

The Experience of Unemployment in Three Victorian Regions

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THE EXPERIENCE OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN THREE VICTORIAN REGIONS

by

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SWRC REPORTS AND PROCEEDINGS

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THE EXPERIENCE OF UNEMPLOYMENT
IN THREE VICTORIAN REGIONS

Findings of a survey carried out by the
Brotherhood of St Laurence in Victoria in
collaboration with the Social Welfare Research
Centre in New South Wales

by

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FOREWORD

This report is one of the publications resulting from a joint project on unemployment which was planned, devised and carried out by staff at the Social Welfare Research Centre (in particular by Bettina Cass, Pauline Garde and Diana Encel) and by Graeme Brewer at the Brotherhood of St Laurence. The project examined unemployment both in New South Wales and Victoria.

The object of the research was to collect information on the labour market, education and job training, income and housing situation of unemployed people, their job seeking networks, labour market training aspirations, and income security and other social welfare needs. The interview studies were planned with a regional focus because it was our contention that the experience of unemployment, and the job training and job creation programmes required to combat it must be explored and understood in a regional context. Local labour markets require study in relation to regional housing and transport policies. However, the data published here also have implications for income security, social services and labour market training policies which are national in their scope and significance.

Graeme Brewer's findings in the Victorian end of the study are contained in this report, providing the results of his interviews in three regions, an inner city and an outer suburban region of Melbourne and in a country town. A separate report of the survey carried out by the New South Wales team is to be published in due course.

Bettina Cass

1. METHODOLOGY

The present study has two main aims: to shed further light on the impact of unemployment on people who cannot find work and to extend community awareness about the nature and effects of unemployment. In so doing it aims further to highlight implications for social policy.

This report forms part of a larger study that is being conducted by the Social Welfare Research Centre at the University of New South Wales and by a Melbourne-based voluntary welfare organisation, the Brotherhood of St Laurence. The study is being funded by the Social Welfare Research Centre. This publication discusses and analyses data gathered in three Victorian areas: Fitzroy-Collingwood, Frankston and Bairnsdale.

An interim report entitled *On the End of a Plank* that outlines data gathered in the Frankston area was published in July, 1982.

The research design allowed for the collection of data in Victoria and in New South Wales in three geographic areas and for three broad age groups so as to give a representative spread of unemployed people.

With regard to geography it was decided to sample in an inner urban area, an outer metropolitan area and in a rural area in both States. For the purposes of this study the inner urban region was defined as being within five miles of the central post office. The outer metropolitan area was to be roughly twenty miles from the centre of the capital, far enough away for the impact of unemployment to be different than for respondents in the inner urban area. The rural area was to be beyond commuting distance to the capital city and not to be dominated by a single industry.

It was anticipated that the social, economic and psychological impact of unemployment may well be experienced differently according to age and family circumstances, as well as according to location. Thus, within each area the sample was broken down so as to represent unemployed people under 25 years of age; unemployed people in their 'family-formation' years, with a dependent child or children; and unemployed people 45 years of age or more.¹

An endeavour was made to include, for each area, 15 interviewees in each age category. Thus, for example, in Frankston there were 15 unemployed interviewees under 25 years of age, 15 in their family-formation years and

15 who were over 45 years of age.

Table 1: Profile of Unemployed Sample

		Inner Urban		Outer metropolitan		Rural		Sub-Total	Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Under 25	M	9		9		11		29	45
	F		6		6		4	16	
Family Formation	M	11		11		10		32	46
	F		4		5		5	14	
45 +	M	15		14		7		36	39
	F		-		2		1	3	
		35	10	34	13	28	10		
Total		45		47		38			130

Despite strenuous protracted effort, the sample quota for older workers in the rural area could not be fulfilled without unduly delaying the completion of this report. They proved just too difficult to locate, short of sitting in pubs and directly approaching people. Due to a belief that the stigma about being unemployed was often acute, especially for older workers in rural districts, it was decided that public approaches for interview should not occur.

The total sample of unemployed interviewees in Victoria is 130. Comparable samples are being gathered, and the results reported upon, in New South Wales.

A sample of 24 employed people - 15 males and 9 females - has also been gathered in the current study. The control group was matched, insofar as possible, on factors of age, place of residence, gender and usual occupation. Lack of resources means that the size of the control group is inadequate. Hence, caution has been exercised in drawing any comparisons with the experimental group. Since a control group is also being included in the New South Wales part of the study, the addition of that sample will enable more detailed comparative analyses to be made at a later date.

A peculiar difficulty with incorporating a proper control group in a study of unemployment is the virtual impossibility of controlling for the key variable of income. How, when unemployment benefit was \$40 weekly for people under 18 years of age, could one find an employed person of comparable age with a comparable income? To varying degrees this problem exists across the age range. Thus, the constant danger is that perceived differences between the experimental and control group may be due to income level rather than employment status.

Data for the present study have been gathered using a questionnaire design. It contains 118 items that were designed to elicit data on: personal details of respondents; employment history; employment situation of other household and family members; income; housing situation; expenditure; health; child care; job-seeking experience; job training; social welfare and social life.

Following a pilot study, pre-coded categories were established for most of the questionnaire items; however, several other items that involved detailed, descriptive data were left open-ended. Data have been analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.

The totals in the tables reported in the text and in the appendix vary slightly for two reasons. First, some interviewers occasionally missed recording information with regard to each item of the questionnaire. Secondly, since some interviewees had never participated in the labour force certain questions could not yield data for the entire sample.

The definition of unemployment in this study went beyond official criteria used by the Commonwealth Employment Service and the Australian Bureau of Statistics, that is, of people registered for work or unregistered but currently actively seeking work and not employed at all. In this study, included among unemployed people were: discouraged workers - those who wished to work, but had given up looking for it because of the state of the labour market; under-employed workers - those who had casual or part-time work, but who sought to work a greater number of hours; 'retired people' who sought paid work; and people in educational institutions who would have left for paid work had it been available. Thus, the definition of unemployed people used here incorporates 'hidden' unemployed people, as well as those who are generally counted among the ranks of the unemployed.

The sample was gathered from a variety of sources: Community Youth Support

Scheme projects; welfare and other community agencies; through the networks of unemployed people; and by word of mouth. In some towns, substantial co-operation was received from Commonwealth Employment Service officers.

Given the resources for the study it was not possible to identify the total unemployed population of an area and to sample randomly from among it. Consequently, within each region and age category, the sample was gathered purposively in an attempt to give a broad, representative picture of the population of unemployed people.

A leaflet describing the essential nature and purpose of the study and the criteria for inclusion was given to local people and organizations with whom unemployed people were likely to be in contact. Prior to each interview the respondent was given a copy of that leaflet to read or else the nature and purpose of the study was described verbally.

Interviews with unemployed people in Frankston were conducted by the writer. In Fitzroy-Collingwood they were conducted by a psychology student with interviewing experience. Local interviewers were appointed in the rural area and were trained if necessary.

The process of locating a representative sample of unemployed people within different regions was slow. Once unemployed people were asked directly whether they would take part in the study, however, only a very small number declined. Usually, they seemed keen to relate their circumstances to an interested person and were extremely open about their socio-economic and emotional circumstances.

An earlier research study by the Brotherhood of St Laurence informed the structuring of elements of this project.² The theoretical framework for this study is contained in a report published in 1981 by the Social Welfare Research Centre.³

2. PROFILE OF SAMPLING AREAS

(a) Inner urban: Fitzroy-Collingwood

These two adjoining suburbs are within a few kilometres of the centre of Melbourne. Fitzroy is actually adjacent to the north-eastern fringe of the central business district. The areas are traditionally working-class in character, although the last couple of decades has witnessed the gentrification of sizable portions of these areas, especially in North Fitzroy where the attraction of Victorian housing, parkland, and closeness to entertainment and jobs has enticed professional and upwardly mobile people.

Consequently, housing prices have soared and rental stock has become more scarce, displacing many working-class families. Despite the influx of more affluent residents and the increase in more expensive shops and restaurants much of the area is still working-class in character. This is most evident with regard to the dense population of low-income residents in high-rise public housing in Fitzroy and in Collingwood.

Overseas-born people, especially Greeks, Italians, Turks and Yugoslavs, are disproportionately represented in the area. The area also comprises many single-parent families and a large number of elderly people.

The industrial base in the area has been mainly manufacturing in small firms. The rapid decline in manufacturing industry in Australia has caused large-scale redundancies in this area, particularly in industries such as clothing. Thus, opportunities for work for young people have also deteriorated.

On the surface, the area appears well-served by welfare agencies. The two local councils have social welfare staff and facilities, in child care and for frail, aged people, for example. Hostel accommodation and other day-care services for aged people are provided by voluntary and statutory organisations. Several innovative programmes - a housing co-operative and a family day-care facility, for example - operate in the area. The impression of comprehensive and adequate social services is fostered further by the location of the headquarters in the area of organizations such as the Brotherhood of St Laurence, Community Child Care and the Victorian Council of Social Service. In fact, all social service agencies in the area report that demand constantly exceeds supply. The advent of large-scale unemployment has caused increasing demand for local services, especially for material aid.⁴

Transport in the area is among the best in the State for people travelling to the city or a short distance along one of the major arterial roads. However, workers requiring transport to get to factories that begin operating early in the morning often find it unreliable and inadequate. In addition, travelling just a few kilometres 'across country' often necessitates travelling into the central business district and out again, making travel costly and time-consuming.

Although the recorded level of unemployment in this area is below the national average it is serious and high nonetheless.⁵ The existence of large-scale unemployment is evident, not merely from the steady stream of people entering the Commonwealth Employment Service offices, but from other indicators: young people congregating around pin-ball machines; women lining up for emergency relief; working-age Greek men playing cards in a local cafe.

(b) Outer metropolitan: Frankston

Frankston is a bayside city on the outer rim of an urban sprawl. It is approximately 42 kilometres from the centre of Melbourne. Beyond it lie semi-rural and less populous bayside areas. A railway line links Frankston to the city of Melbourne. Local bus services operate during daylight hours, but are not well co-ordinated with railway services. Bus services 'up the line' or 'across country' operate extremely infrequently.

Frankston has a population of about 80,000. Around a quarter of the people living there were born outside Australia; however, the area is overwhelmingly Anglo-Saxon. Most overseas-born residents have emigrated from the British Isles and have lived in Frankston for several years.

The area is traditionally politically conservative, although recently it has become a 'swinging' electorate. It has a high rate of car ownership, white-collar workers and home-buyers. A large percentage of residents is in the years of family formation, but child care services are highly inadequate.

Housing prices are fairly stable and slightly below inner urban prices. Rents, however, are quite comparable with those nearer the capital city. There is a drastic shortage of low-rental housing: long waits apply for public housing; accommodation in caravans is expensive and especially insecure. The low rental housing that does exist tends to be in isolated areas.

Recently the image of Frankston as an upper-middle class area with people living comfortably amid bushy native flora and close to the beach has waned. The more affluent groups are clustered in a few residential pockets. Some other areas are more socially mixed while others - relatively inland - are predominantly working-class in character. Street riots by young people several years ago focussed media attention on the social problems of the area, especially its disproportionately high rate of youth unemployment.

Frankston has one of the highest rates of registered unemployment to vacancies in the country (Appendix 2). Commonwealth Employment Service staff report that some skilled jobs, in the metal trades, for example, cannot be filled from among local registrants. Overall, however, there is a general and serious shortfall of jobs. There is no substantial industrial base in the area. Most employment is in small manufacturing industries or in the retail trade. Employment in the retail industry is diminishing, chiefly due to the growth of large, self-service stores at the expense of smaller, more labour-intensive shops.

There is some seasonal work on the peninsula, beyond Frankston, in the tourist industry or in picking vegetables or fruit. A blackboard in the entrance of the local Commonwealth Employment Service office advertised part-time positions for mushroom-pickers who are between 5'4" and 5'8" in height and between 8 and 10 stone in weight. In the space of ten minutes, on a day that the staff described as 'quiet', 30 people entered the office. Most headed directly for the 'self-service' noticeboards. The jobs are mainly for skilled workers some 10-25 kilometres away; invariably they will be snapped up by unemployed people nearer the place of employment. Most require skills, experience, a car of one's own - resources that unemployed people commonly lack. One particular job on the noticeboard grimly underlines the dearth of local employment opportunities: a deck-hand with extensive experience in tuna fishing is wanted - in a remote part of the Northern Territory.

(c) Rural: Bairnsdale

A Victorian rural town with a population of about 10,000, Bairnsdale is situated in East Gippsland, 280 kilometres from Melbourne. Between Melbourne and Bairnsdale lies the Latrobe Valley, the only site of growth in employment in the region. The Latrobe Valley is significant for power generation in the State and, increasingly, for oil and gas exploration. Beyond Bairnsdale lie timber forests stretching to the New South Wales border. Around the

Gippsland Lakes and along the eastern coast is a significant tourist and fishing industry.

Increased interest rates and an ensuing decline in the building industry have been reflected in a decline in the timber industry. Such a decline may dramatically alter the viability and social fabric of small towns set in the midst of timber country; in particularly difficult times in the timber industry around 10 per cent of a town may be rendered unemployed within the one week. Accordingly, many young people, especially, are attracted to the Latrobe Valley where there is a prospect of more permanent work and a more stable infrastructure.

The physical beauty and fishing potential of the lakes and coastal region make for a lively tourist industry in the summer months. In peak seasons the population of Lakes Entrance and its environs may multiply to five times its original size. Accordingly, there is a good deal of seasonal work in the area. As with other types of casual work there are widespread reports of exploitation: low pay below award rates; no period of notice; no holiday or sick pay entitlements.

Although there exists a sizable commercial fishing industry in the area this, too, has run into some new difficulties. As the scallop beds around Lakes Entrance dry up fishermen are forced into more distant waters, thus increasing their costs. Notwithstanding this, some 300 anglers in the area fish all year, weather permitting. About another 700 people employed in boat maintenance, transport, administration and processing are dependent upon the fishing industry.

The major source of employment in the area is primary production - sheep, beef cattle and vegetables. The growth in farm technology and the recent drought have jeopardized employment in agriculture. This in turn, of course, depresses the local service sector.

Within Bairnsdale itself most employment is in the clerical and sales area, in tertiary industry and State Government departments. Technological developments and moves towards self-service have reduced work opportunities, especially for young people aiming to secure a place in the workforce. The growing need among poor farmers to seek a supplementary income 'in town' has increased further the competition for jobs.

Reduced labour market opportunities in Bairnsdale and its environs no doubt contribute to a high level of unrecorded unemployment. Local labour market conditions and poor transport between nearby towns also place additional pressure on young people to leave the area in search of work. Thus, labour market analysis indicates a drop in the male participation rate and a drop in rural employment overall⁶, despite the seeming tendency among female rural workers to acknowledge their workforce membership during periods of recession.⁷

Transport between Bairnsdale and Sale or Lakes Entrance is poor. Ownership of, or access to, a private vehicle is usually essential for employment to be contemplated in other towns in the region.

Welfare workers in the area report that local accommodation is scarce, especially for unemployed people and other low-income earners. A significant number of people have no option but to live semi-permanently in a caravan park.

In terms of ethnic composition, the area is not as homogeneous as appears to the visitor. Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data show that there is a large proportion of Italian-born residents, although the major immigrant groups are British and Irish. New Zealanders, Germans and Dutch are also reasonably well represented. A significant number of Aborigines also live in Bairnsdale and its environs.

In many ways, Bairnsdale appears to be fairly typical of Australian rural towns. It is unhurried, politically conservative and easy with strangers. The relative heterogeneity of the area is not immediately evident. The town area and its institutions are dominated by Anglo-Saxons; but there are small Aboriginal organizations, an Italian pool team, and other indicators of cultural diversity.

The town has a Commonwealth Employment Service office, a Community Youth Support Scheme, and a mixture of voluntary and statutory welfare and housing groups. Unemployment is generally acknowledged to be high and housing to be in short supply. Yet, despite such acknowledgement of structural disadvantage there remains considerable stigma associated with unemployment. Partly as a consequence of this, locating the targetted sample for this study proved to be difficult.

The existence of the Community Youth Support Scheme groups, the steady trickle of people into the Commonwealth Employment Service office and the hub of activity in the pin-ball parlour indicate the level of unemployment. Many more, however, hang around the pubs hoping for news of work or are concealed in their houses or on their small farms, discouraged by the dearth of job opportunities. The relatively high ratio of registered unemployed persons to job vacancies is shown in Appendix 2.

3. PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

As outlined earlier, respondents were recruited for the sample, as closely as circumstances permitted, to create equal representation of unemployed people in inner urban, outer metropolitan and rural areas. Equal representation was also sought according to three 'life-cycle stages': people under 25 years of age; people with a dependent child, or children; and people over 45 years of age without dependants.

