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PERSPECTIVES ON REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT IN URBAN, RURAL AND REGIONAL AUSTRALIA, 2001 CENSUS

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ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This publication is the first of a series of reports analysing a range of topics with a particular focus on Regional Australia. In this issue data from the 2001 Census of Population and Housing has been used to present some perspectives on the characteristics of women in employment in urban, rural and regional Australia.

In recent years economic pressures from global, as well as local, influences have had a significant impact on the availability and nature of employment in many rural and regional areas. Women throughout regional Australia contribute substantially to their regional economies through their participation in the labour force, yet they face considerably different employment considerations and opportunities than do women in urban areas.

This paper provides an insight into the different employment conditions experienced by women in regional Australia by examining characteristics such as age, employment status, qualifications and industry of employment. The data is presented using the geographic classification "Section of State" which enables comparisons in employment patterns across major urban cities, medium townships, small townships and rural areas of Australia.

Dennis Trewin
Australian Statistician

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

Employment is an important contributor to overall wellbeing and quality of life. Employment-related income is a key determinant of the capacity of individuals and households to meet the needs of daily life and employment itself is a means by which individuals may learn and apply new skills, gain access to social networks and develop a sense of self worth (ABS, 2004d).

Across all regions of Australia women contribute substantially to their local economies through their participation in the labour force. The nature and extent of this contribution has changed considerably over the last few decades as a result of various economic and social changes. For example, since the early 1970s laws have been changed to remove marriage bars from employment (e.g. in the Australian Public Service), equal pay rights have been granted and the Sex Discrimination Act has been widely promulgated. Structural changes in the economy, particularly the growth of service industries (increasing the availability of casual and part-time work), flexible working arrangements and increased access to child-care have allowed more women to enter the workforce or to combine work with family responsibilities (ABS, 2003b). In addition, Australian families have become more reliant on dual incomes for their economic wellbeing (ABS, 2003a).

Women residing in rural and regional Australia may face additional employment challenges to those faced by women in urban areas. Employment opportunities for women in these areas may not be as frequent or varied as a result of smaller and less diverse local economies.

This publication explores differences in women's employment across urban and rural areas of Australia and highlights some of the characteristics of women as they relate to the labour force, including full-time and part-time employment, age, industry of employment and post-school qualifications. The data are drawn mainly from the 2001 Census of Population and Housing and represent a snapshot of employed women aged 15–64 years at that point in time. Some comparisons are made with results from earlier Censuses.

The geographical areas used in this analysis have been derived from the 'Section of State' (SOS) Structure contained in the *Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC), Volume 1, 2001* (cat. no. 1216.0). The Section of State structure divides Australia into various types of urban and rural areas, on the basis of population size.

For the purposes of this report, the following categories have been used to compare women's employment patterns in urban and rural areas. The data for these geographic categories are based on where people were located on Census night (i.e. place of enumeration), which may not necessarily correspond to where they usually live (i.e. place of usual residence).

- Major urban—urban centres with a population exceeding 100,000 persons (Major urban in the SOS Structure),
- Medium townships—towns and urban centres with a population in the range of 20,000 to 99,999 persons (part of Other urban in the SOS Structure),
- Small townships—towns and urban centres with a population in the range of 1,000 to 19,999 persons (part of Other urban in the SOS Structure), and

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

INTRODUCTION *continued*

- Rural areas—the remainder of Australia which includes towns with a population in the range 200 to 999 persons (Bounded localities in the SOS Structure) and all other rural areas including towns with a population less than 200 persons (Rural balance in the SOS Structure).

While this paper focuses on these four broad geographic categories, it is important to note that employment patterns may vary widely between towns or regions within the same category, depending on local economic and labour market conditions. For example, while the unemployment rate for women in Medium townships may be relatively high overall, individual towns in this category will have relatively low rates of unemployment, while others will have relatively high rates. The impact of local conditions should therefore be accounted for when making assumptions, based on this publication, about individual towns.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Based on results from the 2001 Census:-

- Women in Major urban areas are more likely to have higher educational qualifications, have the highest labour force participation rate, are least likely to be self-employed, and are less likely to be working part-time.
- Women in Rural areas are least likely to be unemployed, and most likely to be self-employed, with almost half working in agriculture.

Specifically:-

- In 2001, the labour force participation rate for women aged 15–64 years in Australia was 65.3%, compared to 80.4% for men. Small townships had the lowest labour force participation rate for women (61.1%), compared with 66.6% in Major urban centres.
- Between 1991 and 2001 female labour force participation rates increased in each of the four broad geographical regions defined in this report.
- The unemployment rate for women aged 15–64 years across Australia was 6.7% in 2001, which was 1.4 percentage points lower than the rate for men similarly aged (8.1%). Highest rates of female unemployment were observed in Medium townships (8.2%) and Small townships (7.8%), compared to 5.8% in Rural areas.
- Small townships had the highest proportion of part-time employed women (54.3%) compared with 51.9% in Rural areas and 46.5% in Major urban centres.
- In each of the four areas defined in this report, Retail trade and Health and community services were the main industries in which women aged 15–64 years worked.
- The proportion of self-employed women in Rural areas (25.3%) in 2001 was more than double the proportion in Major urban centres (10.2%).
- One quarter of employed women aged 15–64 years in Major urban centres had a University degree compared with around 17% for both Medium townships and Rural areas and 15.7% in Small townships.

