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**THE IMPACT OF VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY ON
WORKERS WHO LEFT THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC
SERVICE AGED OVER 50**

**A thesis presented to the Faculty of Arts of the University of Adelaide
for the Degree of Master of Arts (Women's Studies)**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Chapter 1 Literature Review	5
Chapter 2 Methodology	35
Chapter 3 The Australian Public Service (APS) and Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents	44
Chapter 4 The Voluntary Redundancy Experience	65
Chapter 5 Life After Voluntary Redundancy	88
Conclusion	106
Appendix A	113
Appendix B	114
Bibliography	125

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Permanent staff in the Australian Public Service	48
2	Age group by gender as percentage of total of permanent APS staff	49
3	Appointments of permanent staff by age group and gender as a percentage of total staff	49
4	Permanent part-time staff by gender as a percentage of total permanent staff	50
5	Temporary APS staff by age group and gender as a percentage of all temporary staff, 30 June 1998	51
6	Permanent APS staff by gender and numbers as a percentage of total staff in agency and percentage of permanent staff aged 50 and over in selected agencies 30 June 1998	51
7	Selected classifications and salary ranges for APS staff at 18 June 1998	52
8	Permanent APS staff by classification and gender as a percentage of total staff	53
9	Retrenchments of permanent staff by gender 1988-89 to 1997-98	53
10	Retrenchments of permanent APS staff by classification and gender as a percentage of total retrenchments	53
11	APS agencies with most retrenchments per year, with numbers of staff retrenched	54
12	Separations of permanent staff by type of separation and gender, 1988-89 to 1997-98 as a percentage of total separations	55
13	Retrenchments of gender and age group over ten years as a percentage of total retrenchments	55
14	Retrenchments by length of service and gender over 4 years as a percentage of total retrenchments	56
15	Survey respondents' length of service in range of years and whether service was broken, by numbers in gender groups	57
16	Survey respondents by number in marital status category	57
17	Percentage of married and unmarried respondents	58
18	Survey respondents by gender and post secondary qualifications	58
19	Age of survey respondents at voluntary redundancy	59
20	Classification of survey respondents at voluntary redundancy	59
21	Classification by gender – percentage of total respondents	60
22	Numbers of women and men respondents and year of voluntary redundancy	65
23	Main reasons for joining the Australian Public Service as a percentage of gender group	66

24	Main reasons for being in APS prior to voluntary redundancy as a percentage of gender group	67
25	Main reasons for taking voluntary redundancy as a percentage of gender group	67
26	Were respondents coerced into taking voluntary redundancy as a percentage of gender group	71
27	Amount of redundancy pay out – range in thousands of dollars as numbers and by percentage of gender group	74
28	How respondents spent redundancy pay out as numbers and as percentage of gender group	76
29	Would respondents have continued in APS as percentage of gender group?	77
30	How respondents took superannuation as percentage of gender groups	81
31	Amount of superannuation received (range) by gender groups	82
32	Did respondents have broken service by number and gender group?	83
33	Intentions about seeking work prior to taking voluntary redundancy by percentage of gender group	88
34	Main reasons why intended to seek work by percentage of gender group	89
35	Numbers undertaking courses before and after voluntary redundancy as a percentage of gender group	90
36	Prior to voluntary redundancy – respondents’ views of chances of obtaining work as a percentage of gender group	91
37	Length of service, approximate voluntary redundancy pay out, superannuation lump sum and approximate annual pension of respondents who sought work after redundancy	92
38	After voluntary redundancy – changes of getting work by percentage of gender group	94
39	Current work – respondents working during survey period as a percentage of gender group, job similarity to APS and whether like current job more than APS job	94
40	Current salary during survey period compared to APS salary by percentage of gender group currently working	96
41	Sources of income during survey period by percentage of gender group	97
42	Current income – personal and household range by gender group	99
43	Main changes to lifestyle after voluntary redundancy by percentage of gender group	101
44	Any regrets about taking voluntary redundancy by percentage of gender group	101
45	Voluntary / Community work by percentage of gender group	103

SUMMARY

Retrenchment has become commonplace in Australia in the 1990s as permanent work gives way to part-time, casual and contract work. Popular and academic literature assumes that retrenched workers are male middle-managers and that they are either victims of restructuring and globalisation or self-possessed individuals who can seize the opportunity for change. Older workers are assumed to leave the workforce for retirement.

This thesis provides a more complex picture, at least for former staff of the Australian Public Service. The majority of the staff retrenched from the Australian Public Service were in the lower paid classifications and almost half of the staff retrenched were women. Women are disadvantaged in Australian Public Service, as they are clustered in the lower paid classification levels and are more likely than men to work part time. This has an effect on their annual salary and also on their superannuation benefits.

The retrenched workers who participated in the survey conducted for this thesis accepted the offer of voluntary redundancy, for a variety of reasons. Even when the redundancy appears to be involuntary, the term voluntary redundancy is generally used, and some respondents felt that they were coerced into taking voluntary redundancy. The respondents are all aged over 50 and the majority have not withdrawn from the workforce

The women in the study were disadvantaged by their lower years of service and lower classifications compared with the men. From a financial point of view, the gender differences were considerable with women receiving the lowest amount of voluntary redundancy pay outs, superannuation lump sums and the lowest annual pensions. There were also gender differences in the income of the respondents who continued in the labour force after voluntary redundancy. Women were more likely than men to be working part time and no women received an income greater than in their previous public service jobs.

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Signed

Date 14 July 1999.