The average age of unemployed people in the sample was 34.5 years, compared with 33 years for the employed group. Three-quarters of the unemployed group and almost two-thirds of the employed group were male. Approximately three-quarters of the unemployed sample, and a higher percentage of their employed counterparts, were born in Australia. Only two people were Aboriginal. Among those born overseas, a clear majority was born in the United Kingdom, although people born in southern and northern Europe and in south-east Asia were represented in the sample. Most overseas-born interviewees were established residents, the average number of years of residence in Australia being sixteen. One-fifth of unemployed interviewees born overseas had been living in Australia for two years or less. Most of the sample had been married at some time during their lives; half of the unemployed interviewees remained married or living in a de facto relationship while 13 per cent were separated or divorced. Thus, just over a third of the sample had never married. Virtually identical proportions according to marital status pertain to the employed group in the sample.

On educational criteria it is evident that unemployed people have had less formal education compared with the general population. Over a third of the sample had attended only primary school or completed only two years of secondary schooling; three-quarters had not proceeded beyond Year 10. A significant sex difference occurred on this factor: overall, unemployed women in the sample had a better formal education than unemployed males, although none of the females had proceeded to tertiary education. In addition, older unemployed workers had less formal education than younger workers. Only about a quarter of unemployed interviewees had received any formal educational training after their time at school (Appendix 3, Tables 1 and 2).

4. EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

An analysis of unemployed people's employment history highlights their relatively low status and marginality in the workforce. Approximately a half had been engaged in unskilled or semi-skilled work in their most recent job. This was especially the case for males. Females had been more heavily concentrated than males in sales and clerical work where economic downturn and technological development left them highly vulnerable to unemployment. Only 3 per cent of the sample of jobless people had been engaged in professional occupations immediately before their current period of unemployment. The distribution of prior employment in unskilled and semi-skilled occupations was equal for young and older unemployed workers, despite the marginally better educational qualifications of younger workers. Young unemployed females had been highly represented in the sales and clerical area. No jobless women had been employed in a trade and only 9 per cent of jobless men had worked as tradesmen in their past job.

These figures emphasise the segmentation of the labour market according to gender and the concentration of unemployed people in low status and marginal jobs during their periods in the labour force.

Analysis of the industry in which unemployed people were last working underscores their susceptibility to joblessness and the segmentation of the labour force by sex. Unemployed people in the sample had, in their previous job, most commonly worked in the manufacturing sector or in the retail trade. Manufacturing industry in Australia (and especially in Victoria) has been in decline for a considerable period⁸ and the growth of large, self-service stores at the expense of smaller, more labour-intensive shops has taken its toll on employment opportunities in the retail trade. Cross-tabulation of type of industry in which unemployed interviewees worked, by gender reveals a statistically significant difference. While males were most heavily represented, in order, in manufacturing, construction, retail trade and agriculture, females were most heavily represented in the retail trade, recreation, manufacturing and community services. Although the overwhelming majority had been full-time wage-earners a sizeable proportion (33 per cent of females and 18 per cent of males) had been part-time or casual workers in their last job. In contrast, all bar one of the control group sample of currently employed respondents were in full-time work.⁹ (Appendix 3, Tables 3, 4, 5, 6)

Those interviewees who were unemployed had also experienced a shorter duration

of employment in their last job compared with the control group sample. Whereas 56 per cent of the unemployed group had been in their past job for less than a year this applied to only 27 per cent of the control group. The latter group had also more commonly left past work voluntarily compared with the jobless group (Appendix 3, Tables 7, 8, 9, 10).

While 58 per cent of unemployed respondents had not been unionised members of the labour force in their past job only a further 8 per cent of employed interviewees had union coverage. Neither group had significantly high membership of trade unions. But the similarity of the employed and unemployed groups in this regard indicates the degree of impotence of unions in influencing the industrial decisions of employers, especially at a time of economic recession. As a study by O'Neill points out:

'Few unions were in the position to monitor changes or to predict areas of special need among their membership with any precision. Rather they relied on their unique capacity to interpret industrial behaviour which, while providing essential insights into the process of change, tended to place them in a reactive rather than active role.'¹⁰

Despite a strong concern with unemployment by many unions their role is hampered by their lack of detailed information about groups experiencing particular vulnerability in the labour market. In any case, decisions about employment are initiated by employers rather than by unionists and, moreover, data from this study show that a large percentage of vulnerable workers (in low-skilled jobs) are not unionised.

Significantly, none of the group of unemployed people under 25 years of age had been in a professional or administrative job immediately prior to their unemployment. Young people were over-represented in their last occupation in sales or clerical jobs. All age groups had been highly represented in process work in the manufacturing industry, leaving them susceptible to unemployment.

Young workers had a range of complex personal and industrial reasons for having left their last job; the dismissal rate was also higher for younger workers, often because they became eligible for an adult wage or because their training subsidy had expired. Older workers, nonetheless, were less likely to have left their job voluntarily. They were more likely to have been made redundant and illness or an industrial accident often played an important part in their decision to leave work 'voluntarily' (Appendix 3, Tables 9 and 10).

Most unemployed workers had been regular wage-earners in their last job. Seventy per cent had been in 'permanent', full-time work; only 11 per cent had been casual workers. On the issue of duration of last occupation by age, however, significant differences do occur. Whereas 81 per cent of unemployed people under 25 years of age had been in their last occupation for less than a full year, usually less than six months, most unemployed people over 45 years of age had been in their past job for more than a year and, for over a quarter of that group, more than five years (Appendix 3, Tables 7 and 8).

These differences reflect the traditionally higher labour turnover of young people and, when combined with analysis of the reasons for leaving the last job, throw doubt on the commonly held belief that when redundancies occur the policy of 'last hired, first fired' prevails. The comparatively long duration of older unemployed workers' last job also helps to explain earlier research findings that such workers seek re-employment over a narrower range of jobs than do younger people.¹¹ Physical health sometimes impedes the search for work among older workers; but younger workers have rarely settled into any industrial location and, having no established concept of their particular place in the labour force, tend to cast around more widely for fresh work.

Despite the greater tendency of older workers to have been union members in their last occupation they were, as noted above, more likely to have had no choice when it came to leaving their job. This finding further demonstrates the relative powerlessness of unions in affecting decisions in regard to staffing policy.

Not surprisingly, given the concentration of manufacturing industry in urban areas and the concomitant lack of decentralization, unemployed workers in the inner urban area were more likely to have been process workers in their last occupation. Rural workers were the least likely to have occupied such jobs. The type of job previously undertaken by inner urban and outer metropolitan unemployed people bore a strong resemblance. Rural unemployed workers in the sample had been disproportionately represented in agricultural and sales work, thus reflecting a narrower range of job options. The relatively wider choice of job opportunities and, perhaps, also, somewhat higher expectations in city areas, probably underpins the finding that country people are more likely to have been made redundant while city-dwellers are more prone to have had some part in the decision to conclude their last job.

Although it may be popularly assumed that rural unemployment is more likely to

derive from casual, seasonal work, compared with urban-based unemployment, the research findings do not bear this out. Temporary or casual work among unemployed rural workers in the sample was only slightly more frequent than among their inner urban and outer metropolitan counterparts. However, whereas a half of unemployed people in urban-based areas had been in their past job for a year or more, this applied to only 32 per cent of those from the rural area. Although the initial form of employment is similar across regions, respondents in the rural area experienced a shorter duration of employment in their last job.

Data on union membership support the marginality of unemployed workers. Less than a fifth had always been union members while in work. Despite popular assumptions that the urban workforce is more highly unionised than the rural workforce, unemployed rural workers in the study were as likely to have been in a union in their last job as were urban-based workers. The relative conservatism of rural workers has often been linked to their lack of industrial unity. Such a link is not borne out by the present findings. Across the sample, however, a gender difference occurred: women were less likely than men to have been union members in their last job. This is known to be a general phenomenon and is often attributed to the more tenuous (part-time or casual) form of female employment. In the present study, too, this appears to be the reason for the lower proportion of women who have been union members in their last job. Only among workers 45 years of age and over was there a sizable percentage (33%) who had always been union members.

People's reasons for leaving their past job were complex and varied. Redundancies accounted for about a quarter of all reasons; for jobless interviewees over 25 years of age nearly a half were forced into unemployment as a result of redundancies in their firms. Usually, up to ten other people had been made redundant simultaneously. About a fifth of the unemployed sample had left their previous job 'of their own accord'. The highest incidence of this was among young people in the inner urban area. Although the labour market is depressed in all areas, particularly for job seekers without formal qualifications, the greater range of industrial activity in the inner urban area may well delude working-class youth into over-estimating their opportunities for replacing an unsatisfying job with one that offers more hope for the future. Certainly, any suggestions that the explanation lies in the attitudes of youth is misguided. Young people were no more likely to have been dismissed than people in their family-formation years and, in any case, dismissal of youth is often contingent upon their increased wage entitlement when reaching

age 18 and upwards, rather than upon their work performance. In addition, if youth unemployment is to be attributed to attitudes of youth, then so-called voluntary unemployment among young people should be constant across geographic regions. The data from this study show that this is not the case.

Reasons for leaving work were often linked to the physical conditions of the job. One young man, for example, 'voluntarily' left his job because of constant coughing arising out of the amount of clay dust that he had to breathe in. For older workers the instigating factor was sometimes a 'bad back' that left them unable to undertake work that was previously available to them.

Unemployed interviewees averaged 40 hours per week in the last job, just a few hours less than the average for those who were still in employment. Women averaged significantly fewer hours than men, again reflecting their more marginal workforce status. As might be expected, this significant difference according to gender extends to average weekly pay.

Among unemployed interviewees the average (mean) weekly take-home pay in their past job was \$161. For employed interviewees the comparable mean was \$225. While these data demonstrate that both the experimental and control groups received an income that was below national average weekly earnings, they emphasise, moreover, the meagre income potential of those who have been found to be the most susceptible to unemployment. Data in the present study confirm earlier findings that the victims of unemployment are generally drawn from the most lowly-paid occupational levels.¹²

Although 18 per cent of the unemployed sample did not know if their income had been at the award level, just over a half of the total sample had been paid at the award rate. Thirteen per cent received an above-award wage and 11 per cent had been paid below the award rate. A handful of respondents had worked in jobs for which no award had been determined. When these figures are set alongside the data showing their average weekly earnings to be well under the national mean, the low workforce status of those who are most vulnerable to unemployment becomes particularly evident. Such a status is also evidenced by the fact that three-quarters of unemployed people received no fringe benefits while in their last job.

Surprisingly, in the light of the popular image of rural workers as being less likely to be protected against exploitation, no one in the country reported having been paid below the award rate in return for their labour.

Perhaps the most significant finding on this issue was that over a third of those unemployed people under 25 years of age did not know whether an award rate had been determined for their last job.

Upon leaving their last job almost a half of the sample of unemployed people received no lump sum payment at all. Most of those who did receive a lump sum took away a small amount of holiday pay in their final pay packet. Only two people received a redundancy payment and only three were entitled to a superannuation payment.

Thus, most were forced out of work with no lump sum payment (or an amount less than \$500) that would help to tide them over their period of unemployment. In addition, most were dismissed without notice. Forty-one per cent were given no notice at all of their job loss; only 5 per cent received notice of four weeks or more. Young workers tended to receive the shortest periods of notice, though for all workers unemployment occurred with little, or no, warning. This finding further underscores the low socio-economic status and inability to plan financially experienced by those workers who are most susceptible to unemployment.

The cost and difficulty of the journey to work are apparently greatest for people in the outer metropolitan area. More than a quarter of all unemployed people had travelled less than a kilometre to work in their past job and nearly three-quarters had travelled less than 10 kilometres. Among those living in the outer metropolitan area, however, a disproportionate number had travelled 20 or more kilometres to work, since there was a grossly inadequate supply of jobs in the local region. In the inner-urban area there is a greater level of local industrial activity which does not force people to find work so far afield. Many rural workers look to other towns or industrial complexes for the possibility of employment; but their choice is to localize their job search or to move elsewhere.

Despite an inadequate transport system, outer metropolitan workers are often obliged to travel long distances in order to find work in the central city or in other outer metropolitan, industrial centres. The location of much manufacturing industry within the mid-suburban belt, determines these journey to work patterns.

Time spent travelling to work reflects the same phenomenon. About a half of the total survey sample spent 15 minutes or less in travelling time. A

disproportionate number of people living in the outer metropolitan area, however, spent more than half an hour travelling each way to their last job.

Disaggregation of journey-to-work data lends support to other researchers who have concluded that 'in all locations, substantially higher proportions of the female workforce live closer to their place of work'.¹³ Data from the present study show that both men and women tended to work near their homes. This is consistent with earlier findings that 'most locations of blue-collar employment ... draw on a workforce which lives nearby'.¹⁴ Among workers in this study who travelled upwards of 15 kilometres to work there was a large preponderance of men. Since women continue to bear the brunt of domestic work they are relatively restricted with regard to the radius of their prospective work-places and, thereby, disadvantaged in their search for work.

Data on employment history highlight the segmentation of the labour force according to gender, the location of workers most vulnerable to unemployment in the secondary labour market and the spatial distribution of employment opportunities.

Employment opportunities continue to be divided substantially along gender lines. Women have traditionally been regarded as secondary income earners whose occupational status has derived largely from domestic work. In keeping with this attitude, employed women are concentrated in jobs such as selling goods for domestic consumption, providing care for children and disadvantaged people, and providing office services. As allegedly secondary income earners they are frequently consigned to the secondary labour market, along with vulnerable male workers.¹⁵

Workers in the secondary labour market tend to have low job skills, less job training, low pay, poor physical conditions, low autonomy and few, if any, fringe benefits compared with workers in the primary labour market. Their jobs involve unusually high levels of turnover and are frequently part-time, temporary or casual. Most importantly, they offer relatively poor security.

Just as the distribution of employment is not random, but derives from class-based disadvantage and unequal opportunity in the labour market, nor is the distribution of unemployment random. Workers in outlying areas, removed from viable industrial centres or complexes, are disadvantaged in the search for work. Inaccessibility to work and training opportunities as a result of location thereby aggravates those class-based disadvantages that pertain to

unemployed workers and their families.

It is not surprising, then, to find from an analysis of the employment situation of other family members that unemployment is unduly concentrated among them.

5. EMPLOYMENT SITUATION OF THE FAMILY

Given the methodology of the present study it follows that most interviewees were living in a family unit of some kind. Most lived with a spouse or with parent(s). Family units tended to be nuclear rather than extended. Only a quarter of unemployed people under 25 years of age lived with unrelated peers. No doubt, this reflects the inadequate supply of low-rental stock as well as the insufficiency of unemployment benefit. It also contradicts still popular notions of a large proportion of unemployed young people pooling resources and living bountifully. The reality is that structural factors such as the availability of cheap rental stock and the impoverishment imposed by the level of unemployment benefit frequently delay the exit of jobless young people from their family home to an independent living situation. This process is delayed, too, by the working-class nature of the families of most unemployed people. For young people, then, the onus is often upon subsidizing family finances rather than enjoying a subsidy from the family that may extend leisure activity or underpin independent living. An analysis of the employment status of the families of unemployed people highlights their class position.

Over a half of the unemployed sample reported that at least one close relative had also been out of work in recent times. In a quarter of those cases more than one close relative had been recently unemployed. And among close relatives who had encountered unemployment a half had done so on two or more occasions.

The incidence of unemployment across families with an unemployed member was high. Their unemployment was often recurrent and for lengthy periods. Two-thirds reported a protracted period of unemployment lasting three months or longer; in a fifth of cases the length of unemployment exceeded a year.

For the control group of employed respondents the results on these variables were remarkably similar. Only with regard to the number of occasions on which close relatives were out of work was there a significant difference between the two sample groups. Since one of the matching criteria was occupational status, such findings are not surprising. They are important findings in indicating the social class nature of unemployment. Workers with low occupational status and few marketable educational skills are clearly the most likely to be rendered unemployed. In current labour market conditions there is an especially high concentration and recurrence of unemployment in

families that are chiefly located in the secondary labour market.

Interviewees also reported a high incidence of unemployment among friends and among people in their neighbourhood. In terms of the number of family members who had previously encountered unemployment and the frequency of their unemployment there were no significant differences across life-cycle categories. Young unemployed people, however, reported a much higher incidence of unemployment among their friends than did older, unemployed workers. This is in keeping with national figures showing a particularly high rate of unemployment among young people, especially young females. Accordingly, young people in the present study were more prone than older people to report a higher incidence of unemployment among their friends. And females were more likely than males to identify a high incidence of unemployment among their friends. This has serious social psychological implications. If young people perceive themselves as part of a generation that has few employment opportunities and, therefore, unpromising life chances, the depression and pessimism that is associated with unemployment may well prove to be most serious for that group. Unemployed people in the outer metropolitan region were less likely to identify a large number of unemployed friends. It is tentatively suggested that this may be due to a more home-based life-style among unemployed people in that region. It is not so much that their friends are better off, but that they have fewer friends.

Structural changes in the economy, in combination with economic recession and public policy, have concentrated unemployment and its associated disadvantages in low income families, whose members have entered jobs in the secondary labour market. This process has not only served to perpetuate socio-economic disparity, it has concentrated excessive disadvantage among already low-income families.