LABOUR FORCE STATUS

At the 2001 Census, there were almost 4 million women aged 15–64 years in the Australian *labour force*, comprising 3.7 million *employed* women and around 265,000 *unemployed* women. Over two-thirds (68%) of the nation's employed women in this age group were counted in Major urban centres, 8.9% in Medium townships, 11.0% in Small townships and 12.0% in Rural areas.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

LABOUR FORCE STATUS

continued

While the geographical distribution of employed women aged 15–64 years was very similar to the geographical distribution of all women in this age group, there were some differences in labour force participation rates in urban and rural areas. Women in major urban centres had the highest participation rate (66.6%), compared to 61.1% in Small townships and 63.5% in Rural areas.

The *labour force participation rate* for women aged 15–64 years in Australia was 65.3%, compared to 80.4% for men in this age group. As was the case for women, labour force participation rates for men were lower in Small townships and Rural areas, however there was more variation in female participation rates across the four geographic areas.

1 PERSONS AGED 15–64 YEARS, Labour Force Status—By sex—2001 Census

	Employed	Unemployed	Total Labour Force	Total Aged 15–64	Labour Force Participation Rate(a)
	'000	'000	'000	'000	%
FEMALES					
Major urban	2 518.2	173.9	2 692.1	4 180.3	66.6
Medium townships	329.6	29.4	359.0	576.3	64.2
Small townships	406.1	34.5	440.5	743.5	61.1
Rural areas	443.1	27.4	470.5	764.6	63.5
Australia(b)	3 697.8	265.2	3 963.0	6 266.1	65.3
MALES					
Major urban	2 944.7	249.8	3 194.5	4 081.1	81.1
Medium townships	390.1	42.6	432.7	558.4	80.1
Small townships	508.0	52.3	560.3	737.4	78.6
Rural areas	590.2	46.1	636.3	837.0	78.7
Australia(b)	4 437.7	390.9	4 828.6	6 219.8	80.4
PERSONS					
Major urban	5 463.0	423.7	5 886.6	8 261.4	73.7
Medium townships	719.7	72.0	791.8	1 134.7	72.0
Small townships	914.1	86.8	1 000.8	1 480.9	69.8
Rural areas	1 033.3	73.5	1 106.8	1 601.6	71.5
Australia(b)	8 135.5	656.1	8 791.6	12 485.9	72.8

(a) Excludes persons who did not state their labour force status.

(b) Includes Migratory areas.

Table 2 shows labour force participation rates by age group for women in urban and rural areas. Women aged 25–34 years living in Major urban centres had the highest labour force participation rate, 72.8%. The lowest participation rate was 32.1% for women aged 55–64 years in Small townships.

In all age categories over 25 years, Small townships had the lowest labour force participation rates. This could be due, in part, to women who have withdrawn from the labour force because of a relative lack of employment opportunities, i.e. '*discouraged jobseekers*'.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

LABOUR FORCE STATUS *continued*

Women in Rural areas had the lowest participation rates in the 15–24 year age group (57.0%). Conversely, women in Rural areas had the highest participation rates in each of the age groups over 35 years. This was particularly evident in the case of women aged 55–64 years, for whom labour force participation rates in Rural areas were 43.3%, compared to 39.4% in Major urban areas and 35.1% in Medium townships. This is likely to be related to higher levels of employment in agriculture in Rural areas and the fact that persons working in this sector may in some cases retire later than those working in other industries.

2 WOMEN AGED 15-64 YEARS, Labour Force Participation Rates(a)—2001 Census

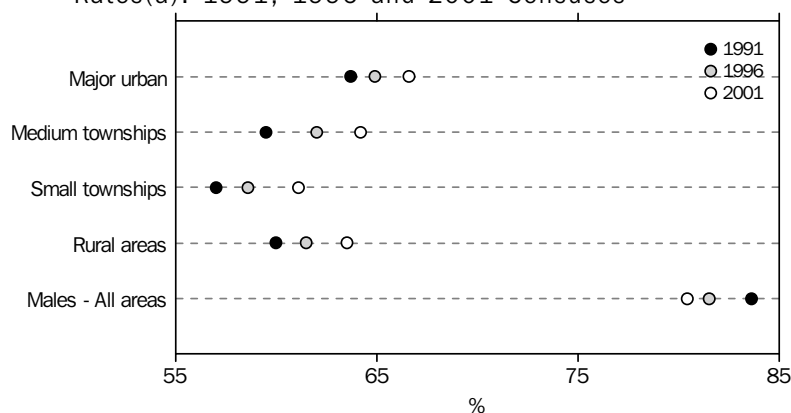
	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	Total Aged 15-64
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Major urban	65.4	72.8	71.9	72.3	39.4	66.6
Medium townships	65.0	67.1	72.1	71.0	35.1	64.2
Small townships	61.9	64.0	70.5	68.9	32.1	61.1
Rural areas	57.0	64.3	72.2	72.3	43.3	63.5
Australia(b)	64.1	70.5	71.8	71.8	38.6	65.3

(a) Excludes persons who did not state their labour force status.

(b) Includes Migratory areas.

Graph 3 illustrates the change in female labour force participation rates between 1991 and 2001. During this period participation rates for women aged 15–64 years increased in all geographical areas, such that the overall female participation rate rose from 62.0% in 1991 to 65.3% in 2001. In 1991 the overall labour force participation rate for females was 21.6 percentage points lower than that for males, while in 2001 the difference fell to 15.1 percentage points.