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INTRODUCTION

Retrenchment has become a fact of life in Australia in the 1990s as permanent work gives way to part-time, casual and contract work.¹ Newspapers and popular magazines, as well as business journals, regularly carry reports of the latest retrenchments and the plight of the victims of business decisions. Reports in the press, such as that detailing unpublished data that showed "3.3 million full-time retrenchments"² of blue and white collar female and male workers occurred between 1986 and 1997, add to the generally gloomy picture of the Australian labour market. Although there has been a net job growth in Australia in the 1990s, it "has been in less secure, casual or part-time work, while those in full-time jobs are working harder and longer"³ and the "gap between those in career jobs" and those in uncertain and poorly paid work increases.⁴ Jobs have been lost from almost every industry sector.⁵

In popular discussion of changes in the labour market, global restructuring is often proposed as a factor in the loss of jobs throughout the industrialised world. Global competition has been generated and supported by electronic communication and has turned the "whole world into a single market".⁶ In the world market the flow of capital means that "[s]hare prices and corporate profits rise in double-digit leaps, whereas wages and salaries sink".⁷ The promise of economic salvation via global restructuring has led governments to deregulate, liberalise trade and privatise public enterprises.⁸ However, instead of economic salvation, it is "disintegration, ecological destruction and cultural degeneration which are rapidly shaping the everyday lives of most of humanity".⁹ Hans-Peter Martin and Harald Schumann argue that the dealers operating on the international money market "can therefore decide on the weal and woe of entire nations, and do so largely free of state control".¹⁰

Martin and Schumann predict that, as a result of globalisation, “20 per cent of the population will suffice to keep the world economy going”¹¹ while the remaining 80 per cent will have no work. Businesses will be reluctant to make any “social commitment” to look after the unemployed.¹² Industrialised countries are “reducing public expenditure, cutting real wages and eliminating social services”.¹³ Martin and Schumann quote an American economist: “America’s ‘capitalists declared class war on their workers - and they have won it’ ”.¹⁴

Applying Martin’s and Schumann’s pessimistic viewpoint, it can be argued that profit chasing in the global money market has led to a crisis in labour markets throughout the world and, as globalisation forces corporations to boost profitability, the effect on workers has been devastating. Even in the booming money business white collar jobs are being lost. Coopers and Lybrand researchers have “forecast that half of all the people currently employed in the money business will lose their jobs” within a decade.¹⁵ Martin and Schumann use an example of companies in the USA and Europe subcontracting data processing and programming to India to reduce labour costs. As costs rise in India, corporations transfer their business to countries such as Russia and Eastern Europe where labour is cheaper.¹⁶

Charles Handy, less pessimistic than Martin and Schumann, points out that there will be “an increasingly divided society unless we can transform the whole of society into a permanent learning culture where everybody pursues a higher intelligence quotient”.¹⁷ Handy urges people “to acquire and apply knowledge and know-how, [which] is the new source of wealth”.¹⁸ But what happens to those workers who have spent their working lives as manual labourers and cannot afford an education? What happens to factory workers when the

processes are taken over by machines? And what happens to white collar workers who have pursued the goal of life long learning but find that their services and knowledge are no longer required in a changing work force?

Chapter 1 reviews literature on a range of issues relating to redundancy and its social costs, the Australian labour market, self-help literature for individuals, women's experiences of work and redundancy, superannuation and re-employment or retirement options for older workers. Workers aged over 50 face particular problems in re-entering the labour market, including the expectation that they will conform to certain social roles. There are also contradictions for many women in their fifties and older, whose early socialisation prepared them for lives only as wives and mothers, but who in fact entered the paid workforce. They may have become accustomed to financial independence but be eligible for only small amounts of superannuation. A woman in this situation may feel some disquiet at the prospect of a long old age of dependency on her husband's retirement income. Men in their fifties and older were generally socialised to be breadwinners and the loss of that role can be devastating.

Chapter 2 sets out the methodology for this thesis, which consisted of a survey and interviews. Chapter 3 examines statistics relating to the Australian Public Service (APS) with the demographic details of respondents to this study. Numbers of staff in the APS have decreased in recent years, as a result of deliberate downsizing which has resulted from the ideology of both Labor and Coalition governments.

Chapters 4 and 5 report the survey findings. Some respondents felt they were coerced into accepting voluntary redundancy and regard the term as a euphemism for dismissal.

Respondents gave details of their voluntary redundancy packages and their superannuation. At redundancy respondents were aged between 50 and 63 and the majority sought work after redundancy for a variety of reasons. These findings are contrary to the common perception that Canberra residents choose early retirement for a life of leisure.¹⁹ The final chapter examines the question of gender differences in the experiences of voluntary redundancy among the respondents to the survey.

¹ Helen Trinca, 'A revolution in the nation's workplace', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 October 1997, p. 1.

² Paul Cleary, 'How the axe fell on 3.3m', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 October 1997, p. 1, presenting Australian Bureau of Statistics unpublished data.

³ Cleary, p. 1.

⁴ Trinca, p. 7.

⁵ Cleary, p. 1.

⁶ Hans-Peter Martin and Harald Schumann, *The Global Trap: Globalization and the assault on prosperity and democracy*, trans. Patrick Camiller, Pluto Press, Sydney, 1997, p. 5.

⁷ Martin and Schumann, p. 7.

⁸ Martin and Schumann, p. 8.

⁹ Martin and Schumann, p. 29.

¹⁰ Martin and Schumann, p. 46.

¹¹ Martin and Schumann, p. 3.

¹² Martin and Schumann, p. 4.

¹³ Martin and Schumann, p. 6.

¹⁴ Martin and Schumann, p. 119.

¹⁵ Martin and Schumann, p. 99.

¹⁶ Martin and Schumann, p. 101.

¹⁷ Charles Handy, *The Empty Raincoat: Making Sense of the Future*, Arrow Books Limited, London, 1995, p. 25.

¹⁸ Handy, p. 23.

¹⁹ Catriona Jackson, "Survey finds more mature faces in changing profile," *The Canberra Times*, 21 July, 1998, p. 3; Anonymous, 'Australia leading retirement trend', *Sunday Times*, 20 September 1998, p. 9.

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature reviewed covers a wide range of issues relevant to redundancy and its social costs, the Australian labour market, self-help for individuals, women's experience of redundancy, superannuation and re-employment or retirement options for older workers.