6. JOB-SEEKING EXPERIENCE

Even though everyone in the unemployed group sought to enter the labour force, 11 per cent had not actively sought work in the few weeks immediately prior to the time that they were interviewed. Sometimes this was due to illness or some other temporary cause. Usually, however, it reflected a broad perception, among long-term unemployed people in particular, that there came a point when it was no longer worthwhile searching vigorously for work. While most unemployed people reached this view after a few months of joblessness, it is clear that their general proclivity was to go on searching, nonetheless. The hope of discovering available work was seen as remote, but the search continued in case it bore fruit. Several unemployed people in the survey who were actively looking for work would not have been included in the Australian Bureau of Statistics definition of unemployment, because they were on a pension, or a benefit other than unemployment benefit, or because they were still at school, but wanted to be in employment. Those who had managed to obtain a hour or more of paid work during any ABS survey week would also have been excluded from the official estimate of the level of unemployment.

Commonly, it is long-term unemployed people who feel so discouraged that they abandon, even if temporarily, the search for work. This, too, depresses the level of unemployment that is recorded by the ABS since people who have not actively sought work in the few weeks immediately preceding the survey week are excluded from the total. It also depresses the average duration of unemployment to the extent that workers encountering a prolonged period of unemployment are excluded from the calculation of the mean.

In the present study the mean duration of unemployment was 47 weeks, nearly twice the reported national average at the time of the survey. Over a quarter of unemployed people in the study had been out of work continuously for more than a year. This applied to only 9 per cent of those under 26 years of age, but to 45 per cent of unemployed workers 45 years of age or over (Appendix 3, Tables 16, 17, 18).

The mean duration of unemployment has increased considerably since 1980, but the social, psychological and economic circumstances of the unemployed are aggravated by the related fact that their unemployment may not be confined to one particular job or to one particular period of time. In the slack labour market conditions that have prevailed since 1974, they are increasingly susceptible to recurrent, as well as protracted, periods of employment.¹⁶

Three-quarters of the unemployed sample had been out of work on at least one previous occasion. In the rural areas and among unemployed people under 25 years of age, the proportion that had encountered earlier unemployment reached 85 per cent. Consequently, findings on the duration of unemployment need to be treated circumspectly. Rural workers and young workers exhibit a duration of unemployment that is below average. On closer analysis, however, it is evident that (especially in the case of rural workers) the average duration of unemployment is artificially depressed due to short periods in the labour force that temporarily interrupt long periods of exclusion from anything resembling stable work.

For rural workers, working life is contingent upon climatic conditions as well as local labour market changes and national economic trends. High interest rates, for example, depress the building industry and jeopardize the position of rural workers in the timber industry. Recent drought conditions and a generally higher incidence of seasonal work in rural areas also contribute to instability in the working lives of rural-dwellers.

Young people have traditionally demonstrated a high level of job mobility while trying to find their niche in the workforce. The difference in the current labour market is that their relatively high level of labour turnover has frequently led to a period of unemployment rather than a simple transfer to another job. The degree of job change by young people is by no means entirely voluntary, especially in the past decade. Where young people have attempted to transfer from unsatisfying or stop-gap jobs in current labour market conditions, however, they have often been surprised at the difficulty of finding fresh work.

Nearly a half of the sample of unemployed people had been jobless on at least three occasions prior to their current period of unemployment. Such a figure shows clearly their repetitive consignment to a reserve army of labour, while indicating the degree of economic and social/psychological difficulties which they face.

A preference existed among unemployed interviewees for full-time work in order to relieve their financial problems, and to forge a more viable role in the workforce. Women, upon whom domestic responsibilities primarily continue to fall, were more prone than men to seek, or to settle for, part-time work. Overall, both sexes preferred to work full-time. Women sought, not 'pin-money', but stable and rewarding work. Given the uphill struggle to

find work of any kind, however, more than a quarter of males and more than a third of females were prepared to take either full-time or part-time work. These trends were quite consistent across regions and across age groups.

When asked what type of work they were seeking most unemployed people nominated several occupational categories. Only little more than a third stated that there were no jobs that they would refuse. For several reasons, it would be erroneous to construe such data as indicating weak job motivation among unemployed people. Unemployed people generally possessed few marketable skills. In addition, they lacked confidence or access to training opportunities that would enhance their eligibility for a wider variety of jobs. Furthermore, economic and social factors, for example, not owning a car or not being able to afford to travel long distances to low-paid jobs, inhibited their choice of work.

Earlier research¹⁷ has revealed that, over time, young unemployed workers, in particular, tend to increase the range of jobs they seek as they realize just how grim are their prospects of work. A structural analysis of the data on the extent and kind of work sought is supported by the regional findings. In spite of the image of ruggedness and adaptability among rural Australians in particular, unemployed workers in this study in the rural area were more likely than unemployed workers elsewhere to be seeking work in only one occupational category. The same tendency applied to unemployed women. The segmentation of the labour market along gender lines and the exceedingly limited range of job opportunities in most rural areas further confine the search for work among women and rural workers.

Some jobless interviewees, mostly young people, shunned factory work in favour of higher status work with better prospects. As unemployment lengthened, however, the range of desirable work broadened. Young people, who sometimes started out being adamant that they would not accept factory conditions, eventually settled for any job at all in preference to feeling social outcasts without a job. The frustration of many young people was encapsulated in the remark of one of them:

'How can you get experience if they don't give you a go?'

The constancy of the search for work and the anxiety associated with it were described by another young person:

'I'm bored. I thought it would be real easy to get a job. I thought maybe I'd be out of work for three to four weeks at most and only those who didn't really want to work didn't find a job. Maybe I should think about going back to school. It's depressing having to constantly look for work and being told you're too young, got no experience, they want experienced people. People think you're "touchy" or a "bludger", but, heck, we do try.'

Personal health factors, such as a back injury, sometimes restricted the range of work to which unemployed people were eligible. Although the problem was not generally serious, in nearly half the cases of unemployed respondents, there were health reasons that somewhat limited the type of work that could be accepted. Among workers in the older age bracket, two-thirds had some health problem that impeded their search for work.

On average, unemployed people were prepared to travel just over three-quarters of an hour in the journey to work. Responses varied substantially across regions and age categories. The maximum amount of time that unemployed people were prepared to travel to work was highest among outer metropolitan interviewees. This reflects the higher gross number of jobs in the centre of Melbourne, which takes roughly an hour to reach from Frankston. Rural workers were also prepared to travel widely. Unless they had their own vehicle, however, they could rarely get to work beyond the outskirts of Bairnsdale to Lakes Entrance (half an hour away) or Sale (about an hour away).

Longer travelling time correlates with higher expenditure, especially for younger people, since their fares constitute a higher proportion of their income than is the case for adults. Yet, young people were willing to travel very widely in search of work. People in their family formation years desired more strongly not to have their travelling time to work exceed half an hour, so that their time with children was not unduly curtailed.

Unexpectedly, the maximum time that unemployed interviewees were prepared to spend travelling to take up a new job opportunity showed no proportional variations between men and women. This finding seems to be at variance with other findings in this study and elsewhere¹⁸ that women seek work over a smaller radius (Appendix 3, Table 19).

The contrasting finding here is probably accounted for by the particularly long period of unemployment and, thereby, the substantial socio-economic disruption that beset jobless women (and their families) in this study.

Consequently, they expressed an intention to constrain their travelling time to a new job no more than did unemployed men in the sample.

Whether that intention — expressed in the context of crushing personal and employment circumstances — was actually borne out in any subsequent labour market participation cannot be answered from the data. But the data do indicate strongly that there would be no difference in the journey-to-work of men and women in the sample if domestic sex roles and/or lack of affordable child-care facilities did not constrain women's search for work.

In their endeavour to find work unemployed people used a variety of sources — the Commonwealth Employment Service, local and other newspapers, places of employment and social networks. Almost without exception they used a mixture of sources, typically trying every available avenue to find a job. Only private employment agencies, which normally charge a fee and have only skilled jobs on their register, were rarely used.

Being registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service, 82 per cent of the sample automatically sought work via that agency. On average, they had been registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service for 16 weeks, but had not been able to discover any work to which they might apply themselves. In each region, in each age category, and for each gender registration with the Commonwealth Employment Service by respondents in this study was high. In the rural area, however, registration with the Commonwealth Employment Service was 22 per cent lower than in the outer metropolitan and inner urban areas combined. This difference cannot be accounted for by sampling methods, nor (at least in regard to the outer metropolitan region where several people lived in semi-rural areas) simply by distance from the Commonwealth Employment Service. Seemingly, the difference reflects the more erratic nature of work for marginal members of the labour force in a rural area, plus the persistence there of a higher level of stigma associated with unemployment. The lower level of registration with the Commonwealth Employment Service in the rural area occurred not because of differences in eligibility for unemployment benefit, but because more jobless people chose not to register with it. Community workers and others in the rural area suggested to researchers for this study that unemployed people in their area felt more stigmatized than their counterparts elsewhere. The data on registration with the Commonwealth Employment Service lend support to that view.

This discussion should not be seen as indicating the persistence of stigma

for unemployed people in rural areas while it has been purged in other areas. Jobless people still often report feeling branded and shamed regardless of where they reside. Such feelings do appear accentuated in rural areas, but are certainly not confined geographically. Analysis of data on income, duration of unemployment and time of registering with the Commonwealth Employment Service underscore this point. Later discussion will show the impoverished state of unemployed people which is exacerbated by the average duration of unemployment for this sample of 47 weeks. Yet, the mean time of being registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service is merely 16 weeks. Fewer rural unemployed people actually registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service; however, among those unemployed people who did so there were no differences of note in the length of time they had been registered.

Since becoming unemployed, interviewees reported vigorous and extensive job-seeking. On average, they had applied for 31 jobs. Usually, job-seeking was most active during the first couple of months of unemployment. Although many people continued to search far and wide for work thereafter, despite their growing knowledge of the dearth of opportunities for them, others curtailed their search for work in the light of such knowledge. They remained vigilant, but tended to cast around less widely, relying more exclusively on the Commonwealth Employment Service or newspapers for information about work once they had investigated the possibilities with friends and local employers.

Contrary to popular notions that the search for work is likely to be more diligent among men, no gender differences were found on this item. Both sexes evidenced strong economic and social motives for work by the nature and extent of their search. Structural rather than personal features dictated the number of job applications. Thus, in the rural area where the actual incidence of available jobs was lowest, so, too, was the average number of jobs for which unemployed people applied. In inner urban and outer metropolitan areas jobless people had access to a large number of factories, shops and offices where they could canvass for work. Parallel opportunities did not exist in the less populous rural areas.

On the dimension of age the number of jobs that were applied for was roughly commensurate with the length of unemployment. Although younger workers generally took extensive measures to find work, older workers — whose duration of unemployment was much longer on average — applied for a larger number of jobs. To some extent this difference occurred, also, because several older workers had better developed job skills and more contacts with

former employers and workmates. As one such person recounted:

'I was just walking down the street and my old boss yelled out, "Are you looking for work?"'

The number of job interviews that unemployed people recalled averaged less than a third of their average number of job applications. Two-thirds of the unemployed interviewees reported having had five or less job interviews; one-third had never been interviewed following a job application. This finding illustrates the relatively low status work for which unemployed people are generally eligible and the degree of competition for scarce jobs. With regard to much of the work for which unemployed people apply, employers frequently base their decision simply on whether a vacancy exists rather than following a careful screening process involving a personal interview. When the latter procedure is followed the clamour for work generally guarantees anyway that the majority of applicants will not obtain an interview. Perhaps, in keeping with the social values of the areas, unemployed people in Frankston were most likely to have had an interview; those in Bairnsdale were the least likely to have been interviewed on the basis of their job application.

Among unemployed people who had been interviewed formally, a third reported that they had received no reply at all from employers. In many other cases a reply came only after unemployed people had inquired themselves of the employer after an untimely delay, or people assumed (or heard on the grapevine) well before a reply reached them that the job had been filled.

'You feel bad enough going for interviews with your ego at rock bottom without them not replying.'

'They said they'd let me know, but didn't. They haven't even got the decency to answer letters.'

Unemployed people express a good deal of acrimony towards employers over this issue. For them, not getting a job and not getting a reply to their applications constitutes a double jeopardy. At a time when they feel fragile, they are rejected twice over by prospective employers whose courtesy and integrity they question when direct replies to their job applications are not forthcoming.

Although direct contacts with employers are important in finding work,

analysis of data on how unemployed people had found their previous job shows that family and social networks were of particular significance. In 39 per cent of cases friends had acted as conduits to employers or had themselves provided employment. In about half as many cases again family members or former bosses provided employment or the avenue to it. A quarter of respondents had found their job via the Commonwealth Employment Service and 18 per cent had done so as a result of following up newspaper advertisements (Appendix 3, Table 20).

In this study use of social and family networks as the means of obtaining work was especially significant in the inner urban and in the rural areas. Outer metropolitan respondents were relatively more reliant on newspaper advertisements as a way of finding work. Young people were relatively more likely to have obtained their past job through the Commonwealth Employment Service. Women were more likely than men to have found their last job through newspaper advertisements, while men (having longer workforce experiences and more work-oriented friends) were somewhat more likely than their female counterparts to have found work via friends.

These findings about use of social networks as a means of obtaining work are indicative rather than conclusive. In this instance, they refer to the success people had in finding work via their networks rather than their actual use of those networks as an endeavour to find work. With regard to young people it is understandable that they should be relatively more reliant on formal institutions than networks in finding work. Generally, the family and social networks to which they have access will be narrower than those of older workers whose longer labour force experience and lifetime of acquaintances tend to provide them with broader and more work-related networks. As well, young people are usually less confident about using their 'contacts'.

The differences between regions in respect of how unemployed people found their previous job may say more about the type of job they occupied than about their use of networks or the prestige of those in their network. Respondents in the outer metropolitan area had occupied somewhat higher status jobs overall compared with respondents in other regions. It may be that the networks of unemployed people are, from time to time, significant conduits to low status jobs, but 'middle' status jobs are more likely to be found through more formal means.

For a number of respondents the general difficulty of finding work is

compounded by the inadequacy of public transport and the unavailability of private transport. In one-third of the households of unemployed interviewees there was no car. When it came to the question of whether unemployed people actually had use of a car for job seeking, however, only 39 per cent always had a car available to them. In half of such cases a car was never available for job seeking, either because the car in the household was used by another member or because the unemployed interviewee did not possess a driver's licence.

Surprisingly, there was virtually no difference on this dimension according to gender. Car ownership was appreciably lower in the households of unemployed people in the inner urban area where 85 per cent of respondents were never able to use a car for job hunting. The availability of a car in searching for work bore a positive correlation with the age of respondents. The older the unemployed person the greater was the chance of being licensed to drive a car and of having unrestricted access to a car during the day.

Despite the poor availability of private transport and the clear shortcomings of public transport, only 43 per cent of unemployed interviewees stated that lack of transport hindered their search for work. Ironically, in large conurbations problems in regard to transport were reported more frequently. This indicates the popular reliance on private transport. In addition, it indicates the parameters that many unemployed people have come to place upon their job hunt due to the sheer unavailability of public transport in some areas and the cost (of any transport) to relatively distant places. Accordingly, although faced with greater distances and higher prices for petrol, rural unemployed people were no more likely to have mentioned problems associated with petrol costs as an issue in the broad nexus between transport and work. Similarly, Frankston interviewees, well aware of the impossibility of finding adequate transport 'across country' to industrial centres such as Dandenong, were not prone to raise this as a problem since Dandenong had come to be perceived as being outside the ambit of their job search. At a local seminar, however, specifically on the question of transport and employment, unemployed participants were generally vociferous in their complaints about poor transport linkages when the unfeasibility of working elsewhere on the outer rim of Melbourne was raised by one participant.

Due to the powerless position of unemployed people and their accumulation of experiences, structural limitations in transport to areas beyond their own residential area, for example, are often accepted as given. A consideration

of 'problems' becomes confined to one's narrower sphere of operation and influence. Thus, personal concerns often do not reflect the scale of structural problems. This is also indicated by unemployed people's response to questions about job training.

Usually, when asked if they were interested in job training, unemployed people looked startled. An overwhelming proportion expressed interest in job training; but since they generally had no expectation of it being available they were surprised to be asked the question. In fact, their low expectation of any job training was well founded, especially among older workers for whom virtually no job training scheme existed. Younger unemployed people knew that their prospects of being offered job training were remote. And among those who had received job training there was generally a feeling of disappointment, or even of having been duped. Among those young people who had received job training under the Special Youth Employment Training Programme most reported little or no actual training. Commonly, they felt used as cheap labour by employers until the job subsidy period expired. Most reported that the only training they had received was a pretence, washing cars or stacking shelves, for example. As one young woman stated:

'I don't want to do any more training courses. I've been on the Special Youth Employment Training Programme five times and been made redundant five times.'

Over half of unemployed interviewees stated that they would like to undertake job training. About a fifth were simply uninterested. Approximately another fifth considered themselves too old for job training or so thoroughly uninformed about options for job training that they felt unable to consider it seriously. The majority of unemployed people, however, wanted to upgrade their skills and, thereby, their overall employability and their prospect of entering a job for which they felt suited. This applied to both sexes, but somewhat more particularly for women whose traditional exclusion from many desirable, skilled areas and whose workforce absence due to child-rearing responsibilities increased their need for job training.