3 WOMEN AGED 15-64 YEARS, Labour Force Participation Rates(a): 1991, 1996 and 2001 Censuses



(a) Excludes persons who did not state their labour force status.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

UNEMPLOYMENT

In the 2001 Census, the *unemployment rate* for women aged 15–64 years in Australia was 6.7%. This was 1.4 percentage points lower than the rate for men aged 15–64 years (8.1%). As shown in Table 4, the unemployment rate for females was lower than that for males in each of the broad urban and rural areas defined in this report.

To some extent, the lower female unemployment rate may be a reflection of lower female labour force participation rates in urban and rural areas. In some cases, women may be less likely than men to remain in the labour market during periods of long-term unemployment (in September 2003, 67% of *discouraged job seekers* in Australia were female (ABS, 2004c).

4 UNEMPLOYED PERSONS AGED 15–64 YEARS, By sex—2001 Census

	FEMALES		MALES		PERSONS	
	<i>Unemployed</i>	<i>Unemployment Rate</i>	<i>Unemployed</i>	<i>Unemployment Rate</i>	<i>Unemployed</i>	<i>Unemployment Rate</i>
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
Major urban	173.9	6.5	249.8	7.8	423.7	7.2
Medium townships	29.4	8.2	42.6	9.9	72.0	9.1
Small townships	34.5	7.8	52.3	9.3	86.8	8.7
Rural areas	27.4	5.8	46.1	7.2	73.5	6.6
Australia (a)	265.2	6.7	390.9	8.1	656.1	7.5

(a) Includes Migratory areas.

Observed differences in female unemployment rates across urban and rural areas were similar to those observed for the population as a whole. Lower unemployment rates were recorded in Rural areas and in Major urban areas, while unemployment rates were higher in Small and Medium townships.

A range of factors are likely to impact on unemployment rates in each area. Due to the limited nature of employment opportunities in some Rural areas, persons looking for work, particularly in the younger age groups, may be more likely to seek out new and expanded opportunities in larger towns and cities (ABS, 2004b). The higher incidence of migration of unemployed persons out of Rural areas may contribute to lower overall unemployment rates in these areas. Women in Rural areas are also more likely than women in other areas to be self employed (see Employment Status section), which may also contribute to lower levels of unemployment in these areas.

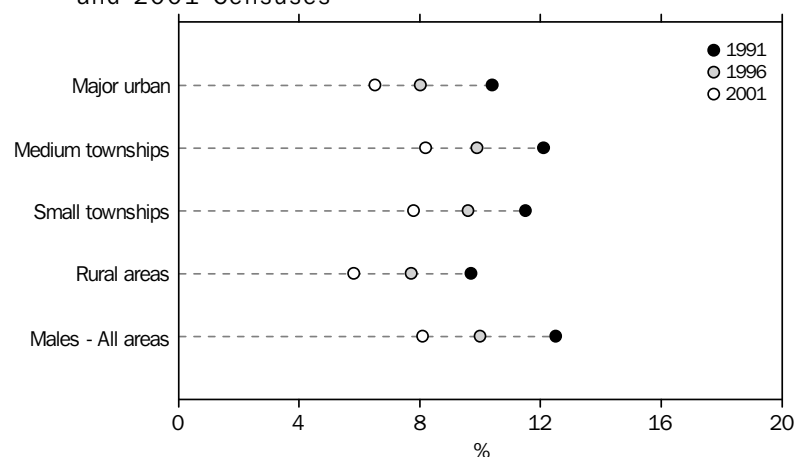
The higher rates of unemployment observed in Small and Medium townships may be partly explained by declines in traditional industry sectors in these areas (e.g. mining and financial and government services) (Garnaut et al, 2001).

Nationally, the unemployment rate for women aged 15–64 years in the 2001 Census was 6.7%, down from 8.3% at the 1996 Census and 10.6% at the 1991 Census. The overall unemployment rate for males aged 15–64 years was higher in each Census. Between 1996 and 2001, the female unemployment rate in each area fell by between 1.5 and 2.0 percentage points.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

UNEMPLOYMENT *continued*

5 WOMEN AGED 15–64 YEARS, Unemployment Rates: 1991, 1996 and 2001 Censuses



Overall, the relativities of the unemployment rates across the four geographical areas have remained virtually the same during the period 1991 to 2001.

PART-TIME WORK

Structural change in the Australian economy, including the growth of service industries, and demands from both women and men for more flexible working arrangements have seen a significant increase in the availability of part-time work over time (ABS, 2003b). Part-time employment has provided increased flexibility for women in the management of career, study and child-care responsibilities. This has allowed greater proportions of women to remain in the labour force following child birth and to supplement their income while undertaking further education.

In Australia, the proportion of employed women aged 15–64 years working *part-time* (i.e. less than 35 hours in the week prior to the Census) was 48.4% in 2001, up from 46.4% in 1996. This was more than double the percentage for men (20.2% in 2001 and 17.5% in 1996).

Small townships had the highest rate of female part-time employment in 2001, 54.3% compared to 46.5% in Major urban centres. By contrast there was little difference in rates of male part-time employment across urban and rural areas (20.8% in Small townships, 20.2% in Major urban areas).