Most approaches in literature present a negative assessment of redundancy, apart from the opinions of human resource managers who advocate an individualist approach suited to only a few retrenched workers. The Howard Government also takes an individualist approach to employment, promoting individual Australian Workplace Agreements for all workers, even apprentices. Downsizing as a strategy for reducing costs is increasingly being criticised as corporate knowledge disappears and corporate performance and productivity are put at risk.

Women's experiences in the work force and in redundancy are virtually ignored in the literature, apart from a few feminist texts. Similarly, women's retirement has been neglected even though women born in the immediate pre and post World War II era are approaching retirement and will have different expectations from those of previous generations of women.

Much of the literature on redundancy or retrenchment is directed to the practitioner or the person under threat of retrenchment. Alternatively the literature examines the labour market experience of retrenched workers. As most articles appear in management or economic journals, business magazines or the popular press, there is a notable absence of analysis of class, power and gender relations or differences. In recent years, as more white

collar workers have been retrenched, the literature concerning retrenchment and re-employment has focussed on professional, managerial or skilled workers. The unwritten assumption is that these workers are male. In these discussions unskilled or low-skilled workers seem doomed to a life of casual or temporary work interspersed with long periods of dependence on Social Security allowances. For older unskilled workers the outlook is even more gloomy.

The effects of globalisation and government cost cutting has implications for all levels of society as workers and communities throughout the world experience the social costs of economic restructuring. This thesis examines a small sample of former public sector workers and the impact of globalisation on their careers.

Social costs of economic restructuring

Charles Handy argues that many jobs have been priced “out of existence all over the industrialised world”¹ while the new jobs being created are low status, low paid, “bits and pieces of pocket-money work”.² People in secure jobs are expected to work long hours, leading to exhaustion and a reduced working life.³ Capitalism has failed the poor and instead of the notion of wealth having a “trickle down” effect, the poor have become poorer.⁴ Handy aims his book at white-collar professional workers, implying that they can take charge of their lives by following his advice. He claims “that the ‘means of production’, the traditional basis of capitalism, are now literally owned by the workers because those means are in their heads and at their fingertips”.⁵ However, I would argue that while some workers in knowledge industries may appear to own the means of production, they are not receiving a fair share of the wealth generated by their knowledge. For example, transnational companies in the software industry relocate their data work to

whichever country provides the cheapest labour.⁶ Hans-Peter Martin and Harald Schumann, from their pessimistic viewpoint, argue that even these jobs may soon disappear as advances in information technology “make all work superfluous”.⁷

European companies are restructuring and shedding workers and there is a trend in Britain and Europe for businesses to use temporary labour to keep costs competitive.⁸ Canadian workers have been affected by downsizing in the 1990s, with “white collar workers in such historically secure industries as banking, health services, public utilities and government” being laid off.⁹

Living standards can be eroded directly or indirectly as a result of cost cutting by governments and business organisations. Retrenched workers may find their reduced income affects their ability to buy goods and services, particularly as government services such as employment assistance are privatised. High unemployment rates, especially among young people, impact on whole families and may lead to increased crime and vandalism.

While the popular press bemoans the effects of redundancy, as discussed in the introduction, the academic literature from a political economy perspective also portrays a gloomy picture of job loss, decline in welfare services and social disintegration.

In spite of the conservative discourse that globalisation leads to riches for all, left-wing commentators argue that the reality is that globalisation has led to “structural change that more and more people are unable to cope with”.¹⁰ As Mimi Abramovitz points out:

On its own, the market still can't create enough income and jobs to serve the demand, let alone provide basic services to those who can't pay, or protection against loss of income due to illness, old age, disability, and unemployment.¹¹

Martin and Schumann argue that in the USA, society is disintegrating with "racial conflicts", "drug problems", high crime rates and downgrading of public education.¹²

Mimi Abramovitz criticises the privatisation of US public services, arguing that "profit-driven services" skimp on staff, exploit workers and transfer "taxpayers' dollars from middle-income workers to high-priced CEOs".¹³

The so-called "robust economies"¹⁴ of the USA, UK, New Zealand and Australia have all restructured their "processes of production in particular industries, enterprises and occupations"¹⁵ resulting in social disruption. The focus has shifted from unskilled and semi-skilled unemployed workers to the previously well off middle class. In the USA two income families are finding that they cannot cover their living expenses and "[t]he ideal world of the white middle classes no longer exists".¹⁶ In the UK, the "social and educational system is approaching the level of a developing country".¹⁷ In New Zealand "restructuring has enhanced the freedom of employers" but the "changes have had less positive effects on the lives of many other citizens as unemployment has soared, benefits have been cut and the costs of health services, state housing and education have increased".¹⁸

The Australian Labour Market

In Australia, as in the USA, restructuring has led to "polarisation of income levels ... with some growth in high income jobs, a far greater growth in low income jobs and a major loss of middle income jobs".¹⁹ The Australian labour market has been affected by

globalisation, with job losses in most industries. The growth in employment has been in casual, temporary, part-time and contract work.²⁰ Official unemployment rates in Australia remain high but also hide the real level of unemployment in the community. Employed persons who work 35 hours or more per week are regarded as full-time workers while part-time workers are defined as usually working less than 35 hours a week.²¹ In the measurement of the labour force, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) uses definitions which mean that a person who during the reference week worked for only one hour for pay, profit, commission or payment in kind, is counted as employed, not unemployed.²² With the growth in part-time, casual or contract work, the ABS fails to acknowledge the increasing misrepresentation of their unemployment statistics by defining workers as employed even though it is highly likely a number of them may only have worked for one hour during the reference week.