Employed and unemployed people alike generally desired job training. Jobless interviewees wanted to increase their access to the workforce and to jobs they preferred to occupy eventually. A similar desire to reach new job goals and, no doubt, a recognition of the pace of technological change, underpinned the expression of need for job training among employed interviewees. Older

workers (over 45 years of age) saw less hope in job training. Employed and unemployed workers in younger age categories and in all regions, however, indicated that they would grasp training opportunities if they were made available.

In current circumstances they recognized that the question was hypothetical. Their search for work was energetic and resourceful, but lack of employment opportunities or access to work via training courses left them frustrated and economically insecure.

7. INCOME

Notwithstanding the fact that all of the experimental group in the study sought to enter or re-enter the labour force, only 62 per cent were in receipt of unemployment benefit. Eight people were in receipt of an invalid or supporting parents' pension. But nearly a quarter of the sample received no income at all in the survey week. Among the latter group some had delayed their application for unemployment benefit, hoping to find work in the meantime; others felt too proud, or too stigmatized, to depend on benefit for their livelihood. Most jobless respondents had no choice but to apply for unemployment benefit. They had rent to pay, children to support, and other financial commitments. Besides, only very rarely did they have any substantial savings or any other means of financial support.

In being generally reliant on unemployment benefit, jobless people were obliged merely to eke out an existence, since benefit levels for various family types are typically below the autere level of subsistence designated by the Poverty Line.¹⁹ Over three-quarters of unemployed people stated that their income did not cover individual or family needs. For over a half of unemployed people the deficit between need and provision was so great that they reported that their income 'falls very short' of their needs. Unemployed people with dependent children and those living in the inner urban area most frequently reported that their income was entirely inadequate. Across all age groups and across all regions, however, the finding was the same: the income of unemployed people was grossly inadequate and did not allow for modest needs to be met.

When asked for an estimate of what level of benefit would be sufficient to meet their needs, the majority of unemployed people thought they would need more than an extra \$40 per week. These ratings are subjective in nature and interviewees considered different items of expenditure in arriving at their estimates. Almost invariably, however, people did not mentally apportion money for anything like lavish entertainment. In arriving at their figure they considered basic domestic needs that were either not met at the time or met only by sacrificing items that had been taken for granted in periods of employment.

For unemployed people with dependent children the situation was dire. One half of that group indicated that they would need an additional \$75 or more per week to cover family needs. The shortfall between their needs and income

is clearly immense and undoubtedly imposes severe strains on family functioning.

Young people were less likely to report a large gap between their income and assessed need than were people with dependants or older unemployed workers no longer caring for dependent children. Nonetheless, in common with other unemployed people, young people were impoverished by being out of work. That they sought a lesser amount of money in addition to their unemployment benefit compared with other jobless people indicates, contrary to some popular notions, that their requirements were frugal. They sought a modest life-style that left them free of debt and with a small amount of money for social outings. For families, the pressing and costly requirements of food, shelter and other necessities and the paucity of their unemployment benefit left them in a particularly adverse economic situation. Unemployed people, generally, face currently or in prospect, a calamitous financial situation; but in terms of economic disadvantage, it is families with children that are apparently the most seriously affected.

Table 2: Adequacy of Weekly Income X Life-cycle Stage

	Under 25 years %	Family Formation years %	Over 45 years %	Total %
Income 'is adequate'	1.6 (n=2)	0.0 (n=0)	1.6 (n=2)	3.2 (n=4)
Need up to \$20 more	11.3 (n=14)	1.6 (n=2)	5.6 (n=7)	18.5 (n=23)
Need \$21-50 more	9.7 (n=12)	8.9 (n=11)	8.9 (n=11)	27.4 (n=34)
Need \$51-75 more	8.1 (n=10)	5.6 (n=7)	1.6 (n=2)	15.3 (n=19)
Need \$76-100 more	3.2 (n=4)	6.5 (n=8)	3.2 (n=4)	12.9 (n=16)
Need > \$100	2.4 (n=3)	8.9 (n=11)	8.9 (n=11)	20.2 (n=25)
Other	1.6 (n=2)	0.8 (n=1)	0.0 (n=0)	2.4 (n=3)
Total				100.0 (n=124)

The level of unemployment benefit for practically all income units falls below Poverty Line estimates, even when Family Allowances are included in the compilation. As the number of dependent children increases so, too, does the gap between benefit levels and Poverty Line estimates. Accordingly, the finding of penury across the board for unemployed people, and especially for families, is not unexpected. The dramatic size of the gap between need and income, however, emphasises the range of difficulties likely to be faced by unemployed people.

Table 3: Difference Between Poverty Line Estimates and Social Security Entitlement

	Unemployment Benefits with Fam. Allowance*	Poverty Line (Sept. 1983) Head not in workforce	Difference
	\$	\$	\$
Single person (pension)	85.90	88.50	- 2.60
Unemployed adult (benefit)	73.60	109.10	- 35.50
Unemployed junior (benefit)	45.00	109.10	- 64.10
Couple	143.20	125.30	+ 17.90
- with 1 child	160.46	154.80	+ 5.66
- with 2 children	179.97	184.30	- 4.33
- with 3 children	200.97	213.80	- 12.83
Single parent			
- with 1 child	109.16	119.40	- 10.24
- with 2 children	128.67	148.90	- 20.23
- with 3 children	149.67	178.40	- 28.73
* Add \$2 per week if youngest child is under 6 years.			
Family Allowance is paid to all families. These amounts (weekly payments) are:			
1 child	\$ 5.26	3 children	\$21.77
2 children	\$12.77	4 children	\$30.77

The economic problems that confront unemployed people dependent on a meagre benefit are further stressed by an examination of savings or other income to which they may have recourse. Over half of the unemployed people in the study had no savings at all at the time of their interview. Another quarter had \$500 or less in reserve. In other words, only a very small proportion of the unemployed people had any economic buffer. About one in five received some financial help, usually short-term help, from close relatives; but, typically, jobless people had to rely on unemployment benefit in an endeavour to meet their basic needs. Although the savings position of unemployed people was similar across regions, the absence of savings was somewhat worse among inner urban residents. Only in the outer metropolitan area, among a handful of former professional or administrative workers, were they unemployed people with very substantial savings that they could fall back upon during their period of joblessness. This did not dissipate economic despair, however, as they were older workers for whom the \$5,000 or more that they had gradually accrued during their time in the workforce represented an important economic foundation for their retirement. In being plunged into unemployment, rather than planned retirement, they were often forced to erode significantly that economic base.

For most jobless people, having no savings of note, the question of unemployment causing loss of substantial cash reserves did not arise. Notwithstanding this, almost a fifth of the unemployed sample reported having used \$2,000 or more of their savings since the onset of unemployment. Seven people had their savings depleted by more than \$5,000. Needless to say, they were demoralised and full of pessimism. Among those with no savings to begin with, feelings were quite similar. Few people had any protection against poverty and the anxiety and despair that accompany it; but even among those with savings the need to dip into them to supplement their inadequate unemployment benefit soon plummeted them into economic uncertainty and misery.

The clear picture that emerges from data on income underlines the economic struggle of workers in the secondary labour market and their desperate situation when excluded from the workforce. Unemployment benefit was originally conceived as short-term relief, mainly for fractionally unemployed people. Over the past decade structural and cyclical factors have predominated (and high levels of hidden unemployment have been acknowledged). Corresponding with the upsurge in the level of unemployment has been a significant lengthening of the duration of unemployment — from a few weeks to about eight months. Yet, the basis for payment of unemployment benefit has remained unchanged.

Data from this study show the penury that is imposed upon individuals and, especially, families.

Public policy in this area also assumed the ability and willingness of families to support financially their members. This is most apparent in regard to the benefit level of \$45 weekly for unemployed people aged 16 to 17 years old. Even though the families of unemployed people are generally the least able to support economically their members — not least of all due to the high incidence of unemployment within such families — they are expected to do so. The same presumption of financial dependence of young people in paid work does not occur.

Individuals and families encountering unemployment are generally unable to cope financially, at least not without cutbacks and stress. Their earning capacity when in work and the paucity of their unemployment benefit when jobless leave them in a serious financial position that jeopardizes their emotional health and the fulfilment of basic needs, such as housing.

8. HOUSING

The majority of unemployed interviewees were in rented accommodation. Nearly a third were in privately rented accommodation compared with 15 per cent in publicly rented houses or flats. Just over a quarter were owner-occupiers. The remainder boarded with parents or friends, or lived in accommodation such as hostels or caravans.

This distribution of unemployed people according to housing situation reflects several underlying factors. The low-paid jobs in which they had worked, combined with the level of benefit to which they were consigned in slack labour market conditions, denied most of them the opportunity of home ownership. Even among unemployed people over 45 years of age less than half were owner-occupiers; less than a quarter of those in their family-formation years were owner-occupiers and the proportion for people under 25 years of age was, understandably, much lower still.

Despite their poor economic status only a small percentage had the security of public housing. There were more unemployed people living in hostels, in caravan parks (where there is absolutely no security of tenure) or in make-shift situations, such as boarding temporarily with friends, than there were living in public housing. This emphasizes the grossly inadequate supply of public rental-stock, plus the unavailability of public housing for certain groups of people, for example, young single people. Their lack of finance, and the paucity of independent group housing in the public sector, typically maintains their dependence on others, usually parents, or forces them into the private sector or into temporary housing arrangements.

Another factor which influenced the type and permanency of housing for unemployed people was the amount of time they had lived in the area. As many as a third had spent less than six months in their local area. Just under a half had resided in their area for two years or more. Conversely, over a half of the employed sample had lived in their area for five years or more. No doubt, having permanent housing and the comfort that comes with that is an inducement to remaining in one's area. For workers occupying particularly fringe status in the labour force any incentive to remain settled is also undermined by their endeavour to stay in employment. Being especially vulnerable to unemployment they move around more than regular workforce participants out of sheer necessity; and being less able to settle down and

command a regular, adequate income they are also less likely to form an attachment to their area.

This phenomenon was especially common for young people in the inner urban area. Several of them moved close to the centre of the capital city due to the greater volume of jobs and rental properties, although the competition for places in industry and housing paralleled that elsewhere. Even among more established, outer metropolitan and older residents only half had spent five years or more living in their area.

While the time spent in their area is less for the unemployed sample, both employed and unemployed people showed similar reasons for moving to their area in the first instance. Such reasons were quite diverse, although usually they were concerned with familiarity with the area or the proximity of relatives or friends. Many stated simply that they liked the area; this applied particularly to respondents living in the rural area and to older people. Since older people had generally lived in their area for a longer period of time it seems likely that their response on this item may indicate more strongly the attachment they have developed to their own area than their initial reason for moving there. For people with dependent children housing issues alone were a more potent determinant of their move to the area than for other age groups. The offer of public housing or the need to find cheaper housing prompted a geographic move for a quarter of that group. Although data on this item need to be treated circumspectly, twice as many of the employed people in the study stated that they came to their area because they viewed it as a favourable place to live. For unemployed people, housing needs or the wish to reinforce a family or social network were, by contrast, more prominent factors in motivating them to move. Data showing higher housing costs for people with dependants confirm that the reason for changing address among that group was, necessarily, more likely to be related to the structure of the housing market than to personal preference about one's environment. As well, this group most commonly reported problems in meeting housing costs. These data demonstrate that while structural needs were highly prominent in determining their place of abode, the relative sacrifice of personal needs did not relieve their housing problems.

Forty per cent of unemployed people had encountered problems in keeping their housing payments up to date, twice the proportion of the employed counterparts. As one man resignedly put it: 'We pay when we can'. Geographically, among the unemployed, inner urban people met the greatest problems; rural workers

met the fewest problems. Since the housing costs among unemployed people were surprisingly similar across all regions, the reasons for the disparity in problems keeping abreast of housing costs are elusive. Perhaps such a finding reflects lower costs or expectations in regard to certain other items of expenditure in the rural area which, in turn, leaves a relatively larger amount from one's budget for housing costs.

Two unemployed people who were unable to keep their housing payments current were eventually evicted. Most people in a situation caught up with their back-payments by reducing expenditure elsewhere, often on necessities such as clothing or food. Only a fifth of the unemployed people with problems keeping up to date with housing costs borrowed money. Obtaining a loan did not relieve their overall financial plight; and, generally speaking, their family or friends did not have spare cash to lend.

The desire to regain employment led a majority of jobless people either to contemplate moving or actually to move. A quarter of unemployed people had changed their address at some time in the past in order to be in an area where their opportunity to enter the labour force would be enhanced. Young unemployed people, having fewer domestic or financial commitments, were the most likely to have moved address to find work.

Unemployed people in the rural and in the inner urban area were equally as likely to have considered moving to get work elsewhere. The drift of inner urban and rural workers to potential work-places, near and far, is common. Nearly 30 per cent in both areas had moved at least once in the past in search of work. Outer metropolitan unemployed people had actually contemplated moving more often than their counterparts elsewhere in order to find work; but just under a fifth had actually moved in those circumstances. In this study jobless people in Frankston were found to be more entrenched and economically bound to their area than were unemployed workers in other regions. They have lived in the area longer and are more likely to be paying off a house. While they are as open to the idea of moving to seek work further afield, in terms of housing, and length of association with the area, they have more at stake.

People's desperation to find work is indicated by the finding that among those unemployed people who had moved to another area in search of greater employment opportunities, more than a quarter had done so on four or more occasions.

The experience of joblessness posed frequent and considerable housing problems. In spite of the fact that people reported favourably upon their home environment, the majority had considered moving in the hope of increasing their chances of employment. For a sizable proportion, unemployment proved to be so unsettling that they actually took up their chattels and shifted, often on more than one occasion, and usually in vain.

9. EXPENDITURE

About a quarter of unemployed people in the study had a hire purchase commitment. Two-thirds of that group buying goods on credit were within their family-formation years. Younger unemployed people had rarely been able to plan to buy on hire purchase due to their inability to maintain a permanent place in the workforce. In the case of older workers there had been a greater chance to acquire household items and, consequently, less need to rely on high-interest credit.

A comparison of employed and unemployed respondents shows a higher rate of hire purchase commitments among the former group. Probably, in having a more stable work history, the control group is better placed to acquire major household and personal items; but in earning wages that are modest, they are obliged to purchase on terms rather than in cash.

Most unemployed people with hire purchase commitments were paying more than \$40 per month. For the control group and for unemployed people in the rural area the average monthly payment was in excess of \$60, reflecting the wider range and greater value of their hire purchase goods.

The income deficit for unemployment beneficiaries compared with the control group of employed people is underlined by the fact that whereas half of the unemployed interviewees reported problems in maintaining their hire purchase commitments, only 11 per cent of the employed group outlined such problems. For the unemployed group the problems included repossession of goods or threats of repossession. The only problems reported by the employed group were of a minor nature, for example, falling behind slightly or temporarily with repayments. The problems faced by unemployed people were normally of that type, also, but their jobless state and inadequate benefit level did force hire purchase problems upon them more frequently and sometimes those problems were serious and demoralising.

For people without assets or without an above-average income, hire purchase was often the only means for acquiring essential items such as household furniture or a car. Possession of a car is frequently crucial in aiding a search for work, especially to outlying areas or for trips that intersect major transport routes. Without a car many unemployed people are severely restricted in their job search and in their capacity to hold down jobs that have early or late starting and finishing times, or which lie off the main

transport arteries. In about a third of the cases of unemployed people with a major outstanding financial commitment, this involved repayments on a car. For employed workers in the sample the equivalent proportion was even higher.

The financial straits of unemployed people are emphasized by a consideration of other items of expenditure. Almost a fifth reported the existence of outstanding medical bills. In the majority of these cases the debt exceeded \$50. Although the unemployed people were exempted through the Health Care Card system from normal bills with doctors, they were not covered for dental, ambulance, optical or pharmaceutical expenses. Accordingly, their outstanding medical bills were often very high. When combined with an analysis of their income and savings position it becomes abundantly clear that their task of repaying such debts was viewed with dread.

Unemployed people also dreaded losing their financial independence and their concomitant personal pride. Yet, 13 per cent had no choice but to declare to local shop-keepers their inability to manage on their income by occasionally buying food and other necessities on tick. Families with children were most often forced into this situation and, with one exception, buying on credit from local stores was confined to inner-urban and rural workers. Whether the extra reluctance of outer metropolitan unemployed people to ask for credit at local stores reflects their greater privacy about financial matters or a more 'hard-nosed' attitude by shop proprietors in that area has not been explored. Interestingly, in spite of their relatively better financial position, employed people in the sample were marginally more likely to have bought on credit than were unemployed people in the survey. For better-off people, buying on credit represents convenience more than an admission of penury. For shop-keepers there is a difference, too: favours for regular customers as against small capital risks with insolvent customers.