While the total number of employed women aged 15–64 years has increased, between 1996 and 2001 the proportion of employed women working full-time decreased in each of the four geographic regions.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

PART-TIME WORK *continued*

6 EMPLOYED WOMEN AGED 15–64 YEARS, Proportion Full-time/Part-time—1996 and 2001 Censuses

	1996		2001	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
	%	%	%	%
Major urban	55.3	44.7	53.5	46.5
Medium townships	50.7	49.3	49.1	50.9
Small townships	48.1	51.9	45.7	54.3
Rural areas	51.6	48.4	48.1	51.9
Australia(a)	53.6	46.4	51.6	48.4

(a) Includes Migratory areas.

The effect of life-cycle stages on hours worked is evident when examining the propensity for women in different age groups to engage in part-time work (see Table 7). At age 15–24 years, the incidence of part-time work was relatively high (55.7% for Australia in 2001). This stage is characterised by a high proportion of women working part-time whilst, for example, undertaking further education. Upon the completion of study, it is then likely that women move into full-time employment, as shown by the fall in part-time work for women aged 25–34 years (40.1%). The effect of caring for young children and working becomes pronounced with the increased rate of part-time work for 35–44 year olds (51.9%). When these children reach secondary school age, the rate of female part-time employment falls for women aged 45–54 years (45.6%), while for women aged 55–64 years moving towards retirement, the incidence of part-time employment increases (53.4%). This pattern is most predominant in Major urban centres and is generally consistent across each region.

Excluding women aged 15–24 years, the incidence of part-time work was highest in Small townships and Rural areas. Differences between urban and rural areas in regard to levels of part-time work were most pronounced in the case of the 25–34 year age group. In 2001, 51.4% of employed women aged 25–34 years in Small townships were working part-time while in Major urban areas the equivalent figure was 36.6%. Possible reasons for this difference may include a relative lack of full-time positions available in Small townships and Rural areas in comparison to urban areas. The fact that the difference between urban and rural areas in this respect is less pronounced in the case of 35–44 year olds may also reflect the greater propensity for women in urban areas to defer child birth (and consequently the requirement for part-time work) until later in life (ABS, 2003c).

Nationally, 53.4% of employed women aged 55–64 years worked part-time. Much of this is due to women moving into part-time employment before retirement. Again, the proportion for this age group is highest in Small townships (58.8%), compared with 53.0% in Major urban centres, while it is the lowest in Rural areas (50.7%).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

PART-TIME WORK *continued*

7 EMPLOYED WOMEN, Proportion Working Part-time—By age—2001 Census

	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	Total Aged 15-64
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Major urban	55.2	36.6	49.9	44.3	53.0	46.5
Medium townships	56.9	45.7	53.4	46.6	55.1	50.9
Small townships	56.2	51.4	57.5	50.2	58.8	54.3
Rural areas	57.1	50.6	55.3	47.1	50.7	51.9
Australia (a)	55.7	40.1	51.9	45.6	53.4	48.4

(a) Includes Migratory areas.

INDUSTRY

Nationally, 17.4% of employed women aged 15–64 years were employed in Retail trade, 17.3% in Health and community services, 11.6% in Property and business services and 11.2% in Education. This reflects the trend of women working predominantly in *service industries*. Overall 87.5% of employed females aged 15–64 years worked in service industries, compared to 64.8% of employed males in the same age group. Both Major urban centres and Medium townships had higher proportions of women employed in these industries than the national average with 89.0% and 90.6% respectively.

The highest proportion of women working in *goods producing industries* (such as Agriculture, forestry and fishing, Mining and Manufacturing) was found in Rural areas (24.3%) reflecting the importance of the agricultural sector as an employer in these regions. In comparison, 11.0% of women in Major urban centres were employed in goods producing industries, 9.4% in Medium townships and 11.5% in Small townships.

While in each region relatively large proportions of women aged 15–64 years worked in Retail trade, Health and community services and Education, each region also had other industry sectors which, in terms of employment, were important. For example, in Rural areas, Agriculture, forestry and fishing was a predominant industry (15.0% of employed women) while in Major urban centres, Property and business services (13.3%) and Manufacturing (8.1%) were other industries with significant proportions of women. In both Small and Medium townships, tourism was significant with 9.3% and 7.7% of women respectively working in Accommodation, cafes and restaurants. Property and business services was also a significant employer in both Small townships (8.2%) and Medium townships (9.0%).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

8 EMPLOYED WOMEN AGED 15–64 YEARS, Proportion—By industry division—2001 Census

	Major urban	Medium townships	Small townships	Rural areas	Australia (a)	Males 15–64yrs Australia (a)
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	0.5	1.2	2.7	15.0	2.5	4.8
Mining	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.3	1.5
Manufacturing	8.1	5.5	5.8	6.1	7.3	16.8
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.3	1.1
Construction	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.0	11.0
Goods Producing Industries	11.0	9.4	11.5	24.3	12.5	35.2
Wholesale Trade	4.2	3.0	3.1	3.5	3.9	6.7
Retail Trade	16.9	21.2	20.5	15.1	17.4	13.0
Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants	5.6	7.7	9.3	6.6	6.3	4.1
Transport and Storage	2.6	2.4	2.1	2.2	2.5	6.0
Communication Services	1.6	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.4	2.2
Finance and Insurance	5.8	3.3	3.0	2.3	4.8	3.1
Property and Business Services	13.3	9.0	8.2	7.2	11.6	11.1
Government Administration and Defence	4.5	5.1	4.3	4.5	4.6	4.6
Education	10.8	12.1	12.1	12.1	11.2	4.2
Health and Community Services	17.0	19.3	19.1	16.2	17.3	3.9
Cultural and Recreational Services	2.9	2.3	1.9	2.0	2.6	2.4
Personal and Other Services	4.0	4.2	4.1	3.1	3.9	3.6
Service Industries	89.0	90.6	88.5	75.7	87.5	64.8
All industries (b)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(a) Includes Migratory areas.