Judith Sloan compares Australia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employment growth and unemployment with other countries, excluding Asia, apart from Japan, and argues that Australia compares favourably in most areas.²³ Australia's high unemployment rate does not compare so favourably and growth in full-time employment was considerably less than that of part-time for 1996-1997, the period Sloan examines.²⁴ Overtime has declined since 1994, with Sloan offering several explanations for this phenomenon:

- 1) "the relative decline in ... manufacturing, construction and mining" industries and "the relative increase in ... service industries";²⁵
- 2) "the increasing incidence of industrial agreements which provide for forms of aggregated wages which cash out previous overtime payments."²⁶

However, she does not suggest that overtime may also have declined because employees are working longer hours without extra payment in an effort to keep their jobs.²⁷

Mark Lombard examines the major explanations for unemployment in Australia and concludes “that the real cause of Australia’s poor performance in the last decade has been the pursuit of restrictive macroeconomic policies” because of the “underlying belief in the power of market forces alone to deliver low unemployment”.²⁸ The Australian labour market “has undergone a considerable structural transformation over the past two decades” along with other OECD countries, probably as a result of “technological change and international trade”.²⁹ The Hawke/Keating Labor Government’s attempts to restructure the labour market led to a decrease in male full-time jobs and an increase in female part-time jobs and to intensified “disadvantage and inequality” as unemployment was “unevenly distributed across the community”.³⁰ Belinda Probert argues that “[m]acroeconomic reform, the restructuring of outdated industrial awards, tariff reduction, flexibility ... have become the icons of both parties”.³¹ The federal Coalition government, in power since March 1996, has continued the restructuring of the labour market begun under the Hawke-Keating Labor Government.

Workplace relations framework

Until the early 1980s there was “little legislative intervention to establish standards for the protection of redundant employees” in Australia.³² In December 1984 the Full Bench of the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission delivered its supplementary decision which contained various standards and rights to protect redundant workers.³³ Strategies for the protection of workers included consultation on the proposed introduction

of technological change, advance notice of retrenchment, paid time off to seek alternative employment and compensation in the form of severance payments.³⁴

However, the Federal Coalition government has changed the face of industrial relations in Australia with individual contracts and enterprise bargaining via the *Workplace Relations Act 1996*. While the Act contains a number of schedules, the principal objective appears to be to remove the influence of unions and to erode workers' rights. Thus the Act aims to ensure "that the primary responsibility for determining matters affecting the relationship between employers and employees rests with the employer and employees at the workplace or enterprise level".³⁵ Enterprise bargaining disadvantages women as they "generally have less bargaining power than their male counterparts" due to their "predominance amongst part-time workers, segmentation into lower status industries and occupations, lower representation in union hierarchies and lower levels of unionisation".³⁶

Redundancy

Redundancy appears to be the favoured method of restructuring the permanent work force "to improve efficiency and production through cost-cutting".³⁷ Other terms associated with redundancy include "labour adjustment"³⁸, retrenched, laid off, downsized, separation, voluntary redundancy, involuntary redundancy, early retirement, outplacement, delayering, right sizing, "compressing, consolidating, contracting, demassing, down-shifting, slimming down, leaning up", "release of resources", 'involuntary separation from payroll', 'career change opportunity', and 'elimination of employment security'³⁹, "getting the sack, the tap on the shoulder, the pink slip".⁴⁰ Whatever the euphemism, Australian industries and governments have embraced redundancy as a means of cutting or shifting costs.

There are two approaches to redundancy in the literature. One is the management efficiency oriented approach; the other critiques this approach. Lisa Ryan and Keith A. Macky in their survey of the sparse academic research on downsizing, look at reasons, strategies and outcomes for downsizing and also at the attitudes and productivity of employees who remain in downsized companies.⁴¹ Although they criticise downsizing as a strategy, they are more interested in the aspect of management efficiency. They recommend “longitudinal research that ... tracks the commitment of downsized employees from before announcement, immediately after or before actual job loss and then over time”.⁴² They also state the “need for more and better empirical research on the impact of downsizing on both individual and organizational productivity” and conclude that there is a need for research to “adopt a theory-building rather than theory-testing approach”.⁴³

In attempting to define the term redundancy in law and management in the UK, Paul Lewis argues that “redundancy is a form of dismissal” when “the employer requires fewer employees”.⁴⁴ “Three types of situations” test “whether fewer employees are needed”.⁴⁵

- a the work has diminished, so fewer employees are needed;
- b the work has *not* diminished, but new technology has reduced the demand for employees;
- c the work has *not* diminished, but reorganization leads to fewer employees being wanted (that is, past overstaffing).⁴⁶

While the scenarios described by Lewis may apply to manufacturing or similar industries, in his test he ignores the retrenchment of employees either as a cost cutting measure or due to government commitment to privatisation of government services as reasons for downsizing. Lewis also neglects the intensification of work for those who remain in the

downsized organisation. This issue is outside the scope of this thesis but is the subject of some recent debate.⁴⁷

Ryan and Macky list a number of examples of downsizing as “a proactive human resource strategy”.⁴⁸ However, they argue that cost cutting appears to be the major reason for redundancies with a longer term effect of “applying downward pressure on wage demands from those who remain with the company”.⁴⁹ The authors point out that downsizing has “hidden costs [which] may, in the long run, limit the value of downsizing as a cost-reduction strategy”.⁵⁰ This issue has also been taken up by the popular press, with articles criticising the practice.⁵¹ Ryan and Macky found no evidence that a “theoretical basis exists for explaining the relationship between downsizing and successful organizational performance” but there is evidence which “suggests that management has been jumping onto the ‘downsizing bandwagon’ without properly preparing for the possibility of negative business consequences, such as decreased morale, commitment, and productivity.”⁵²

In a study in 1994, Craig Littler, Thomas Bramble and Jacquie McDonald found that there had been little research on delayering or downsizing in Australia⁵³ and argued that “there may also be a faddism about downsizing: the motivation to downsize may not be driven by a simple consideration of costs but by a socially-determined definition of appropriate behaviour”.⁵⁴ This view is supported by Terry H. Wager, writing about workforce reduction in Canada in 1997. Wager argues that the literature is “prescriptive in nature”, contradictory “and a number of the recommendations are unsupported by research”.⁵⁵ In the Australian context, Geoffrey Maslen also points out the contradictions in the value of

downsizing.⁵⁶ Maslen quotes surveys on downsizing done by Craig Littler in the past five years which shows that in Australia productivity decreases after downsizing and that businesses “may achieve short-term savings but face medium-term cost increases”.⁵⁷

Martin and Schumann point out the contradictions in a democracy, where “if the market economy is to flourish, it absolutely requires entrepreneurial freedom”.⁵⁸ In Australia the federal Coalition government has attempted to reform both the public and private sectors, to allow for an unfettered market economy. Richard Evans, referring to reform in telecommunications, banking and the public service sectors, argues that the reforms “seem mostly to involve sacking people and closing offices in country towns”.⁵⁹ Advocates for public sector reform argue that the public sector will be more adaptable, flexible and responsive “to a new range of social and economic pressures” and that “changes represent real progress over old ways for all concerned - politicians, citizens and consumers and public servants”.⁶⁰ The reduction in the size of the Australian Public Service may have “created more space for private enterprise”⁶¹ but the social costs and the long term implications of public sector reforms are of some concern to many critics of economic rationalism.