Although the number of people was small, the data show a greater proclivity for employed, rather than unemployed people, to be buying goods on lay-by, to be in receipt of a loan or to be paying off a car. Those with jobs have more money and more financial options to exercise in the way they acquire goods and services. They are also likely to have a social and family network that is more widespread and has greater assets. Unemployed people, conversely, have fewer financial resources to draw on and no likelihood of achieving a loan from any conventional source.

The notion that much of the behaviour of unemployed people is governed by their economic position is supported by the finding that they were less likely to have been threatened with disconnection of gas or electricity, but more likely to have had one of those services actually disconnected. In other words, employed people are more likely to delay payment for such services. Unemployed people are more likely to pay on time when they have the cash, but are also more likely to be without sufficient cash to cover their expenses on essential services. In the group of unemployed people with a dependent child (or children), 20 per cent had gas or, more commonly, electricity supplies discontinued because their payments were overdue.

Ten (mainly young) people had their telephone disconnected following their unemployment. At the time of their survey interview only just over a third of unemployed respondents were on the telephone. Virtually all of those people lived in the outer metropolitan area. Despite similar needs for a telephone among the inner urban unemployed group and the extraordinary needs among rural people, only in the homes of outer metropolitan unemployed people were telephones at all common. The reason for this geographic difference is difficult to explain, except that the more affluent social milieu and greater expectations generated in Frankston may account for the variation.

In the case of expenditure on food, over two-thirds of jobless people reported cutbacks since they had been out of the workforce. Cutbacks on food were reported by 83 per cent of unemployed people with dependent child(ren). Regionally, rural unemployed people most commonly reported such expenditure cuts, especially on meat. On other foodstuffs the cutbacks were fairly consistent across areas. A quarter of all unemployed people stated that they had reduced their expenditure on food extensively. Perhaps because of a heavier reliance on meat as part of their staple diet, rural unemployed people were considerably more likely to have cut back on that item.

A comparison with control group data reveals clearly that the underlying cause of the cutback on food was the level of unemployment benefit rather than general economic conditions, whereas nearly 70 per cent of unemployed people reported having cut back on any food purchase, usually meat.

'We eat virtually no meat. We have less tinned food and more spuds. We buy food at the Sunday markets where the vegetables are cheaper.'

'We've cut back on everything. We buy from day to day now rather than weekly.'

Sometimes expenditure had to be reduced on household items such as furniture or on 'luxuries' such as books or magazines. In general, however, the cut-backs were on essential items like food and clothing. Half of the unemployed group reported diminished expenditure on clothing. Regardless of the age or residential area of unemployed people, the proportion who reduced the purchase of clothing, usually to nothing at all, was constant. Leisure activities, holidays, book-buying, trips to the hairdresser and so on were quite often scaled down, also. But clothing purchases were reduced significantly by a large proportion of jobless people and cutbacks on food were extremely common, especially in the case of families. Unemployed people ate less food and poorer quality food. Particularly for families, the task of maintaining a balanced diet was very difficult.

The lack of income for unemployed people in trying to meet basic expenditure requirements proved burdensome. Speculatively, the tension that ensues from such a situation may have prompted compensatory expenditure on inessential items such as alcohol or cigarettes. This was not so. In fact, a quarter of the unemployed sample consisted of non-drinkers and a fifth were non-smokers. Many of them reported no change following unemployment in the consumption of alcohol and cigarettes. Despite the increased tension associated with unemployment, only 11 per cent had increased their alcoholic intake; 39 per cent reduced it. Unemployed people were twice as likely to decrease their level of cigarette-smoking as they were to increase it. Those who increased their drinking and smoking tended to be young people living in the rural area. Their reason for doing so was actually related to their job-search in many cases. In country areas a major source of information about casual work in particular is the local pub, where people exchange local information about labour market requirements. Since they often have no money for other social activities yet seek companionship, drinking and smoking in the local pub becomes a popular activity for unemployed people in rural areas in particular.

Unemployed people reduced their expenditure on both essential and inessential items. Cutbacks on food and clothing were extremely common. Commensurate with their economic plight, unemployed families with children were the worst placed. Public policy decisions leaving unemployment benefit levels below austere Poverty Line estimates trap jobless people in a situation

that demands unreasonable expenditure cutbacks. As one interviewee said:

'You think of the Tooraks and the Picasso paintings and that they will have six months' holiday overseas. If only things could be more balanced.'

10. HEALTH

The social class position of unemployed people is underlined by an analysis of data regarding usage of medical services. Only half of the unemployed people from the sample stated that they attended a general medical practitioner when ill. The cost and remoteness of doctors working in traditional settings have functioned to alienate a large number of working-class people. A quarter of the unemployed group said they went to the casualty section of a hospital when ill. Thirteen per cent indicated that they visited a chemist when they or a family member was sick.

The coincidence of the control group of employed people with the social mainstream is suggested by the fact that 87 per cent of that group go to a general practitioner in case of illness. Despite their relatively low income status their behaviour is much more akin to that of more affluent groups. This suggests that their behaviour, at least in this regard, may have more to do with social identification than with social class. As labour force participants they all had health insurance cover through one of the appropriate funds. By comparison, only 63 per cent of currently unemployed people had taken out paid insurance when in work. They earned less money and often had debts to pay off due to a previous bout of unemployment. Consequently, many of them had no effective medical cover for significant periods of time.

While unemployed, people were entitled to free basic health cover²⁰ through the Health Care Card system. This pertained, however, only for those individuals and families who were in receipt of unemployment benefit. Since jobless people often avoid taking social security payments due to pride or stigma or a belief that they will shortly regain employment, many unemployed people are not medically covered. This applied to 13 per cent in the present study. Another 17 per cent of unemployed people were still in a health insurance scheme at the time of their interview.

Even for jobless people who received health cover as a direct result of receiving unemployment benefit the cover was not comprehensive. Any dental, ambulance, optical or pharmaceutical costs had to be borne by unemployed people themselves. Thus, some unemployed people resisted seeking medical treatment or went into debt as a result of buying glasses or receiving dental treatment. For chronic sufferers, the cost of tablets and other pharmaceutical products may assume a considerable proportion of their income and, thereby, contribute to stress and anxiety.

When asked what they would do about health cover when they managed to find a place in the workforce, just over two-thirds of unemployed interviewees stated that they would take out health cover through one of the appropriate schemes. Several said they would take their chances. Only 6 per cent intended to apply for free basic health cover by registering as 'socially disadvantaged'. This extremely low figure arose from something quite fundamental: unemployed respondents rarely knew of the scheme.

The socio-economic position of unemployed people, their lack of comprehensive health cover through the Health Care Card System and their unawareness of alternative schemes to paid health insurance often meant that health services were disproportionately costly to them or that they had no health cover at all. Understandably, such factors compounded the difficulties and estrangement they faced as people not able to forge a permanent place in the labour force.

11. CHILD CARE

For unemployed people with a dependent child or children, child care arrangements tended to be undertaken within the family context. Single parents tailored their job-seeking so they could be available when, for example, small school-children returned home. Unemployed interviewees living with a partner either cared for children themselves if the partner was employed or shared the child care with a partner who was not employed in the labour force.

Despite the overall reliance on oneself or one's partner with regard to child care a number of other supplementary arrangements needed to be made. Typically, these involved reliance on a network of family members, trusted neighbours or close friends. Only one unemployed interviewee used a baby-sitter and only one used a child care agency.

The lack of use of formal child care arrangements stems largely from their unavailability, especially in the rural and outer metropolitan areas. As well, commercial rates are prohibitive for unemployed people and for low-income earners. Yet, subsidized child care facilities that are more affordable for such people are still very scant. Consequently, unsatisfactory arrangements sometimes occur and job-seeking is impaired.

'Our young girl (aged 10) arrives home first. It's a bit of a worry, but there's nothing else we can do about it.'

'My wife looks after the children, but she'd probably look for full-time work if full-time child care was available.'

Approximately a quarter of unemployed family members in the present study declared that child care problems inhibited their search for work. Several would need to be able to place their child(ren) with a child minder or have a regular arrangement whereby after-school or some other care could be undertaken in order for them to search freely for paid work. In the absence of such child care provisions, their search was limited to employment that was part-time or offered highly flexible hours.

The hindrance to job-seeking resulting from the lack of affordable, accessible child care services affected women more than men. Although the actual number of people who reported that their search for work was hampered by child care difficulties was small, the trend was for women to be more affected. Close to a half of the mothers in the sample complained that inadequate child care

facilities limited their job-seeking, whereas only a sixth of the fathers reported such difficulties.

By a ratio of about 2:1 women were more likely to assume clear primary responsibility for child care. And the lack of affordable child care facilities meant that women's employment opportunities, in particular, were adversely affected.

12. SOCIAL WELFARE

Several unemployed people in the study were ineligible for unemployment benefit because their spouse was receiving a wage or a social security pension or benefit. Two fifteen-year-old unemployed people did not meet the age criteria for benefit. A number of other respondents who were seeking work were also ineligible for unemployment benefit since they were in receipt of another benefit or pension. This age group comprised mainly women who were receiving a supporting parents' benefit.

For the majority of unemployed people there is no financial alternative to applying for unemployment benefit. They have no savings of note, nor any other income. Notwithstanding this, delays in making application for unemployment benefit are common and sometimes lengthy. Some people remain too proud to claim unemployment benefit at all, preferring to whittle away their savings:

'I always thought I'd get a job. I got occasional bits of money from part-time work and didn't get around to applying for unemployment benefit. It was sloth; but there was some morality thing for me about not getting unemployment benefit.'

Among jobless interviewees who had applied for unemployment benefit, 28 per cent delayed their claim for more than a month after the onset of their unemployment. People in their family-formation years were more likely to have delayed in lodging their claim for unemployment benefit. Yet, as has been observed earlier, their economic position is especially precarious. Young people may sometimes lean temporarily on their parents, and older people will sometimes have recourse to savings accrued during their working lives. Unemployed people with dependent children, however, have constant, pressing financial demands that generally exceed those of other unemployed workers. Thus, the aberrant finding on this variable defies explanation. There is no basis for assuming that feelings of pride or stigma are more prominent among that group. The only possible explanation for this unexpected finding is that friends and relatives often rally quickly and provide a substantial amount of assistance when young children are affected. The support that can be offered through the network and supplemented by voluntary welfare agencies is of limited duration, however, causing unemployed people with children to register for unemployment benefit, albeit belatedly, in the same proportions as other unemployed workers.

Among those jobless interviewees who had experienced unemployment previously, just under a third had always applied for unemployment benefit. Forty per cent had chosen not to apply despite their eligibility, usually because they wished to remain financially independent for as long as possible and hoped to regain work promptly.

No differences emerged on this factor according to location or gender. There are some indications, however, that young people are more prone to apply for unemployment benefit each time they are out of work. While young people complain vehemently, in concert with other unemployed people, about allegations of 'bludging', it seems that they are also somewhat more likely to assert their right to unemployment benefit when unable to find paid work. In part, this may arise from the fact that the only organization of unemployed people occurs through Community Youth Support Scheme groups. The mere congregation of numbers of young unemployed people in Community Youth Support Scheme groups may encourage a sense of legitimacy in always claiming an entitlement to unemployment benefit.

When unemployment first rose rapidly in the mid-1970s, complaints were rife over delays in the payment of unemployment benefit. Findings from the present study indicate that such problems with the bureaucratic machinery of the Department of Social Security have substantially been overcome. Nonetheless, 17 per cent of respondents still report at least one delay of three weeks or more in receiving unemployment benefit. In the rural area this figure reached 26 per cent. Such delays, of course, place considerable financial and emotional pressure on claimants, few of whom have other means.

Provision exists for unemployment beneficiaries to earn a small amount of extra money through paid work. Only a quarter of the sample had knowledge of their allowable earnings. The traditionally low amount that may be earned in addition to unemployment benefit has provided unemployed people with no incentive to learn the exact details. Few unemployed people have access to occasional paid work. Those who do, find the amount of money involved to be small and the tenure of the work to be brief. In such circumstances they often prefer to remain ignorant of their formal entitlement.

Due to the dearth of regular, or even occasional, work opportunities and the impoverishing levels of unemployment benefit, it was predicted that jobless interviewees would need substantial assistance from their family and social network. One half reported that they had assistance provided since the onset

of their unemployment. This compares with 35 per cent of the control group.

Relatives, in the unemployed persons' households and elsewhere, were the major providers of material assistance. Friends were also significant providers of assistance. By contrast, however, neighbours rarely provided assistance, probably because unemployed people tended to be concentrated in social class areas that were not rich in resources. Thus, material assistance almost invariably came only from relatives or friends, with whom stronger bonds existed.

Unemployed women were much more likely to report having received material assistance than did their male counterparts. This difference cannot be accounted for in terms of financial position. Rather, it seems to echo the traditional role of women in seeking supplementary assistance to family income.

Interestingly, it was young unemployed people, particularly in the inner urban region, who were the most likely to have received material assistance. Their incidence of such help was boosted by problems they had in finding suitable and affordable accommodation.

Income data reveal that it is families with children who are in the most difficult economic circumstances. This may be partly because young people seek material assistance more frequently or because their plight is broadcast more effectively. Despite the relatively greater deprivation among unemployed families, young unemployed people more frequently receive material assistance through their family and social network, and from community organizations. This raises the possibility that it is actually young unemployed people who are in worse circumstances, but their relative detriment is offset by their stronger tendency to seek help and this induces them, when asked how much more money they would need per week, to underestimate the amount.

In seeking material assistance, the needs of all groups were for basic necessities: food, clothing and accommodation. Despite the pride that prevents many unemployed workers, especially older unemployed workers, from seeking assistance, the sheer inadequacy of their income in meeting basic needs plus their general lack of resources forces the majority of them to seek, or at least to accept, assistance from within their network or from community organizations.

Forty per cent of the unemployed sample had recourse to community organizations, usually voluntary welfare organizations. Sometimes assistance was required with legal matters or with welfare rights. But, overwhelmingly, people needed assistance from community organizations on those same basic items for which assistance was sought through their social networks. Half of those receiving material assistance from community organizations did so in order that they and their dependants could eat.

The need for assistance with items that are absolutely fundamental to well-being was paramount. In spite of the considerable stress ensuing from economic insufficiency and the erosion of self-identity that is associated with unemployment, less than 10 per cent of those seeking help from community organisations received counselling. Personal stress was clearly perceived as being symptomatic of economic conditions, so jobless people sought to solve the problem at its root.

In 78 per cent of cases unemployed interviewees who had approached a community organization reported that they were fully satisfied with the help they received. However, some continued to have their need for food or for money to pay accommodation costs remain unsatisfied. In the light of continuing increases in the level of unemployment, and with benefits levels still below Poverty Line estimates, voluntary welfare organizations, on whom the burden falls increasingly heavily, indicate that more unemployed people will find that their urgent and basic needs will not be met in the future.

Data from the present study indicate that those who do not have their needs met following approaches to agencies either find some assistance from family or friends, or literally go without food or jeopardize their housing, because they do not have any money until the next cheque for unemployment benefit arrives. Since that amount is inadequate to meet basic needs for the next fortnight they find themselves in a vortex in which social life and personal fulfilment are impaired.

13. SOCIAL LIFE

In the present study interviewees were asked on a number of dimensions how unemployment had affected their social life. On each dimension it was evident that the impact had been detrimental. Even though unemployed people had more spare time they had fewer leisure pursuits.

Following the onset of unemployment they were less likely to visit their friends than before, and their friends were less likely to visit, or be entertained by, them. Not only were they less likely to meet friends in their respective homes, but they were less likely to see them at all. While 36 per cent of unemployed respondents said that they saw their friends as often as before their period of unemployment, the ratio of those seeing less rather than more of their friends whilst out of work was in the order of 4:1. This finding held for all regions; for jobless people with dependent children the direction of the finding was even stronger:

'Friends? I've got no friends. I feel out of things being unemployed. There's no money to go out and mix with people and have a good time. Most of my friends have got jobs and money.'

In general, unemployed people withdraw socially for economic reasons and to avoid discussion of their situation. An example of this is that by a ratio of 4:1 they went to the pub less. For men the ratio was over 5:1; among unemployed people with families it was 14:1. More than a quarter of all unemployed interviewees were actually teetotalers. These findings conflict with continuing notions of unemployed people being over-represented by indolent parasites. Despite the significance of the local pub as a meeting place for working-class groups, the attendance of unemployed people is reduced relative to when they were in work. They have little if any spare cash and their embarrassment at not being able to buy a round of drinks or at being questioned about their employment status pushes them into social isolation.

In the rural area, however, the finding in regard to attendance at the local pub was somewhat at variance with other areas. Whereas only 4 per cent of unemployed people in the other two regions stated that they went to the pub more often than when they were in work, in the rural area 28 per cent had done so. Even in Bairnsdale unemployed people tended to decrease their attendance at the local pub, but the finding contrasted with the inner

urban and outer metropolitan regions for a reason that is directly attributable to job-seeking patterns. Much work, especially casual work, becomes known of in rural areas over a beer or a game of darts in the local pub. Well aware of this fact, many unemployed people in the rural sample therefore attempted to pay more frequent visits to the pub after they had become unemployed. Their motive was not self-indulgence, but finding employment.