(b) Excludes persons who did not state their industry of employment and persons employed in non-classifiable economic units.

INDUSTRY *continued*

The industries employing the highest proportions of women aged 15–64 years on a part-time basis were Retail trade, (63.1% of employed women in this industry worked part-time), Accommodation, cafes and restaurants (62.2%) and Culture and recreational services (54.9%).

Interestingly, for most industries, the proportion of women working part-time generally increased as the size of the townships decreased. This also applied to those industries not generally associated with part-time employment. For example, 31.1% of women employed in the Manufacturing industry in Major urban centres worked part-time, compared with 36.7% in Medium townships, 39.5% in Small townships and 40.7% in Rural areas. Other industries such as Mining, Construction and Electricity, gas and water also displayed this trend. A notable exception to this was Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry industries, in which the proportion of women employed on a part-time basis was considerably higher in Major urban areas and Medium and Small townships than in Rural areas.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

INDUSTRY *continued*

9 EMPLOYED WOMEN AGED 15–64 YEARS, Proportion Working Part-time—By industry—2001 Census

	<i>Major urban</i>	<i>Medium townships</i>	<i>Small townships</i>	<i>Rural Areas</i>	<i>Australia(a)</i>
	%	%	%	%	%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	51.9	52.0	50.3	37.1	41.2
Mining	21.9	20.5	23.5	24.7	22.6
Manufacturing	31.1	36.7	39.5	40.7	33.2
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	24.9	25.6	32.7	33.3	26.6
Construction	52.5	53.8	58.0	60.4	54.4
Goods Producing Industries	35.4	41.1	44.4	40.1	37.8
Wholesale Trade	34.4	42.8	45.8	45.0	37.1
Retail Trade	63.1	64.4	63.1	61.9	63.1
Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants	61.5	63.7	63.9	61.6	62.2
Transport and Storage	34.5	40.2	46.9	51.6	37.9
Communication Services	30.7	42.0	49.9	48.2	34.5
Finance and Insurance	32.2	40.9	47.2	47.3	34.6
Property and Business Services	39.1	43.8	49.7	49.4	41.0
Government Administration and Defence	30.1	31.1	40.2	47.1	33.2
Education	45.5	44.9	48.2	50.6	46.4
Health and Community Services	52.9	52.4	58.0	60.2	54.3
Cultural and Recreational Services	53.7	57.5	61.3	57.6	54.9
Personal and Other Services	44.5	47.0	51.0	52.6	46.3
Service Industries	47.7	51.8	55.4	55.4	49.8
All industries	46.5	50.9	54.3	51.9	48.4

(a) Includes Migratory areas.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

At the 2001 Census, there were just under 3.7 million women aged 15–64 years employed in Australia. Of this number, 87.6% were employees working for wages and salary for an employer (i.e. *employee*) and 12.4% were *self-employed* (i.e. working in their own unincorporated business with or without employees). Nationally, a higher proportion of men than women aged 15–64 were self employed (20.9% of males were self-employed).

In Rural areas, the proportion of self-employed women was 25.3%, more than double the proportion for Australia as a whole. Much of this can be attributed to women running and operating the family farm either as individuals or in partnership. The proportion of self-employed women in Small townships (13.7%) was slightly higher than was the case at the national level (12.4%), but still substantially lower than that observed for Rural areas.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

EMPLOYMENT STATUS *continued*

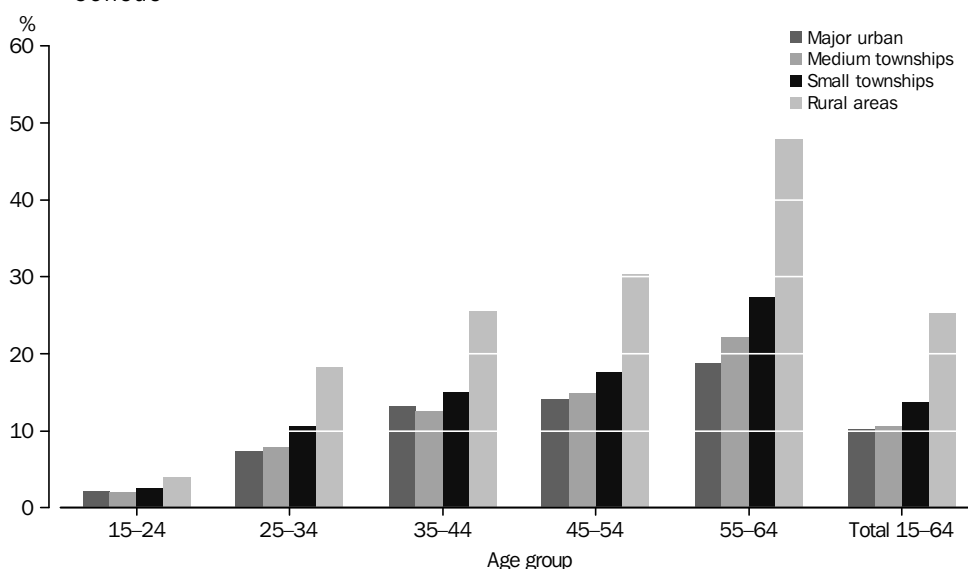
10 EMPLOYED WOMEN AGED 15–64 YEARS, Employment Status—2001 Census

Employment Status	Major urban	Medium townships	Small townships	Rural areas	Males 15–64yrs	
					Australia (a)	Australia (a)
'000						
Employee	2 260.8	294.7	350.6	331.2	3 237.9	3 509.2
Self-employed	257.4	34.9	55.5	111.9	459.8	928.5
Total Employed	2 518.2	329.6	406.1	443.1	3 697.8	4 437.7
%						
Employee	89.8	89.4	86.3	74.7	87.6	79.1
Self-employed	10.2	10.6	13.7	25.3	12.4	20.9
Total Employed	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(a) Includes Migratory areas.