In the private sector, the Government’s attempt to reform the Australian waterfront led to “mass sackings, angry confrontations on the wharves, extraordinarily intemperate language from public figures, and a bewildering tangle of litigation”.⁶² Pamela Cawthorne, in her discussion about the waterfront dispute, looks at what “the dominance of an ideology of ‘economic efficiency’ in government policy” means “for the work environment in our societies”.⁶³ She argues that workers and unions have had no choice but to accept the need

to improve productivity.⁶⁴ The pressure to improve productivity has “radically altered the relatively secure work environment which was fought for after World War II”.⁶⁵

In 1994 Littler et al optimistically claimed that, unlike the manufacturing industry, the public sector could not turn away clients and “close down part of the operations” to save money and resources.⁶⁶ This claim is no longer valid. Prior to 1986-87 there were few retrenchments from the APS with most separations being by resignation and retirement.⁶⁷ The *Redeployment and Retirement (Redundancy) Award 1987* led to a substantial increase in retrenchments, initially from General Service Officers (GSOs) and Technical Officers (TOs) but increasingly from all levels of the APS.⁶⁸

The closure on 30 April 1998 of the national Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) network and its replacement by private employment agencies shows how the ideology of privatisation and competition has permeated government policy in spite of community opposition. In the six months following the closure of the CES and its replacement by the Job Network, comprising approximately 300 government, community and private organisations, there were numerous media reports concerning the failure of the new arrangements.

The CES was the public face of the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA). During the 1996-97 financial year DEETYA retrenched 2,472 permanent staff, representing 25% of total Australian Public Service retrenchments, and transferred 1,503 permanent staff to the Department of Social Security.⁶⁹ In the 1997-98 financial year, 2,346 staff were retrenched from DEETYA⁷⁰ (including those retrenched

from the CES), 1,579 staff were transferred to the Department of Social Security⁷¹ and 718 staff transferred to Employment National, the Job Network agency set up by the government to compete with other organisations for Job Network business.⁷² The union representing most of the APS staff in DEETYA, the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU), was in a difficult position as not all workers' interests were the same. Some APS staff wanted redundancy with attractive packages and some preferred to retain secure jobs.⁷³ Ironically, in 1998, the former DEETYA was an Australian Human Resources Institute award winner for Excellence Of Human Resources in the Organisational Support and Business processes category for their achievement in the process of downsizing.⁷⁴

Productivity can be difficult to quantify, especially for public sector workers who do not produce goods, as such. The economic rationalist agenda pursued by both the Labor and Coalition governments has ignored "the complexities of the role of the public sector in the modern mixed economy" and has undermined the role of the public sector.⁷⁵ In the restructuring of the workforce, the Australian Public Service (APS) has not escaped the trend towards downsizing.

The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) recently published a performance audit *Staff Reductions in the Australian Public Service* which discussed factors leading to the retrenchment of thousands of APS staff.⁷⁶ ANOA did not include globalisation among these factors but did include cost cutting.⁷⁷ The audit questioned the practice of voluntary redundancy "because it may not always reflect the longer-term needs of the agency and there is the potential for agency performance to be put at risk and corporate knowledge to

be sacrificed to alleviate short-term financial pressures”.⁷⁸ The issue of redundancy in the APS is the focus of this thesis and will be examined in later chapters.

Individualism and Self-help

Much of the literature relating to human resource management and redundancy pursues an individualist self-help perspective and refers mainly to middle class male white collar workers. In an article on corporate downsizing, James Kirby discusses the “new breed of human resource managers taking power in Australia’s major corporations”⁷⁹ and quotes a Human Resources manager: “Some people have a view that companies exist to facilitate their careers. They don’t – they exist for shareholders”.⁸⁰ Wager has criticised this notion: “employees are a particularly attractive target for cost-cutting decision-makers who often regard workers as “units of production” rather than assets to be developed”.⁸¹

Gordon discusses reasons why employees volunteer for redundancy schemes and concludes that ‘there seemed to be a general conviction that the size of the bag of money gently placed into redundant employees’ sacks was a major factor determining take-up, if not the single most important factor’.⁸² He also states that

staff who may well have been compelled to leave if compulsion became necessary volunteered. Some did so because of individual counselling and advice; others did so because of a recognition that the choice might not be theirs for so very long.⁸³

In a study of restructuring in the Australian Telecommunications Industry, Zeffane and Macdonald found uncertainty in the workplace could lead individuals to “become incapable of envisioning their own future and that of their organisation” and also “lead to negative employee attitudes including apathy, undesirable mindset and behaviours”.⁸⁴ I

will be examining the issue of volunteering for redundancy in relation to Australian Public Service staff in succeeding chapters.

Berman offers tips to managers in the USA “on working in a climate of uncertainty and preparing yourself for the possibility of losing a job”.⁸⁵ She lists personal rules, professional rules and managerial rules that would maintain high productivity while preparing the individual for retrenchment. However, perhaps unsurprisingly in a self-help article, these rules seem aimed more at assisting the individual to prepare for retrenchment and obtaining the next job than maintaining corporate productivity.

