services</i> , February 2007. | 8/08 | <i>Beyond Reasonable Debt: A background report on the indebtedness of New Zealand families</i> , December 2008. |
| 2/07 | <i>Moving On: Changes in a year in family living arrangements</i> , February 2007. | 1/09 | <i>Family-centred Communities: The planning process</i> , February 2009. |
| 3/07 | <i>It's About Time: Towards a parental leave policy that gives New Zealand families real choice</i> , August 2007. | | |

Reports are available on the Commission's website or contact the Commission to request copies:

Families Commission
PO Box 2839
Wellington 6140
New Zealand
Telephone: 04 917 7040
Email: enquiries@nzfamilies.org.nz

www.nzfamilies.org.nz

Wellington office

Public Trust Building, Level 6
117–125 Lambton Quay
PO Box 2839, Wellington 6140
Phone 04 917 7040
Fax 04 917 7059

Auckland office

AMI House, Level 5
63 Albert Street, Auckland 1010
Phone 09 970 1700

Email

enquiries@nzfamilies.org.nz

Commission website

www.nzfamilies.org.nz

***The Couch* website**

www.thecouch.org.nz