Graph 11 below shows that in 2001 the incidence of self-employment amongst females increased significantly with age. In Australia, only 2.3% of employed women aged 15–24 years were self-employed, while for those aged 55–64 years the proportion was 24.9%. This pattern of increasing levels of self-employment with age was observed across each geographical category.

11 SELF-EMPLOYED WOMEN AS A PROPORTION OF TOTAL EMPLOYED WOMEN, By age: 2001 Census



Nationally, most self-employed women were engaged in the Retail trade industry (18.5% of all self-employed women) followed by Property and business services (15.5%) and Agriculture, forestry and fishing (12.2%). Property and business services includes accounting services, legal services, business management services, IT services, architecture/engineering services, real estate agencies and cleaning services.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

continued

In Rural areas, 42.9% of self-employed women were engaged in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sector. A further 12.7% were engaged in the Retail sector. In Small townships, 9.9% of self-employed women were engaged in Accommodation, cafes and restaurants.

12 SELF-EMPLOYED WOMEN AGED 15–64 YEARS, Industry of Employment—By area—2001 Census

	% of total self-employed
Major urban	
Property and Business Services	20.5
Retail Trade	19.0
Health and Community Services	9.8
Manufacturing	9.2
Medium townships	
Retail Trade	23.8
Property and Business Services	13.2
Health and Community Services	10.5
Personal and Other Services	8.7
Small townships	
Retail Trade	24.4
Property and Business Services	11.5
Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants	9.9
Health and Community Services	8.8
Rural areas	
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	42.9
Retail Trade	12.7
Property and Business Services	6.9
Manufacturing	6.1
Australia (a)	
Retail Trade	18.5
Property and Business Services	15.5
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	12.2
Health and Community Services	8.3

(a) Includes Migratory areas.

HIGHEST LEVEL OF POST-SCHOOL QUALIFICATION

At the 2001 Census, 45% of employed women aged 15–64 years in Australia held a *post-school qualification* with almost 23% having a University degree. In comparison, almost 54% of employed men in Australia held a post-school qualification with 18% having a University degree. In all areas there was a higher proportion of employed women than employed men with University degrees and Advanced diploma and diploma level qualifications. This was particularly the case in Rural areas where over 17% of employed women had a University degree, in comparison to under 10% of employed men. By contrast, in all areas, a considerably higher proportion of employed men aged 15–64 years had Certificate level qualifications (which are predominantly skilled vocational or trade qualifications of a type usually obtained from a TAFE College).

Reflecting the availability and range of jobs in Major urban centres, there was a much higher proportion of employed women aged 15–64 years with University degrees (25.3%) in these areas than in other areas. In Rural areas, 17.3% of employed women had obtained a University degree, while the lowest proportion was in Small townships (15.7%).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

HIGHEST LEVEL OF POST-SCHOOL QUALIFICATION *continued*

Around 60% of employed women aged 15–64 years in Rural areas and Small and Medium townships had no post-school qualification, compared to 52.5% of employed women in Major urban areas. This is likely to be at least partially indicative of the greater access to, and opportunities to apply, post-school education in large metropolitan centres.

Employed women aged 25–34 years had the highest proportion of post-school qualifications in each region. In Major urban centres, 34.9% of employed women aged 25–34 years had gained a University degree. Medium townships (23.3%), Small townships (20.9%) and Rural areas (21.7%) had significantly lower proportions of tertiary educated employed women in this age group.

There is a considerable difference between the proportion of tertiary educated employed women aged 25–34 years and 35–44 years. In Major urban areas, the proportion of employed women aged 35–44 years with a University degree was 27.8%, 7.1 percentage points lower than for 25–34 year olds. This was evident in each of the areas to varying degrees (Medium townships 4.7 percentage points lower, Small townships 4.5 and Rural areas 3.1). This illustrates greater tertiary education opportunities and the relatively recent trend to gain tertiary qualifications.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