In Australia, Maslen promotes an individualistic solution in suggesting that “we are all chief executives of our own companies, “Me Inc.””.⁸⁶ The notion of “Me Inc.” may be successful for highly motivated and confident, skilled workers, but disadvantages younger and older workers and those who are unable to afford study to improve their skills and employability in a ruthless labour market. Maslen quotes John Rawlinson, a director of a human resources consulting firm, who asserts that successful people in today’s environment “may have a permanent part-time job” plus some “flexible work which may be casual and where they put in a few hours a week” as well as “their own business with the prospect of boosting their earnings as they expand their client base”.⁸⁷ Rawlinson sees this scenario as being particularly suitable for retrenched people aged 45 to 55. However later in the article he admits that “for those aged over 45 without a degree, there’s a lot of stick with a pretty bleak future”.⁸⁸

In a self-help book directed at women, Elizabeth Perle McKenna argues that although lives of the baby boomer generation are different from those of their parents, “the institutions around us haven’t changed as much as we have”.⁸⁹ Career paths are still “structured linearly”⁹⁰ and women are judged by different standards from men.⁹¹ Women who challenge the system do not get the rewards⁹² and “fear of loss of acceptance in society [is] a huge motivator in keeping people from making changes”.⁹³ McKenna overcame her fear and resigned from the job she loved but which was too demanding of her time and energy. However she had a husband to support her financially and emotionally. Women who do not have that support have limited choices when their paid work becomes too demanding. As with authors of most of the literature, McKenna assumes that it is men who are usually affected by downsizing and she states that women then “go to work (at lower salaries) to make ends meet”.⁹⁴

McKenna argues that the class system has been replaced by income brackets and quotes a study which found that “social embarrassment” was one of the concerns of people being downsized as “their ability to keep up middle-class appearances might be put into jeopardy”.⁹⁵ She also quotes a therapist who states that women are downsized because they communicate their unhappiness “in very subtle ways”!⁹⁶ Such an approach, found in other self-help texts, blames the victim and ignores the real reasons for downsizing, such as cost cutting or government ideology. There is an absence of class and power analysis in these books. For example, McKenna seems to assume that all women are middle class and well educated and are not subject to the effects of globalisation and the shrinking of well paid job opportunities. She speaks of the need to change the structures that determine

women's success or otherwise in the workforce and society but does not analyse how these structures continue to shape the lives of women and men.

Role of women in the workforce

Some authors examine the role of women in the modern work force. Handy considers women are "more likely to exhibit the kind of qualities" needed in jobs in the postmodern workforce.⁹⁷

For these jobs the organisations want quality people, well educated, well skilled and adaptable. They also want people who can juggle with several tasks and assignments at one time, who are more interested in making things happen than in what title or office they hold, more concerned with power and influence than status. They want people who value instinct and intuition as well as analysis and rationality, who can be tough but also tender, focused but friendly, people who can cope with these necessary contradictions. They want, therefore, as many women as they can get.⁹⁸

However, paid work is still designed for men, with long hours and total dedication expected. "The very powerful desires for independence, autonomy, recognition and meaning propelled women into the workplace over the last few decades" but women are still expected to care for families, home and community.⁹⁹ McKenna found that many women, single or married, wanted more from their work, "where succeeding meant working as women on men's terms".¹⁰⁰ She interviewed 200 women and surveyed over a thousand and found that these women felt "a growing dissonance between their outer work lives and their inner values".¹⁰¹ The issue of personal values and work practices will be discussed later in this thesis.

Pusey, discussing the male-dominated system in the Australian Public Service in 1991, asserts that "it is clear enough that the problem of gender and inequality goes far beyond

the gross inequality in the representation of women at this top end of a civil service".¹⁰² The statistics for the Australian Public Service in chapter 3 reveal the inequality in classifications of women and men and chapters 4 and 5 show the inequality suffered by women in the voluntary redundancy experience.

In contrast with Handy's claim that women are the ideal post-modern workers, Strachan and Winter claim that computerisation has led to intensified workloads especially for female workers handling "customer transactions and inquiries while using sophisticated data bases".¹⁰³ The company paid little attention to these women's working conditions.¹⁰⁴ Thus, although women are considered to have "superior communication skills", these skills are not valued and women are not remunerated for the skills, knowledge and responsibility they display.¹⁰⁵

Women: A different experience of work and redundancy

Women and men who have worked since their twenties, and are now aged in their fifties, entered the workforce in the post World War II era when expectations and conditions were very different from today. The popular discourses of women's roles in the 1950s and early 1960s did not encourage women to seek training or a career or to aspire to economic independence. Australian men were expected to secure stable employment, remain in the same job until retirement and support a wife and children. An Australian woman born between 1938 and 1948 would quite likely have started work between the ages of 14 and 17 and would have expected to work for a few years, marry, give up paid work, have children and live happily ever after. Academic and popular literature of the 1950s and early 1960s did not question the assumption that girls would become wives and mothers.¹⁰⁶

Later studies examined the ways in which girls and women were constituted in Australian society during that time.¹⁰⁷ With the second wave of feminism, goals changed and women expected that they could and should “succeed at everything because [they] had been given these unprecedented opportunities”.¹⁰⁸

Older women workers face particular problems caused by societal attitudes and structures. Eva Cox, writing in 1993, suggested that the male experience is claimed “as the universal” and “women’s workforce participation in the older age groups is increasing”:¹⁰⁹

Women, freed from the pressures of unpaid family responsibilities in their forties and fifties, see the possibilities of working on and using their skills in the paid workforce.¹¹⁰

Cox argues that women are “in the workforce to stay” and makes use of an economic rationalist discourse in asserting that for women, “extra years in the paid workforce have benefits for both the community and the individual”.¹¹¹ She points out that there are benefits “for employers and the economy in using the skills of older women effectively” in the context of the “efficient use of resources, not equity”.¹¹² She advocates policy changes to assist older women and “redress the gender biases of present assumptions and the problems and barriers that face women”.¹¹³ In spite of her use of an economic rationalist approach, Cox has not succeeded in changing the attitudes and behaviour of the government or employers. The problems older women face when seeking work are discussed later in this thesis.