On other factors, unemployed people reduced their social activity. They participated less in sport by a ratio of nearly 4:1 and watched less sport by a ratio of 15:1. Participation required money and emotional energy. Unemployed people were often drained of both. Passive involvement in sport required even more money and so was abandoned more frequently. Passive or active involvement in sport was especially reduced in the inner urban area. The greater number of facilities there probably meant that people had been more heavily involved in sport while in work and therefore had a greater chance of having to limit their involvement when finance and spirit dried up.

With regard to hobbies, by a ratio of 2:1, unemployed people in all age groups and regions did less. Especially after their early vigorous job seeking yielded no work, they had more spare time than ever before. Simultaneously, they had less money and much of the time that was available to them for fruitful leisure pursuits was consumed by foreboding and depression. Because of their restlessness and anxiety, by a ratio of more than 2:1 unemployed people slept less than when in employment even though they had less reason to rise early.

Since their anxiety was caused predominantly by insolvency, or the threat of it, there existed a possibility that unemployed people may have increased their gambling. If unemployment benefit levels imposed cutbacks and indebtedness why not risk minimally greater detriment through a bet or a lottery ticket in the hope that winnings and economic sufficiency might ensue, at least temporarily? In fact, more than half of the unemployed interviewees did not gamble at all. Among the minority who did gamble (invariably, lightly) only one in 29 increased their outlay after the onset of unemployment. The struggle to meet basic needs promoted penny-pinching, rather than risk-taking. Further economic detriment could not be contemplated. As it was, the strain already flowed onto relationships too often for their liking.

Just under a third of unemployed interviewees reported no change in the

quality of their relationship with their partner following unemployment. However, among those who noted a change, four times as many reported increased tension compared with those who noted increased support and understanding. This is not to say that emotional support was generally lacking; but the overriding impact of unemployment on relationships with partners was negative. The most common finding here was of tension, seen by unemployed people as arising inexorably from their financial difficulties. The same sequence was reported by jobless people in regard to other relationships at home.

'My wife and I get on each other's nerves being around each other all the time. It could be a catastrophe in the end. There's no chance to go anywhere and relieve the tension. She doesn't understand the problem of getting work. Friends get new cookers and things. It leads to flare-ups when we can't.'

'There's friction because my wife has to listen to my frustrations. She understands, but it does wear a bit thin. At the supermarket there are people flinging things into trolleys, paying \$80, when we pay only \$2.'

'We're not in the class of our friends any more. We're the untouchables.'

Respondents in the outer metropolitan area were much more likely than people elsewhere to report positive alterations in relationships with partners and with children since being unemployed. In regard to their relationships with partners, however, negative outcomes clearly outnumbered positive outcomes. That they fared better in domestic relationships than unemployed counterparts elsewhere seem attributable to their somewhat more favourable economic situation at the time when they became unemployed. For many in that position, however, the eventual economic decline caused acute tension that spilled over into personal relationships.

The line between economic plight and tension, manifested in relationship with a partner, may be seen as a more direct than the same sequence in regard to children. But anxiety and irritability emanating from poverty take their toll also on relationships with children. Several unemployed people indicated that their rapport with their children had grown because they had more time to spend with each other. Overall, however, extra time with the children provided an increased chance for underlying anxiety to be expressed diffusely.

The quality of relationships with relatives and friends tended to decline also. Sometimes this occurred because unemployed people felt reproved by

their failure to enter the workforce, sometimes because they felt embarrassed about being perceived as different from the norm. In the main, the cause of the deterioration in their relationships was insufficient money to maintain social contacts. Their lack of money and their concomitant emotional state imposed relative social isolation. Friends and relatives were visited less often and were met less often for social outings.

The picture that emerges from these data is one of social isolation for jobless people. Even among young people who were more likely to have gone out socially, a fifth had gone nowhere in the past week and another two-fifths had been to only one venue, usually a pub or club.

Data with regard to activities in the past week were surprisingly similar for unemployed men and women, who undertook the same kinds of limited social activities. Even in the household, jobless men and women reported virtually identical activities. Though the time given to these domestic chores and their performance may well be different across gender, it does seem that the poverty and boredom associated with unemployment may produce a levelling effect for men and women, socially and domestically.

In the inner urban area the number of people who had gone nowhere was substantially less than in the other two areas. This may reflect the greater number of immediate social outlets in the vicinity of a major city. Equally, though, it could indicate that living in a populous, relatively anonymous centre means that formal arrangements more often need to be made in smaller centres if any social contact is to be maintained. The greater number of pubs, amusement centres, etc, entails less guarantee that going out socially in the inner urban area will result in meeting anyone familiar. Similarly, a casual stroll down the main street in Bairnsdale is more likely to result in a chat with someone familiar than is a walk down a main street in Fitzroy. Nevertheless, for many:

'It's boring, waiting for a job to come up. It gives you the creeps. There's nothing to do and every day's the same.'

As a consequence of their penury and social isolation unemployed people overwhelmingly describe a typical week for them as boring or depressing. No one in the control group gave this description of their typical week. By contrast they found life hectic, with friends, or absorbed in hobbies. Compared with unemployed people, workers with jobs were four times as likely to describe

their typical week as hectic or to mention time with friends or involvement in hobbies as key ingredients of their 'typical week'. The differences in the description volunteered by each group are striking. These differences and the direction of the results for unemployed respondents occur across each region and age category.

While half of the unemployed interviewees under 25 years of age reported no change in their relationship with their parents, among those who felt a change had occurred, the ratio of negative change to positive change was 20:1. For young people, the problem of parents being unsympathetic to them during their period of unemployment and of not appreciating the sheer difficulty of finding work of any kind is sizeable and serious:

'It's boring. I stay at home and get growled at all the time.'

Those respondents with previous work experience frequently felt that being out of work had little impact on the quality of their relationship with former colleagues. Since many people do not see their work-mates outside their place of employment this finding needs to be viewed circumspectly. Over half of the interviewees with past employment reported a negative shift in their relationship with former colleagues. Only one in 35 felt a positive shift.

Above all, unemployed people had lost the opportunity to establish a work identity and to fraternize with women and men in the workplace itself. Thus, a key social outlet and, often, strong personal bonds, were lost to former workforce members. Not only that, but nothing emerged to fill the vacuum.

The following series of quotes from interviewees indicating the personal and material problems faced by unemployed people.

'I always used to sleep in last time I was unemployed and not get up until about four o'clock (in the afternoon), and then watch TV. I got to the stage of being a vegetable. I didn't want to even see anyone or do anything for myself. It takes more than a few years to get back on your feet when you've been unemployed for a long while. You have to stay at home with your parents; there's no money for a car or holidays. You don't get a chance to grow up. You can't take on any responsibilities, so when you get them you don't know how to handle them. You become a hermit ... got no conversation. It becomes an embarrassment on your parents - not that they say so, but you can tell. Other parents talk about their kids working. I can't go on about my nice job or clothes ...'

'The Press is always full of stories about young unemployed people. There's virtually nothing about families that suffer. It's starting to hurt now. There's lots of positions in the papers. Which gives you confidence. But the shock comes when you look hard and there aren't as many jobs as you think.'

'It's no good when you can't do or go where you'd like to. We should be saving money for retirement. It looks like being hard all the way through now.'

'I get aggro pretty easily. It's the frustration with being unable to get work. It builds up and then I explode with friends. It worries me being hot-blooded. Maybe one day I'll crack up and slug someone.'

'It's made me feel less worthy as a person. I don't feel I have anything to contribute to society. I feel rejected and depressed when constantly told I'm too old to work. I'm bored and find as each week goes on it is easier to become more lethargic and pessimistic.'

'It just goes on and on and you ask yourself, "What have we got to offer our son?" I never had any schooling myself and I want him to have it. You can't even get the boy an egg at Easter. You dread birthdays and Easter and Christmas because you can't afford things.'

'Unemployment affects you two ways. One element is that you feel useless. Your self-esteem goes and you have to fight that all the time. You think morbid things, that you have to fight against. Like, "Am I too old, over the hill, do I fit in?" You're a failure, you've been used and no longer good for anybody; you take another look at yourself and think, "I am of value, I can do things." You hope things will change. But being unemployed has meant I have lost everything of value for me. Everything - my wife, family, friends.'

Forty per cent of unemployed people in the survey stated that they had not been anywhere socially in the past week. This compares with 13 per cent of the control group. A tenth of the unemployed interviewees had been out twice in the past week and another 12 per cent had managed to go out somewhat more often.

14. MEASURES TO REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT

When asked what they thought would have to change in society in order to reduce unemployment, jobless interviewees offered diverse remedies. Most suggestions revolved around structural factors such as creating publicly funded jobs or expanding the economy in some way. The spread of ideas was extremely wide. But the most common response was that the (then) Liberal and National Party coalition government be voted from office.

In response to the question of what they thought the government should do to tackle unemployment, jobless interviewees' most frequent suggestion by far was that a job creation scheme be introduced. Practically every one of the wide range of suggestions related to economic or industrial structures being changed in some fashion. Occasionally, prejudice towards migrant or female workers emerged, but responses leaned very strongly towards finding structural solutions.

On the broad question of desirable social change for alleviating unemployment, negative responses about trade unions hardly featured. When asked directly what the unions should do about unemployment, however, jobless interviewees commonly thought that since the problem resulted from macro-economic policies and world factors there was nothing the unions could do. Notwithstanding this, the majority believed that unions should reduce their wage demands and their industrial action as a way of limiting unemployment.

Interestingly, unemployed workers did not attribute blame for unemployment to trade unions, until specifically asked about their role in this regard. Primarily, blame and responsibility for joblessness seemed to be attributed to government, but trade unions were seen by a sizable proportion of unemployed workers as being complicit in aggravating the problem. Given the lack of industrial organization and politicization of unemployed workers it is, perhaps, surprising that blame for unemployment was not more often ascribed to unions.

15. THE MEANING OF PAID WORK

Regardless of the attribution of blame for unemployment it is evident from the data that its impact on its chief victims was almost inevitably deleterious. Depression, worry about not having enough money, enforced dependence and boredom were most frequently mentioned by unemployed respondents as effects of their work status. Clearly, these are interlocking factors. If unemployment benefits were raised significantly, for example, two of these factors - enforced dependence and worry about money - would dissipate, if not disappear.

Perhaps it is mainly poverty rather than unemployment per se that causes the boredom and depression. But the general statements of unemployed interviewees often drew clear links between unemployment as such and their emotional state. As well, the control group (although one can never be found that adequately matches the income of employed and unemployed people) showed stark differences. Employed people most often said that the effect of having regular work was a feeling of personal satisfaction. A syndrome of economic well-being - security; owning one's home; and independence - followed next in order.

Both the experimental and the control group mentioned first of all the emotional and social value of work when invited to describe the effect of being in or out of the workforce. It goes without saying that the availability of a steady and adequate income is of fundamental importance to well-being. Yet, among people with or without jobs the first association with work was the link with their social/psychological state. Feelings of boredom, depression and emotional (and financial) dependence were immediately reported by unemployed respondents. By contrast, employed respondents reported feelings of personal satisfaction and independence as a consequence of their workforce participation.

No doubt, finances underpinned these feelings, but it is significant that work was so immediately related to individuals' sense of personal fulfilment and social status. Accordingly, it is evident that the loss of work threatened to shatter people psychologically as well as economically. Data from this study indicate clearly that this risk pertains to all groups of unemployed people, particularly young people. It is common currency that the work ethic has been eroded, but little evidence exists to support that proposition. In fact, young people in this study were quickest to relate the absence of work to social psychological detriment. Unemployed and employed

people were both able to identify immediately and with a conviction derived from their own experiences, that having work entails social/psychological rewards that are as intrinsically important to sound functioning as are material rewards. Thus, it is an essential task of public policy to address the psychological and economic needs of the unemployed: to provide through full employment the opportunity to sustain themselves and their families.

16. CONCLUSION

Differences between employed and unemployed workers will be more easily ascertained later when data from this study may be combined with data being gathered and analysed in New South Wales, using the same methodology.

The current study attests to the disadvantaged situation of unemployed people. Some data are new and some confirm insights gained through earlier research on unemployment. But in the final analysis the data point primarily to the fact that unemployed workers struggle profoundly to survive, economically and emotionally. Social, economic and industrial structures combine to deny them anything like a proper share of goods and services that are generally taken for granted by employed workers. Their lives and those of their families are blighted by the denial of one crucial structural provision: jobs.

Clearly, the loss of jobs and the consequent penury does not fall equally. The brunt of economic malaise, and of structural changes within the economy and within industry, is borne by workers in the secondary labour market. There, they encounter the double jeopardy of relatively poor conditions and low pay, plus particular vulnerability to unemployment.

The financial responsibility for dealing with the problems posed by unemployment has rested with the families of unemployed people. But the low level of unemployment benefit and the economic circumstances of such families has left them unable to cope adequately financially. The thrust of public policy in this area - to limit statutory payments and, thereby, place responsibility in the private sector, that is, within families - has provoked financial distress. Sometimes this distress is manifested widely, causing social isolation and despair. Thus, inadequate public financial provision to the chief victims of labour market deterioration results in great personal and social costs.

Research data in this study indicate a need for a review of policy in areas as diverse as: income security; labour market programmes; health; housing; public utilities; and regional planning.

Clearly, the fundamental problem is the lack of jobs. Yet social policy continues to be framed upon a false and outmoded assumption of an economy characterised, inter alia, by full employment. Traditionally, unemployment benefit was provided as a short-term measure for a small number of people

whose joblessness was usually fractional. The growth of cyclical and structural unemployment has created a situation in which unemployment is typically protracted; but the payment of benefit remains predicated upon a supposition of temporary need.

In the context that has prevailed for almost a decade, and without any sign of a return to a full employment economy, it is inappropriate and unjust that the level of unemployment benefit remain so paltry. Unemployed interviewees in each region and in each life-cycle category report severe financial difficulties, thus reinforcing the need for unemployment benefit to be increased. Data on income, especially when set alongside the gap between unemployment benefit levels and Poverty Line estimates, point to a particularly dire need in the case of jobless people with dependent children. This indicates a specific need for increased transfers of income for the care of children, as well as a need to raise unemployment benefit generally.

The current inadequate social security payments leave jobless people (and others who are excluded from the labour force) struggling to make ends meet and effectively denied access to a range of goods and services which, for the rest of society, constitute necessities and rights. Data on income and social activity in this study demonstrate that unemployed people are often denied basic material items and their capacity for social participation is seriously blocked. In Townsend's words, they fall below a 'threshold of deprivation' and drop out or are excluded from 'participation in the community's style of living'.²¹

As well as indicating the necessity to adjust the level of unemployment benefit upwards, current data show, also, the need for other statutory initiatives so that unemployment does not entail multiple jeopardy for its victims.

With regard to housing repayments there is a strong case for a moratorium, rental assistance or mortgage assistance from the relevant authority. This is especially so while unemployment benefit is pegged at unrealistic levels. Public policy makers cling to a false notion that unemployment is a temporary problem. Yet, at the same time, inadequate temporary solutions to housing crises exist. In reality, due to a bout of unemployment, some individuals and families actually lose their permanent housing, or have their housing security seriously jeopardized. Thus, other social/psychological and economic problems are set in train.

Data point also to the need for debt to be handled better by public officials and utilities. It may be argued that provision of gas and electricity is a household necessity and that the failure to provide enough jobs or adequate income in the public sector should on no account lead to a withdrawal of public utilities. In the absence of work and adequate income security it is essential that provisions be made for repayment of debts over time, for example, so that victims of public failure in one area are not then further disadvantaged by the withdrawal of public utilities.

Survey data also demonstrate that, in the area of health, the imposition of dental, optical and pharmaceutical costs on unemployment beneficiaries often leaves them and their dependants without proper medical care. Again, as a consequence of unemployment and penury, plus inadequate public provision, considerable detriment may ensue to jobless people and their families.

In consideration of labour market programmes, data from the present study that show significant regional differences in the experience of unemployment as a result of differing local infrastructures indicate the potential value of labour power planning within a regional context. The narrower industrial base and the more limited access to educational institutions, for example, in rural areas compared with inner urban areas, underscore the desirability of analysing markets regionally and applying labour market programmes differentially.

Although the central issue in combatting unemployment is overall economic policy and activity, carefully devised labour market programmes that create jobs and training opportunities are of crucial significance in severely depressed areas and for severely disadvantaged workers. The strong commitment to work displayed by jobless interviewees should, in itself, act as a catalyst for expanded labour market programmes that are sensitive to local conditions and to the varying needs and talents of unemployed workers.

For low-income families, among whom unemployment is highly concentrated, there is a demonstrable need for far-reaching and innovative public policies in areas such as job creation, job training, labour power planning, social security provision and economic restructuring.

In many ways unemployment has become, by default, a 'welfare problem'. But fundamentally, it is a product of the failure of economic and industrial policies. The 'welfare problems' of unemployed people arise as a symptom of structural inequalities and the loss or, perhaps, abandonment of a goal of

'full employment'. Data from this study demonstrate that unless such a goal is revived, along with the payment of an adequate level of unemployment benefit in the meantime, individuals and families concentrated in the secondary labour market face an insecure occupational and financial future.