HIGHEST LEVEL OF
POST-SCHOOL
QUALIFICATION *continued*

13 EMPLOYED WOMEN AGED 15–64 YEARS, Level of Post-School Qualification(a)—By age—2001 Census

						<i>Total Aged</i>	
	15–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	15–64	Males 15–64
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Major urban							
University degree	13.7	34.9	27.8	23.8	19.6	25.3	21.5
Advanced Diploma and Diploma Level	5.9	11.6	10.9	11.1	11.0	10.1	7.6
Certificate Level	12.0	13.5	12.4	10.9	9.9	12.1	26.9
No qualifications	68.4	40.1	49.0	54.2	59.5	52.5	43.9
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Medium townships							
University degree	8.3	23.3	18.6	18.0	15.0	17.1	11.9
Advanced Diploma and Diploma Level	3.7	9.5	9.8	10.1	10.6	8.6	5.9
Certificate Level	15.2	16.5	14.0	11.7	9.3	14.0	33.4
No qualifications	72.7	50.7	57.6	60.2	65.0	60.3	48.8
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Small townships							
University degree	7.7	20.9	16.4	16.7	14.1	15.7	10.2
Advanced Diploma and Diploma Level	3.5	8.6	9.2	10.1	10.1	8.4	5.4
Certificate Level	15.6	17.1	14.7	12.0	9.4	14.3	34.6
No qualifications	73.2	53.4	59.8	61.2	66.4	61.6	49.9
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Rural areas							
University degree	7.4	21.7	18.6	19.1	15.2	17.3	9.7
Advanced Diploma and Diploma Level	4.0	9.6	10.4	11.5	11.6	9.8	5.6
Certificate Level	14.2	16.1	13.6	11.2	8.4	12.9	31.6
No qualifications	74.4	52.6	57.4	58.2	64.9	59.9	53.1
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Australia (b)							
University degree	12.0	31.3	24.4	21.8	17.9	22.6	17.8
Advanced Diploma and Diploma Level	5.3	10.9	10.5	11.0	11.0	9.8	7.0
Certificate Level	12.9	14.3	13.0	11.2	9.6	12.6	29.0
No qualifications	69.9	43.4	52.2	56.1	61.6	55.1	46.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(a) Excludes persons who did not state their level of qualification and persons for whom level of qualification was inadequately described.

(b) Includes Migratory areas.

At the 2001 Census, 9.7% of unemployed women aged 15–64 years in Australia had a University degree while 71.6% had no post-school qualification.

Table 14 shows the highest level of post-school qualification held by unemployed women in each area. This is indicative of the unutilised skill pool that exists within each broad region. In Medium townships, Small townships and Rural areas, the proportions of unemployed women with a post-school qualification (either a University degree, Diploma or Certificate) were generally very similar. A higher proportion of unemployed women in Major urban areas had a post-school qualification than was the case in other areas.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

HIGHEST LEVEL OF
POST-SCHOOL
QUALIFICATION *continued*

14 UNEMPLOYED WOMEN AGED 15–64 YEARS, Level of Post-School Qualification—2001 Census

	<i>Major urban</i>	<i>Medium townships</i>	<i>Small townships</i>	<i>Rural areas</i>	<i>Australia(a)</i>
	%	%	%	%	%
University degree	12.0	4.8	4.5	6.5	9.7
Advanced Diploma and Diploma Level	6.7	4.2	4.3	5.1	6.0
Certificate Level	12.3	14.0	13.8	13.1	12.8
No qualifications	69.0	76.9	77.4	75.3	71.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(a) Includes Migratory areas.

SUMMARY

This paper describes selected labour force characteristics of women aged 15–64 years across four broad geographical categories — Major urban centres, Medium townships, Small townships and Rural areas of Australia.

Based on results from the 2001 Census, women in Major urban areas have the highest labour force participation rate, are more likely to have post-school qualifications, and are less likely to be self-employed or working part-time. Women in Rural areas are most likely to be self-employed and least likely to be unemployed.

Female labour force participation rates were lowest in Small townships followed by Rural areas. Of note however, is that while women in Rural areas had an overall participation rate lower than Major urban centres and Medium townships, Rural areas had the highest labour force participation rate for women in the 55–64 year age group. Across each of the four areas defined in this report female labour force participation rates rose between 1991 and 2001, while the overall participation rate for men fell slightly. Despite this the labour force participation rate for women in 2001 was still 15 percentage points lower than that for men.

In 2001 the unemployment rate for women aged 15–64 years was 1.4 percentage points lower than the rate for men. For women higher unemployment rates were recorded in Medium townships and Small townships. The lowest unemployment rate was in Rural areas.

In both urban and rural areas a large proportion of women aged 15–64 years worked part-time. Part-time employment for women was most prevalent in Small townships, followed by Rural areas. The industries that employed the greatest proportions of women on a part-time basis were Retail trade and Accommodation, cafes and restaurants. This was consistent across all four areas.

Service industries were the primary employers of women aged 15–64 years in most areas. Industries involved in Retail trade, Health and community services, Property and business services and Education employed large proportions of women. In Rural areas, Health and community services and Retail trade employed a similar proportion of employed women to the Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry. In Small townships, women predominantly worked in Retail trade and Health and community services.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS *continued*

SUMMARY *continued*

For women aged 15-64 years, self-employment was most prevalent in Rural areas, predominantly in Agriculture, forestry and fishing. Nationally, women were most likely to be self-employed in Retail trade and Property and business services. The proportion of self-employment for women increased as their age increased.

A higher proportion of employed women with post-school qualifications lived in Major urban centres. Small townships had the highest proportion of employed women without post-school qualifications followed by Medium townships and then Rural areas.

APPENDIX LIST OF REFERENCES

LIST OF REFERENCES

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GLOSSARY

The data presented in this publication are drawn from the Census of Population and Housing. Definitions for the main data items are included in the Glossary. Further information can be obtained from the Census dictionaries relevant to each Census year (ABS cat. no. 2901.0).