Cox warns that there could be a “backlash against the recipients of the aged pension” although she argues that it would come from “the self-righteousness of those who see themselves as foregoing income to provide for their own retirement”.¹¹⁴ This could be a

particular problem for older women because of their caring responsibilities and their lack of superannuation.¹¹⁵ Cox argues that because women are unlikely “to be able to support a long retirement in comfort ... continued options of paid work are likely to be essential”.¹¹⁶ Even if women do manage to obtain paid work, they are likely to experience interruptions in their working lives for childbirth and/or caring for others and are more likely to work part-time.

Although superannuation is now more available to women on equitable terms with men, older women in particular have not had the opportunity to build up enough superannuation for a comfortable retirement.¹¹⁷ As superannuation is linked to women’s position in the labour market, “women’s relatively lower income during their working lives will be the basis of their relative income levels in retirement”.¹¹⁸ Women, as well as men, have been affected by changes in the labour market and women are less likely to have accumulated superannuation benefits from long term stable employment. Guillemard and Rein, in their article on retirement, point out that their empirical analysis was “based on statistics about men” and that a study of women would need to be different, “both at the level of empirical data and of research questions.”¹¹⁹ They also note that there is less “sociological literature” about women’s retirement.¹²⁰

Jenny Onyx, writing in 1998, pointed out that there is evidence which suggests women do not plan “for their retirement and are increasingly at risk of facing a life of poverty in their old age”.¹²¹ Onyx conducted a survey of women and men aged over 30 and employed in Sydney and found that men received much higher salaries than women whether they were working full-time or part-time and that more men than women were planning for their

retirement. More women than men expected to depend on a partner's superannuation or a government pension in their old age.¹²²

Onyx argues that there are "three dimensions" that explain why women do not plan for their retirement. There is an attitudinal dimension, representing the social roles of women and their expectation that their partner will support them financially.¹²³ Then there is a lack of information available to women about retirement and superannuation.¹²⁴ The third dimension, "external impediments", concerns women's disadvantage in the labour market.¹²⁵ Onyx's conclusion "that retirement planning is one of the neglected issues of gender equity"¹²⁶ indicates that older women may take voluntary redundancy packages even when they do not have the financial resources to leave the work force.

Restructuring of the workforce not only affects women workers but also affects the services women use. In rural areas banks and public services such as the CES have closed and electronic transactions take the place of over the counter personal service. Louise Glanville asserts that "women remain the major users and providers of social and human services".¹²⁷ She argues that state intervention has enabled women "to make real gains in contemporary society, especially those relating to political citizenship, income security and equal opportunity" and that privatisation and the decline of the State "will exacerbate the relative powerlessness of many women in contemporary society".¹²⁸ "Equity issues may not receive sufficient attention in environments which focus on profit and efficiency in terms of lowest cost."¹²⁹ Deborah Mitchell points out that declining employment in the public sector affects women directly as jobs disappear and also indirectly as government support for "childcare services, training and education programmes" is withdrawn.¹³⁰

Employment, redundancy and retirement of older workers

As this thesis focuses on workers aged 50 and over, a discussion of the literature on older workers is in order. A British study found that “the age of 50 appeared to represent an important point at which people found it more difficult to return to the labour force”.¹³¹ Older workers had ‘high rates of self-employment, part-time working and a wider range of different types of economic inactivity, including ill health and having caring responsibilities’.¹³²

Shea asserts that with the population ageing in industrialised societies “management of older employees is becoming a world-wide problem”.¹³³ He worries that with the trend to early retirement, there will be “more and more people being supported by a shrinking labour force”¹³⁴ and argues that society must find new ways “to ensure a longer working life for those who wish or need it.”¹³⁵ He feels that management makes “short-term gains while creating long-term losses for all of us”.¹³⁶

The changing workforce demographics have led to grim predictions of generational warfare as the burden of an ever growing number of retired people is borne by younger wage earners.¹³⁷

Other writers warn that companies will have to go against the early retirement trend and find ways to retain older workers as there are no longer enough workers to fill positions “vacated by retired baby boomers”¹³⁸ and that the cost of age discrimination litigation could be a factor in retaining older workers.¹³⁹

Several studies have examined re-employment after retrenchment. A Canadian study found that the majority of retrenched workers accepted part-time work, as they were unable

to obtain full-time work.¹⁴⁰ Women were unemployed longer than men and were more likely to accept part-time work.¹⁴¹

In an Australian study of former Australian Capital Territory Australian Public Service employees who had taken voluntary redundancy, Irene Krauss found that a “significant number” of the forty respondents “had withdrawn from the workforce”.¹⁴² Krauss limited her sample to residents of the ACT who had taken voluntary redundancy in 1996, twelve to eighteen months earlier than her survey. The size of the voluntary redundancy package could have delayed the need to obtain further employment in the survey period, particularly for older workers. Krauss found that all the women in her survey aged 50 and over and a number of men aged over 40 had withdrawn from the labour force.¹⁴³ Catriona Jackson, in *The Canberra Times*, using data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, reported that 43% of Canberra residents aged over 45 years had retired as at November 1997.¹⁴⁴ As the Australian Public Service has been a major employer in the ACT, this statistic may reflect the flood of retrenchments from the APS.¹⁴⁵ A study of mature age job seekers in Canberra conducted by the Belconnen Employment Solutions Taskforce (BEST) in 1998 found that over half of their respondents were in the age group 40 to 49 years, “indicating a lowering of the label ‘mature age’”.¹⁴⁶ BEST asserts that the reductions in public sector staff in Canberra has had “a flow on effect within the private and small business sectors”.¹⁴⁷

Definitions of Retirement

The Australian Bureau of Statistics publication *Retirement and Retirement Intentions* lists definitions that cover retirement:

Partial retirement Persons who had retired from full-time work or looking for full-time work, and were working or looking for part-time work.

Retired from the labour force Persons who had retired from work or looking for work of more than 10 hours per week, and did not intend to work at any time in the future. These persons are considered fully retired. Persons that have never worked more than 10 hours per week were also treated as fully retired.