NOTES

1. The use of the terms 'young workers' and 'older workers' elsewhere in the text corresponds with 'under 25 years of age' and '45 years of age or more'.
2. Graeme Brewer, *Out of Work, Out of Sight*, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne, 1980.
3. Bettina Cass, 'Unemployment and the Family : The Social Impact of the Restructuring of the Australian Labour Market' in *Social Welfare Research Centre Reports and Proceedings, No.7*, April 1981.
4. It is estimated that between \$3.7m and \$4.6m was given out in emergency relief in Victoria in 1980, compared with about \$1.9m in 1978. Unemployment beneficiaries constituted the largest group seeking emergency relief. For further details, see Alison McClelland and Helen Gow, 'Emergency Relief in Victoria', Victorian Council of Social Service, 1982.
5. See Appendix 2 for actual unemployment rates.
6. See Peter Salmon and Ruth Weston, 'Human Adjustment in Rural Towns', University of Melbourne, 1974.
7. See, for example, Ann Hodgkinson, 'The Nature and Extent of Unemployment in the Bairnsdale District, Canberra College of Advanced Education, p.6 (unpublished paper).
8. For a detailed discussion of this phenomenon, see: 'Proposed Policies for Industry and Regional Development'. Discussion Paper, Victorian Ministry for Economic Development, June 1983.
9. For a more detailed discussion of industrial changes in the Australian labour market, see: 'Employment and Prospects by Industry and Occupation : A Labour Market Analysis', Department of Employment and Youth Affairs, AGPS, May 1979.
10. Judith O'Neill, 'Unions and Unemployment : A Survey', Australian Council of Trade Unions, October 1981, p.19.
11. See, for example, Graeme Brewer, *Out of Work, Out of Sight*, Brotherhood of St Laurence, 1980, p.25.
12. For details, see: Bettina Cass, 'Unemployment and the Family : The Social Impact of the Restructuring of the Australian Labour Market', *Social Welfare Research Centre, Reports and Proceedings, No.7*, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 7 April, 1981, p.47; Peter Townsend, *Poverty in the United Kingdom*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1979, p.639; Peter Whiteford, 'The Earned Incomes of the Unemployed', *Social Security Journal*, December 1982.
13. C. Maher, K. O'Connor and M. Logan, 'Employment Opportunities', p.142, in P.N. Troy (ed.), *Equity in the City*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1981.
14. *Ibid.*, p.140.

15. For further discussion see Bettina Cass, op. cit., 'Unemployment and the Family', *Social Welfare Research Centre, Reports and Proceedings*, No.7, University of New South Wales, April 1981.
Also, see Margaret Power, 'Women's Work is Never Done - by Men : A Socio-Economic Model of Sex-typing in Occupations', *Journal of Industrial Relations*, September 1975.
16. Bettina Cass and Pauline Garde, 'Unemployment and Family Support', in A. Graycar (ed.), *Retreat from the Welfare State*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1983.
17. Graeme Brewer, *Out of Work, Out of Sight*, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne, 1980.
18. Maher et al. op. cit.
19. As calculated by the Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research at the University of Melbourne. In 1983, benefit levels were below the poverty line for single people without dependants, and for married couples with children.
20. Survey data were collected prior to the introduction of Medicare.
21. See Peter Townsend, *Poverty in the United Kingdom*, Penguin Books, 1979, esp. pp.248-61.

APPENDIX 1: Profile of study areas according to Australian Bureau
of Statistics Census data 1981
FRANKSTON

Population 78,801

Place of Birth %

Australia	75.3
Overseas	23.8
Other (e.g. visitors)	0.9

Marital Status %

Never married	
aged < 15 years	27.6
aged 15 years & over	16.8
Now married	46.2
Separated/divorced	4.6
Widowed	4.7

Sex %

Male	49.1
Female	50.9

Labour Force Participation %

Employed	41.8
Unemployed	2.7
Not in labour force	
(aged 15 years & over)	27.8
Aged less than 15 years	27.6

Frankston (cont'd)

<u>Income</u>	<u>%</u>
None	14.4
< \$2,000	6.3
2,001 - 3,000	6.8
3,001 - 4,000	8.0
4,001 - 6,000	8.8
6,001 - 8,000	7.3
8,001 - 10,000	7.6
10,001 - 12,000	9.5
12,001 - 15,000	10.5
15,001 - 18,000	7.0
18,001 - 22,000	4.5
22,001 +	4.3
Not stated	5.1

<u>Age left school</u>	<u>%</u>
12 years or less	1.1
13 years	2.3
14 years	20.0
15 years	23.0
16 years	20.6
17 years	13.9
18 years	7.2
19 +	2.7
Did not attend	0.2
Still attending	5.4
Not stated	3.7

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>%</u>
Professional, technical	14.0
Administrative	5.6
Clerical	19.0
Sales	11.0
Farmers, fishermen	1.5
Miners, quarrymen	0.0
Transport, communication	3.9
Tradesmen	31.2
Service, sport, recreation	7.9
Members of Armed Forces	1.3
Inadequately described or not stated	4.7

Frankston (cont'd)

<u>Industry</u>	<u>%</u>
Agriculture	1.0
Mining	0.2
Manufacturing	23.5
Electricity, gas, water	2.5
Construction	7.0
Wholesale, retail trade	20.0
Transport, storage	3.6
Communication	2.2
Finance, property, business services	9.1
Public administration, defence	4.9
Community services	14.7
Recreation, personal, other services	4.3
Not stated	6.8

Family Type

	<u>% of Persons</u>
Head only	6.0
Head & dependants only	5.5
Head & spouse only	14.4
Head, spouse & dependants	44.4
Head & other adults only	2.8
Head, other adults & dependants	2.0
Head, spouse & other adults	7.9
Head, spouse, other adults & dependants	13.1
Non-family members	4.0
Total	100.1

Structure of Occupied Private Dwellings% of Households

Separate house	86.6
Semi-detached house	0.8
Row, terrace house	0.4
Other medium density	11.0
Flats, 3 storeys	0.0
Caravans, houseboats	0.1
Improvised home	0.0
Dwelling attached non-dwelling	0.2
Not stated	0.9

<u>Nature of Occupancy</u>	<u>% of Households</u>
Owner	25.9
Purchaser	51.2
Owner/purchaser undefined	1.7
Tenant - Housing authority	1.1
Tenant - other	16.0
NEI	2.3
Not stated	1.8

<u>Weekly Rent (\$)</u>	<u>% of Households</u>
0 - 9	0.6
10 - 19	3.9
20 - 29	8.4
30 - 39	12.4
40 - 49	22.0
50 - 59	22.7
60 - 69	17.0
70 - 79	6.5
80 - 89	2.0
90 - 99	0.3
100 - 109	0.5
110 - 129	0.4
130 - 148	0.1
149 +	1.1
Not stated	2.1

FITZROY

<u>Population</u>	19,112
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<u>Place of birth</u>	%
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Australia	58.6
Overseas	36.7
Other (e.g. visitors)	4.7

<u>Marital status</u>	%
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Never married	
aged < 15 years	17.1
aged 15 yrs & over	35.7
Now married	32.9
Separated/divorced	8.5
Widowed	5.8

<u>Sex</u>	%
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Male	49.8
Female	50.2

<u>Labour Force Participation</u>	%
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Employed	46.4
Unemployed	5.5
Not in labour force	31.0
(aged 15 yrs & over)	
Aged less than 15 years	17.1

Fitzroy (cont'd)

<u>Income</u>	<u>%</u>
None	10.2
< \$2,000	3.4
2,000 - 3,000	11.2
3,001 - 4,000	11.3
4,001 - 6,000	8.1
6,001 - 8,000	8.0
8,001 - 10,000	9.0
10,001 - 12,000	8.8
12,001 - 15,000	8.4
15,001 - 18,000	4.8
18,001 - 22,000	3.4
22,001 +	3.3
Not stated	10.0

<u>Age left school</u>	<u>%</u>
12 years or less	7.8
13 years	3.5
14 years	13.4
15 years	10.6
16 years	11.3
17 years	18.7
18 years	12.8
19 +	5.7
Did not attend	2.5
Still attending	3.5
Not stated	10.3

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>%</u>
Professional, technical	27.1
Administrative	2.5
Clerical	14.5
Sales	5.1
Farmers, fishermen, etc.	0.6
Miners, quarrymen	0.0
Transport, communication	3.1
Tradesmen	25.5
Service, sport, recreation	10.6
Members of Armed Services	0.1
Inadequately described or not stated	10.9

Fitzroy (cont'd)

<u>Industry</u>	<u>%</u>
Agriculture	0.3
Mining	0.1
Manufacturing	19.6
Electricity, gas, water	0.9
Construction	3.1
Wholesale, retail trade	10.2
Transport, storage	4.2
Communication	1.8
Finance, property, business services	7.6
Public administration, defence	5.5
Community services	25.6
Recreation, personal, other services	7.4
Not stated	13.7

Fitzroy (cont'd)Family Type

	% of Persons
Head only	17.0
Head & dependants only	6.8
Head & spouse only	11.5
Head, spouse & dependants	24.1
Head & other adults only	4.5
Head, other adults & dependants	1.8
Head, spouse & other adults	5.0
Head, spouse, other adults & dependants	8.4
Non-family members	20.9
Total	100.0

<u>Structure of occupied private dwellings</u>	<u>% of households</u>
Separate house	16.0
Semi-detached house	16.6
Row, terrace house	28.5
Other medium density	20.4
Flats, 3-storeys	11.4
Caravan, houseboat	0.0
Improvised home	0.0
Dwelling attached non-dwelling	3.4
Not stated	3.8

<u>Nature of Occupancy</u>	<u>% of households</u>
Owner	22.4
Purchaser	15.4
Owner/purchaser undefined	1.7
Tenant - Housing authority	14.9
Tenant - other	35.5
NEI	3.2
Not stated	7.0

Fitzroy (cont'd)

<u>Weekly Rent</u> (\$)	<u>% of households</u>
0 - 9	0.4
10 - 19	8.5
20 - 29	13.6
30 - 39	26.0
40 - 49	11.4
50 - 59	9.9
60 - 69	7.6
70 - 79	5.8
80 - 89	4.5
90 - 99	3.2
100 - 109	2.0
110 - 129	2.5
130 - 148	1.2
149 +	1.2
Not stated	2.3

BAIRNSDALE

Population 9,459

<u>Place of Birth</u>	%
Australia	91.3
Overseas	7.8
Other (e.g. visitors)	0.9

<u>Marital Status</u>	%
Never married	
aged < 15 years	25.7
aged 15 yrs & over	16.3
Now married	49.9
Separated/divorced	3.3
Widowed	4.8

<u>Sex</u>	%
Male	48.4
Female	51.6

<u>Labour Force Participation</u>	%
Employed	37.2
Unemployed	2.7
Not in labour force	
(aged 15 years & over)	34.5
Aged less than 15 years	25.6

Bairnsdale (cont'd)

<u>Income</u>	<u>%</u>
None	12.4
< \$2,000	5.9
2,001 - 3,000	10.3
3,001 - 4,000	13.3
4,001 - 6,000	10.8
6,001 - 8,000	8.3
8,001 - 10,000	8.3
10,001 - 12,000	9.1
12,001 - 15,000	6.6
15,001 - 18,000	4.0
18,001 - 22,000	2.7
22,001 +	2.4
Not stated	5.9

<u>Age Left School</u>	<u>%</u>
12 years or less	2.0
13 years	3.7
14 years	25.8
15 years	19.5
16 years	19.1
17 years	12.4
18 years	4.7
19 +	1.4
Did not attend	0.5
Still attending	4.6
Not stated	6.4

<u>Occupation</u>	
Professional, technical	12.9
Administrative	4.9
Clerical	15.1
Sales	12.6
Farmers, fishermen	4.6
Miners, quarrymen	0.3
Transport, communication	5.5
Tradesmen	24.5
Service, sport, recreation	11.3
Members of Armed Services	0.0
Inadequately described or not stated	8.3

Bairnsdale (cont'd)

<u>Industry</u>	<u>%</u>
Agriculture	4.3
Mining	0.9
Manufacturing	8.1
Electricity, gas, water	1.5
Construction	10.4
Wholesale, retail trade	23.5
Transport, storage	4.5
Communication	1.8
Finance, property, business services	5.9
Public administration, defence	4.9
Community services	20.0
Recreation, personal, other services	5.1
Not classified/not stated	9.1

Family Type

	<u>% of Persons</u>
Head only	8.4
Head & dependants only	6.1
Head & spouse only	15.4
Head, spouse & dependants	37.4
Head and other adults only	3.4
Head, other adults & dependants	1.8
Head, spouse & other adults	7.3
Head, spouse, other adults & dependants	10.7
Non-family members	9.6
Total	100.1

Structure of Occupied Private Dwellings% of Households

Separate house	89.1
Semi-detached house	0.5
Row, terrace house	0.1
Other medium density	7.9
Flats, 3-storeys	0.0
Caravan, houseboat	0.2
Improvised home	0.1
Dwelling attached non-dwelling	1.0
Not stated	1.3

Bairnsdale (cont'd)

<u>Nature of Occupancy</u>	<u>% of Households</u>
Owner	38.7
Purchaser	27.6
Owner/purchaser undefined	2.4
Tenant - Housing authority	5.2
Tenant - other	19.7
NEI	4.0
Not stated	2.5

<u>Weekly Rent</u>	<u>% of Households</u>
0 - 9	1.2
10 - 19	16.6
20 - 29	15.9
30 - 39	16.4
40 - 49	24.8
50 - 59	12.4
60 - 69	6.2
70 - 79	1.7
80 - 89	0.3
90 - 99	0.0
100 - 109	0.3
110 - 129	0.0
130 - 148	0.3
149 +	0.3
Not stated	3.8

APPENDIX 2: Unemployment in regions studied

	Total	Male	Female	15-19 years	20-24 years	25-44 years	45+ years	Duration of registration			Unskilled vacancies at end of Sep.quart.	Ratio of u/e persons to job vacancies
								< 3 months	3-9 months	> 9 months		
Australia	775862	564518	211344	158187	195338	310434	111903	264619	272428	238815	18341	42:1
Victoria	178690	125880	52810	38281	44847	68064	27498	58518	63880	56292	4332	41:1
Metrop.	131063	92374	38689	26503	32655	50889	21016	42903	46477	41683	3080	43:1
Other	47627	33506	14121	11778	12192	17175	6482	15615	17403	14609	1252	38:1
Fitzroy	2968	2143	825	373	695	1478	422				186	16:1
Frankston	7574	5220	2354	1818	1827	2677	1252				82	92:1
Bairnsdale	1683	1196	487	332	466	659	226				30	56:1

* Source: Department of Employment and Industrial Relations, *Commonwealth Employment Service Statistics*, Issue No. 2, September quarter, 1983.