Calculation of proportions	Unless otherwise indicated, 'Not stated' and 'Inadequately described' categories have been excluded from the denominator when calculating the proportion of the population with a particular characteristic.
Contributing family worker	A person who works without pay in an economic enterprise operated by a relative. (Previously entitled unpaid family helper).
Discouraged job seeker	A person with a marginal attachment to the labour force who wanted to work and were available to start work but whose main reason for not actively looking for work was that they believed they would not find a job.
Employed persons	Refers to persons who had a full-time or part-time job of any kind in the week prior to Census night. A 'job' refers to any type of work, including casual or temporary work or part-time work, if it was for one hour or more, and includes persons who: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ worked for payment or profit, or as an unpaid helper in a family business;■ had a job from which they were on leave or otherwise temporarily absent;■ were on strike or stood down temporarily.
Employee	A person who works for a public or private employer and receives remuneration in wages or salary; or is paid a retainer fee by his/her employer and works on a commission basis; or works for an employer for tips, piece-rates or payment in kind; or is a person who operated his/her own incorporated enterprise with or without hiring employees.
Employer	A person who operates his/her own unincorporated economic enterprise or engages independently in trade, and hires one or more employees.
Full-time workers	For Census purposes a person is considered to be working full-time if they worked 35 hours or more, in all jobs, during the week prior to Census night.
Goods producing industries	Goods-producing industries include the following divisions of the <i>Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC), 1993</i> (cat. no. 1292.0): Agriculture, forestry and fishing; Mining; Manufacturing; Electricity, gas and water supply; and Construction.
Industry	Industry has been classified according to the <i>Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC), 1993</i> (cat. no. 1292.0).
Labour force	The labour force is made up of employed and unemployed people aged 15 years and over. Persons who are neither employed nor unemployed are classified as 'not in the labour force' (includes people who were retired, pensioners and people engaged solely in home duties).
Labour force participation rate	The number of persons in the labour force expressed as a percentage of the population aged 15 years and over, excluding persons who did not state their labour force status.
Major urban	Urban centres with a population exceeding 100,000 persons ('Major urban' in the SOS Structure).
Medium townships	Towns and urban centres with a population in the range of 20,000 to 99,999 persons (part of 'Other urban' in the SOS Structure).

GLOSSARY *continued*

Migratory areas	Covers people who were enumerated in the Census on off-shore oil rigs, drilling platforms and the like, aboard ships in Australian waters or on an overnight journey by train or bus and by definition are not allocated to a particular SOS category.
Own account workers	A person who operates his or her own unincorporated economic enterprise or engages independently in a profession or trade, and hires no employees (this category was formerly entitled self-employed).
Part-time workers	For Census purposes a person is considered to be working part-time if they worked 34 hours or less, in all jobs, during the week prior to Census night.
Post-school qualification	Describes the level of a person's highest completed non-school qualification and is classified to the <i>Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED), 2001</i> (cat. no. 1272.0).
Rural areas	Rural areas include towns with a population in the range 200 to 999 persons ('Bounded localities' in the SOS Structure) and the remainder of Australia ('Rural balance' in the SOS Structure).
Section of state (SOS) structure	<p>The geographical areas used in this publication have been derived from the Section of State (SOS) Structure contained in the <i>Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC), Volume 1, 2001</i> (cat. no. 1216.0)</p> <p>The Section of State (SOS) Structure uses population counts from the Census of Population and Housing to classify Census Collection Districts (CD) as urban or rural. The SOS then represents an aggregation of non-contiguous geographical areas of particular urban/rural CDs in particular size groups. The Section of State categories are:</p> <p>Major Urban - population clusters of 100,000 or more. Comprises all of the capital cities excluding Darwin, together with a number of other large urban centres such as Newcastle, Gold Coast, Wollongong, Geelong, Townsville, Central Coast and Sunshine Coast).</p> <p>Other Urban (A) - population clusters in the range 20,000 to 99,999. Includes large regional centres such as Cairns, Ballarat, Bunbury, Tamworth, Dubbo, Warnambool, Mackay, etc. Darwin is also included in this category.</p> <p>Other Urban (B) - population clusters in the range 1,000 to 19,999. Includes a range of diverse towns such as Ballina and Cootamundra (NSW), Bacchus Marsh and Lakes Entrance (Vic), Nambour and Mareeba (Qld), Karratha and Northam (WA), Murray Bridge and Naracoorte (SA), Ulverstone and New Norfolk (Tas) and Katherine and Nhulunbuy (NT).</p> <p>Bounded Locality - all population clusters of 200 to 999 people.</p> <p>Rural Balance - the remainder of Australia. Note: there is a great diversity within this category as it includes those living on small rural allotments within commuting distance of Major Urban centres as well as farms and other property throughout Australia.</p> <p>Migratory - includes persons counted in the census on off-shore oil rigs, drilling platforms and the like, aboard ships in Australian waters or on an overnight journey by train or bus.</p>
Self-employed	For the purposes of this report self-employed persons have been defined to include Employers, Own account Workers and Contributing Family Workers.
Service industries	Service industries include the following divisions of the <i>Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC), 1993</i> (cat. no. 1292.0): Wholesale trade; Retail trade; Accommodation, cafes and restaurants; Transport and storage; Communication services; Finance and insurance; Property and business services; Government administration and defence; Education; Health and community services; Cultural and recreational services; and Personal and other services.

GLOSSARY *continued*

Small townships	Towns and urban centres with a population in the range of 1,000 to 19,999 persons (part of 'Other urban' in the SOS Structure).
Unemployed	Refers to persons who did not have a job in the week prior to Census night but had actively looked for work in the last four weeks and were available to start work.
Unemployment rate	For any group, the number of unemployed persons expressed as a percentage of the labour force in the same group.

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