APPENDIX 3

Table 1: Educational Level X Gender

	Male %	Female %	Total %
Primary	7.7 (n=10)	0.8 (n=1)	8.5 (n=11)
Secondary Year 7-8	25.4 (n=33)	3.8 (n=5)	29.2 (n=38)
Year 9	15.4 (n=20)	4.6 (n=6)	20.0 (n=26)
Year 10	10.8 (n=14)	7.7 (n=10)	18.5 (n=24)
Year 11	6.2 (n=8)	6.2 (n=8)	12.3 (n=16)
Year 12	3.8 (n=5)	2.3 (n=3)	6.2 (n= 8)
Tertiary	4.6 (n=6)	0.0 (n=0)	4.6 (n=6)
Other	0.8 (n=1)	0.0 (n=0)	0.8 (n=1)
Total			100.0 (n=130)

Table 2: Educational Level X Region

	Outer Metrop. %	Inner Urban %	Rural %	Total %
Primary	3.1 (n=4)	3.8 (n=5)	1.5 (n=2)	8.5 (n=11)
Secondary Year 7-8	12.3 (n=16)	10.0 (n=13)	6.9 (n=9)	29.2 (n=38)
Year 9	4.6 (n=6)	7.7 (n=10)	7.7 (n=10)	20.0 (n=26)
Year 10	5.4 (n=7)	5.4 (n=7)	7.7 (n=10)	18.5 (n=24)
Year 11	6.9 (n=9)	0.8 (n=1)	4.6 (n=6)	12.3 (n=16)
Year 12	2.3 (n=3)	3.8 (n=5)	0.0 (n=0)	6.2 (n=8)
Tertiary	2.3 (n=3)	1.5 (n=2)	0.8 (n=1)	4.6 (n=6)
Other	0.0 (n=0)	0.0 (n=0)	0.8 (n=1)	0.8 (n=1)
Total				100.0 (n=130)

Table 3: Last Occupation X Gender

	Male %	Female %	Total %
Professional, technical	1.6 (n=2)	1.6 (n=2)	3.1 (n=4)
Administrative	1.6 (n=2)	0.0 (n=0)	1.6 (n=2)
Clerical	2.4 (n=3)	6.3 (n=8)	8.7 (n=11)
Sales	3.9 (n=5)	5.5 (n=7)	9.4 (n=12)
Farming	7.9 (n=10)	0.0 (n=0)	7.9 (n=10)
Mining	0.8 (n=1)	0.0 (n=0)	0.8 (n=1)
Transport, communication	3.1 (n=4)	0.8 (n=1)	3.9 (n=5)
Trades work	9.4 (n=12)	0.0 (n=0)	9.4 (n=12)
Process work, labouring	38.6 (n=49)	5.5 (n=7)	44.1 (n=56)
Other	6.3 (n=8)	4.7 (n=6)	11.0 (n=14)
Total			100.0 (n=127)

Table 4: Last Occupation X Life-cycle Stage

	Under 25 years %	Family Formation years %	Over 45 years %	Total %
Professional, technical	0.0 (n=0)	1.6 (n=2)	1.6 (n=2)	3.1 (n=4)
Administrative	0.0 (n=0)	0.0 (n=0)	1.6 (n=2)	1.6 (n=2)
Clerical	3.9 (n=5)	3.9 (n=5)	0.8 (n=1)	8.7 (n=11)
Sales	5.5 (n=7)	3.9 (n=5)	0.0 (n=0)	9.4 (n=12)
Farming	1.6 (n=2)	3.1 (n=4)	3.1 (n=4)	7.9 (n=10)
Mining	0.0 (n=0)	0.8 (n=1)	0.0 (n=0)	0.8 (n=1)
Transport, communication	0.8 (n=1)	1.6 (n=2)	1.6 (n=2)	3.9 (n=5)
Trades work	1.6 (n=2)	4.7 (n=6)	3.1 (n=4)	9.4 (n=12)
Process work, labouring	16.5 (n=21)	11.0 (n=14)	16.5 (n=21)	44.1 (n=56)
Other	5.5 (n=7)	3.1 (n=4)	2.4 (n=3)	11.0 (n=14)
Total				100.0 (n=127)

Table 5: Last Industry X Gender

	Male %	Female %	Total %
Agriculture	7.1 (n=9)	0.0 (n=0)	7.1 (n=9)
Mining	0.8 (n=1)	0.0 (n=0)	0.8 (n=1)
Manufacturing	26.0 (n=33)	4.7 (n=6)	30.7 (n=39)
Electricity, gas, water	1.6 (n=2)	0.8 (n=1)	2.4 (n=3)
Construction	12.6 (n=16)	0.0 (n=0)	12.6 (n=16)
Wholesale & retail	11.0 (n=14)	6.3 (n=8)	17.3 (n=22)
Transport & storage	2.4 (n=3)	0.0 (n=0)	2.4 (n=3)
Communications	0.0 (n=0)	1.6 (n=2)	1.6 (n=2)
Finance, property & business services	3.9 (n=5)	0.8 (n=1)	4.7 (n=6)
Community services	1.6 (n=2)	3.9 (n=5)	5.5 (n=7)
Recreation, personal & other services	6.3 (n=8)	5.5 (n=7)	11.8 (n=15)
Other	2.4 (n=3)	0.8 (n=1)	3.2 (n=4)
Total			100.0 (n=127)

Table 6: Last Industry X Life-cycle Stage

	Under 25 Years %	Family Formation years %	Over 45 years %	Total %
Agriculture	0.8 (n=1)	3.1 (n=4)	3.1 (n=4)	7.1 (n=9)
Mining	0.0 (n=0)	0.0 (n=0)	0.8 (n=1)	0.8 (n=1)
Manufacturing	12.6 (n=16)	8.7 (n=11)	9.4 (n=12)	30.7 (n=39)
Electricity, gas, water	0.8 (n=1)	0.8 (n=1)	0.8 (n=1)	2.4 (n=3)
Construction	3.9 (n=5)	3.9 (n=5)	4.7 (n=6)	12.6 (n=16)
Wholesale & retail	7.9 (n=10)	3.1 (n=4)	6.3 (n=8)	17.3 (n=22)
Transport & storage	0.0 (n=0)	1.6 (n=2)	0.8 (n=1)	2.4 (n=3)
Communications	0.8 (n=1)	0.8 (n=1)	0.0 (n=0)	1.6 (n=2)
Finance, property & business services	0.0 (n=0)	3.9 (n=5)	0.8 (n=1)	4.7 (n=6)
Community services	1.6 (n=2)	3.1 (n=4)	0.8 (n=1)	5.5 (n=7)
Recreation, personal & other services	6.3 (n=8)	2.4 (n=3)	3.1 (n=4)	11.8 (n=15)
Other	0.8 (n=1)	2.4 (n=3)	0.0 (n=0)	3.2 (n=4)
Total				100.1 (n=127)

Table 7: Duration of Last Job X Gender

	Male %	Female %	Total %
< 2 weeks	3.4 (n=4)	0.8 (n=1)	4.2 (n=5)
2 - 8 weeks	14.3 (n=17)	6.7 (n=8)	21.0 (n=25)
> 8 weeks & < 6 months	10.1 (n=12)	5.9 (n=7)	16.0 (n=19)
6 months - < 1 year	11.8 (n=14)	2.5 (n=3)	14.3 (n=17)
1 - 2 years	16.0 (n=19)	1.7 (n=2)	17.6 (n=21)
> 2 years & < 5 years	8.4 (n=10)	3.4 (n=4)	11.8 (n=14)
5 years +	12.6 (n=15)	2.5 (n=3)	15.1 (n=18)
Total			100.0 (n=119)

Table 8: Duration of Last Job X Life-cycle Stage

	Under 25 years %	Family Formation years %	Over 45 years %	Total %
< 2 weeks	0.8 (n=1)	1.7 (n=2)	1.7 (n=2)	4.2 (n=5)
2 - 8 weeks	11.8 (n=14)	4.2 (n=5)	5.0 (n=6)	21.0 (n=25)
> 8 weeks & < 6 months	10.1 (n=12)	5.0 (n=6)	0.8 (n=1)	16.0 (n=19)
6 months - < 1 year	5.9 (n=7)	5.9 (n=7)	2.5 (n=3)	14.3 (n=17)
1 - 2 years	5.0 (n=6)	5.0 (n=6)	7.6 (n=9)	17.6 (n=21)
> 2 years & < 5 years	1.7 (n=2)	5.0 (n=6)	5.0 (n=6)	11.8 (n=14)
5 years +	0.0 (n=0)	6.7 (n=8)	8.4 (n=10)	15.1 (n=18)
Total				100.0 (n=119)

Table 9: Reason for Leaving Last Job X Gender

	Male %	Female %	Total %
Redundant	20.8 (n=26)	4.0 (n=5)	24.8 (n=31)
Left of own accord	15.2 (n=19)	7.2 (n=9)	22.4 (n=28)
Dismissed	8.0 (n=10)	4.0 (n=5)	12.0 (n=15)
Fixed period of employment	6.4 (n=8)	3.2 (n=4)	9.6 (n=12)
Illness, work accident	5.6 (n=7)	3.2 (n=4)	8.8 (n=11)
Change of address	1.6 (n=2)	0.0 (n=0)	1.6 (n=2)
Other miscellaneous (inc. more than one reason)	17.6 (n=22)	3.2 (n=4)	20.8 (n=26)
Total			100.0 (n=125)

Table 10: Reason for Leaving Last Job X Life-cycle Stage

	Under 25 years %	Family Formation years %	Over 45 years %	Total %
Redundant	3.2 (n=4)	10.4 (n=13)	11.2 (n=14)	24.8 (n=31)
Left of own accord	8.8 (n=11)	8.8 (n=11)	4.8 (n=6)	22.4 (n=28)
Dismissed	5.6 (n=7)	4.8 (n=6)	1.6 (n=2)	12.0 (n=15)
Fixed period of employment	3.2 (n=4)	4.8 (n=6)	1.6 (n=2)	9.6 (n=12)
Illness, work accident	1.6 (n=2)	2.4 (n=3)	4.8 (n=6)	8.8 (n=11)
Change of address	1.6 (n=2)	0.0 (n=0)	0.0 (n=0)	1.6 (n=2)
Other miscellaneous (inc. more than one reason)	10.4 (n=13)	3.2 (n=4)	7.2 (n=9)	20.8 (n=26)
Total				100.0 (n=125)

Table 11: Weekly Pay in Last Job X Gender

	Male %	Female %	Total %
\$20 or less	0.8 (n=1)	0.8 (n=1)	1.7 (n=2)
\$21 - \$50	5.0 (n=6)	2.5 (n=3)	7.5 (n=9)
\$51 - \$100	5.8 (n=7)	9.2 (n=11)	15.0 (n=18)
\$101 - \$150	20.0 (n=24)	3.3 (n=4)	23.3 (n=28)
\$151 - \$200	25.8 (n=31)	5.8 (n=7)	31.7 (n=38)
\$201 - \$250	9.2 (n=11)	0.8 (n=1)	10.0 (n=12)
\$251 - \$300	7.5 (n=9)	0.0 (n=0)	7.5 (n=9)
Other	1.7 (n=2)	1.7 (n=2)	3.3 (n=4)
Total			100.0 (n=120)

Table 12: Weekly Pay in Last Job X Life-cycle Stage

	Under 25 years %	Family Formation years %	Over 45 Years %	Total %
\$20 or less	1.7 (n=2)	0.0 (n=0)	0.0 (n=0)	1.7 (n=2)
\$21 - \$50	2.5 (n=3)	3.3 (n=4)	1.7 (n=2)	7.5 (n=9)
\$51 - \$100	9.2 (n=11)	3.3 (n=4)	2.5 (n=3)	15.0 (n=18)
\$101 - \$150	10.0 (n=12)	3.3 (n=4)	10.0 (n=12)	23.3 (n=28)
\$151 - \$200	8.3 (n=10)	13.3 (n=16)	10.0 (n=12)	31.7 (n=38)
\$201 - \$250	1.7 (n=2)	4.2 (n= 5)	4.2 (n=5)	10.0 (n=12)
\$251 - \$300	1.7 (n=2)	3.3 (n=4)	2.5 (n=3)	7.5 (n=9)
Other	0.0 (n=0)	2.5 (n=3)	0.8 (n=1)	3.3 (n=4)
Total				100.0 (n=120)

Table 13: Travelling Distance to Last Job X Gender

	Male %	Female %	Total %
< 1 kilometre	18.8 (n=21)	8.9 (n=10)	27.7 (n=31)
2-3 kilometres	8.9 (n=10)	1.8 (n=2)	10.7 (n=12)
4-5 kilometres	9.8 (n=11)	7.1 (n=8)	17.0 (n=19)
6-10 kilometres	10.7 (n=12)	2.7 (n=3)	13.4 (n=15)
11-20 kilometres	10.7 (n=12)	5.4 (n=6)	16.0 (n=18)
> 20 kilometres	13.5 (n=15)	1.8 (n=2)	15.2 (n=17)
Total			100.0 (n=112)

Table 14: Travelling Distance to Last Job X Life-cycle Stage

	Under 25 years %	Family Formation years %	Over 45 years %	Total %
< 1 kilometre	11.6 (n=13)	9.8 (n=11)	6.3 (n=7)	27.7 (n=31)
2-3 kilometres	2.7 (n=3)	4.5 (n=5)	3.6 (n=4)	10.7 (n=12)
4-5 kilometres	7.1 (n=8)	6.3 (n=7)	3.6 (n=4)	17.0 (n=19)
6-10 kilometres	3.6 (n=4)	4.5 (n=5)	5.4 (n=6)	13.4 (n=15)
11-20 kilometres	4.5 (n=5)	6.3 (n=7)	5.4 (n=6)	16.0 (n=18)
> 20 kilometres	5.4 (n=6)	4.5 (n=5)	5.4 (n=6)	15.2 (n=17)
Total				100.0 (n=112)

Table 15: Housing Situation X Life-cycle Stage

	Under 25 years %	Family Formation %	Over 45 years %	Total %
Privately rented house	7.7 (n=10)	8.5 (n=11)	5.4 (n=7)	21.5 (n=28)
Privately rented flat	3.8 (n=5)	3.8 (n=5)	1.5 (n=2)	9.2 (n=12)
Housing Commission of Victoria rented house	1.5 (n=2)	3.8 (n=5)	1.5 (n=2)	6.9 (n=9)
HCV rented flat	1.5 (n=2)	4.6 (n=6)	1.5 (n=2)	7.7 (n=10)
Owner-occupier of house	5.4 (n=7)	7.7 (n=10)	13.1 (n=17)	26.2 (n=34)
Flat owned	0.8 (n=1)	0.0 (n=0)	0.0 (n=0)	0.8 (n=1)
Boarding	12.5 (n=6)	2.3 (n=1)	5.4 (n=7)	10.8 (n=14)
Hostel	2.3 (n=3)	0.0 (n=0)	0.0 (n=0)	2.3 (n=3)
Other (e.g. caravan, temporary arrangement with friends)	9.2 (n=12)	3.8 (n=5)	1.5 (n=2)	14.6 (n=19)
Total				100.0 (n=130)

Table 16: Duration of Unemployment X Gender

	Male %	Female %	Total %
0-4 weeks	11.1 (n=14)	4.8 (n=6)	15.9 (n=20)
5-8 weeks	7.1 (n=9)	3.2 (n=4)	10.3 (n=13)
9-12 weeks	6.3 (n=8)	2.4 (n=3)	8.7 (n=11)
13-26 weeks	15.1 (n=19)	5.6 (n=7)	20.6 (n=26)
27-52 weeks	13.5 (n=17)	4.0 (n=5)	17.5 (n=22)
53-104 weeks	12.7 (n=16)	4.0 (n=5)	16.7 (n=21)
>104 weeks	8.7 (n=11)	1.6 (n=2)	10.3 (n=13)
Total			100.0 (n=126)

Table 17: Duration of Unemployment X Region

	Outer Metrop. %	Inner Urban %	Rural %	Total %
0-4 weeks	6.3 (n=8)	1.6 (n=2)	7.9 (n=10)	15.9 (n=20)
5-8 weeks	2.4 (n=3)	3.2 (n=4)	4.8 (n=6)	10.3 (n=13)
9-12 weeks	2.4 (n=3)	3.2 (n=4)	3.2 (n=4)	8.7 (n=11)
13-26 weeks	7.9 (n=10)	9.5 (n=12)	3.2 (n=4)	20.6 (n=26)
27-52 weeks	7.1 (n=9)	6.3 (n=8)	4.0 (n=5)	17.5 (n=22)
53-104 weeks	7.1 (n=9)	5.6 (n=7)	4.0 (n=5)	16.7 (n=21)
> 104 weeks	4.0 (n=5)	4.0 (n=5)	2.4 (n=3)	10.3 (n=13)
Total				100.0 (n=126)

Table 18: Duration of Unemployment X Life-cycle Stage

	Under 25 years %	Family Formation years %	Over 45 years %	Total %
0-4 weeks	7.9 (n=10)	4.8 (n=6)	3.2 (n=4)	15.9 (n=20)
5-8 weeks	3.2 (n=4)	4.8 (n=6)	2.4 (n=3)	10.3 (n=13)
9-12 weeks	2.4 (n=3)	4.0 (n=5)	2.4 (n=3)	8.7 (n=11)
13-26 weeks	7.1 (n=9)	8.7 (n=11)	4.8 (n=6)	20.6 (n=26)
27-52 weeks	11.9 (n=15)	1.6 (n=2)	4.0 (n=5)	17.5 (n=22)
53-104 weeks	3.2 (n=4)	7.1 (n=9)	6.3 (n=8)	16.7 (n=21)
> 104 weeks	0.0 (n=0)	3.2 (n=4)	7.1 (n=9)	10.3 (n=13)
Total				100.0 (n=126)

Table 19: Time Prepared to Spend Travelling to Work X Gender

	Male %	Female %	Total %
Up to 10 minutes	1.6 (n=2)	1.6 (n=2)	3.2 (n=4)
11-20 minutes	4.8 (n=6)	3.2 (n=4)	8.0 (n=10)
21-30 minutes	26.4 (n=33)	10.4 (n=13)	36.8 (n=46)
31-40 minutes	2.4 (n=3)	0.8 (n=1)	3.2 (n=4)
41-50 minutes	7.2 (n=9)	0.8 (n=1)	8.0 (n=10)
51-60 minutes	19.2 (n=24)	6.4 (n=8)	25.6 (n=32)
> 60 minutes	12.0 (n=15)	3.2 (n=4)	15.2 (n=19)
Total			100.0 (n=125)

Table 20: How Last Job was Found X Gender

	Male %	Female %	Total %
Commonwealth Employment Service	19.3 (n=22)	5.3 (n=6)	24.6 (n=28)
Newspaper	11.4 (n=13)	6.1 (n=7)	17.5 (n=20)
Friend	31.6 (n=36)	7.0 (n=8)	38.6 (n=44)
Employment agency	0.9 (n=1)	0.0 (n=0)	0.9 (n=1)
Other (e.g. past employer, family member)	13.2 (n=15)	5.3 (n=6)	18.5 (n=21)
Total			100.0 (n=114)

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