Retired from full-time work Persons who had had a full-time job at some time and who had ceased full-time labour force activity (i.e. were not working full-time, were not looking for full-time work and did not intend to work full-time at any time in the future). Unpaid voluntary work was not considered full-time work.

Retired from part-time work Persons who had ceased part-time labour force activity, that is, working or looking for work of 10-34 hours per week, and who did not intend to work or look for work of 10-34 hours per week at any time in the future.¹⁴⁸

Early retirement appears to be a euphemism for redundancy or retrenchment. In the USA, Shea states that in 1988 the US Defense Department offered early retirement to workers aged 40 and upwards who normally would not be eligible under federal rules.¹⁴⁹ This trend continued in the USA with early retirement becoming an option “in private industry, institutions and local government whenever personnel cutbacks have been required”.¹⁵⁰ Shea regards the age of 50 as the turning point from “middle-aged” to “older” workers¹⁵¹ and argues that there are many myths about older workers, such as assumptions of poor health, low motivation, desire for early retirement and inability to perform tasks.¹⁵² He is “concerned about the strong, persistent tendency for many companies, institutions, and government agencies to force older employees out of the workforce or to bribe them into taking early retirement”.¹⁵³ Rosenman argues that “the worker’s forthcoming superannuation pay out makes it easier morally for an employer to terminate a person”.¹⁵⁴

Guillemard and Rein argue that retirement has multiple meanings, referring “simultaneously to an event, a social institution, a stage in the life course, and the transition from work to nonwork”.¹⁵⁵ In their study the authors refer to people on a “public old-age

pension scheme” as retired and people who have stopped paid work “but have not yet been admitted into the public old-age pension scheme” are regarded as withdrawing early from the labour market.¹⁵⁶ For people too young to receive an age pension, unemployment insurance or social security allowances have become an alternative to the age pension as the decrease in labour force participation drops for older workers.¹⁵⁷ Guillemard and Rein argue that employment activity rates for men aged 55 and over have decreased significantly since 1970 in West Germany, France, Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States, Canada and Japan.¹⁵⁸ This may also be the case in Australia although Guillemard’s and Rein’s definition of retired does not fit Australian conditions as the means test for eligibility for the public old-age pension scheme excludes many self-funded retirees and many people with income from superannuation.

CONCLUSION

The issue of redundancy is attracting significant attention from the popular press although much less academic analysis. On the one hand the political economy perspective paints a bleak picture of mass unemployment and a devastated public sector. On the other hand there is the popular business literature describing the opportunities an individual may seize by becoming “Me Inc.”¹⁵⁹

There is very little literature which examines the complex and contradictory experience of redundancy. In Australia, there is growth in part-time and casual employment at the same time as corporations and the public sector are downsizing. What makes a redundancy voluntary or involuntary? What happens to those who take a redundancy package? What are their expectations and are they realised? In 1998 Ryan and Macky commented on the

need for “longitudinal research that, for example, tracks the commitment of downsized employees” before and after retrenchment and after re-employment.¹⁶⁰ In this thesis I am examining the experiences of retrenchment as reported by respondents’ rather than from a management efficiency viewpoint and will focus on their experiences before, during and after their voluntary redundancy.

The literature mostly neglects the implications of redundancy for women. This thesis will examine whether there are gender differences in the experience of redundancy for older Australian Public Service workers and whether older women are able to accumulate the same amount of superannuation benefits that are available to men, given women’s position in the paid workforce, the structural changes in superannuation over the years and the changes in the roles of women.

Another significant question for this thesis concerns the voluntary nature of redundancy. In 1992 the Office of Labour Market Adjustment of the Department of Employment, Education and Training issued a publication outlining strategies and a code of practice for enterprises which needed to “adjust labour to changing economic circumstances”.¹⁶¹ The authors refer to retrenched workers as “victims”.¹⁶² This term is also used by Ryan and Macky who found “clear evidence of adverse psychological effects resulting from job loss”.¹⁶³ These findings are contradicted in Irene Krauss’s study of retrenched workers from the APS in the Australian Capital Territory.¹⁶⁴ While I do not wish to understate the anguish and upheaval of retrenchment, not all workers are unwilling victims and many use the opportunity to change careers or to pursue other interests. As will be seen in the following chapters, some workers actively seek out the option of voluntary redundancy, for

a variety of reasons. Retrenched workers are not homogeneous and there are differences across and within gender, age, and socio-economic groups. From the literature review it is obvious that the standard experience of redundancy in most of the literature is the middle manager male experience in which the victims are coerced. The literature does not generally allow for agency in seeking opportunities for retrenchment.

The next chapter discusses the methodology used in this thesis.

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³ Handy, pp. 9-10.

⁴ Handy, p. 12.

⁵ Handy, p. 23.

⁶ Hans-Peter Martin and Harald Schumann, *The Global Trap: Globalization and the assault on prosperity and democracy*, trans. Patrick Camiller, Pluto Press, Sydney, 1997, p. 100.

⁷ Martin and Schumann, p. 101.

⁸ Gail Edmondson, William Echikson, David Woodruff, Monica Larner and Andy Robinson, 'A Tidal Wave of Temps', *Business Week*, 24 November, 1997, pp. 24-25.

⁹ Terry H. Wager, 'From the Shop Floor to the Executive Suite: Workforce Reduction in Canada', *International Journal of Employment Studies*, Vol.5, No.2, October 1997, p. 17.

¹⁰ Martin and Schumann, p. 231.

¹¹ Mimi Abramovitz, 'Opinion', *Ms.*, Volume VIII, No. 4, January/February 1998, p. 29.

¹² Martin and Schumann, p. 169.

¹³ Abramovitz, p. 29.

¹⁴ Judith Sloan, 'The Australian Labour Market - March 1998', *Australian Bulletin of Labour*, Vol.24, No.1, March, 1998, p. 8.

¹⁵ Anne Edwards and Susan Magarey, 'Introduction', in Anne Edwards and Susan Magarey (eds), *Women in a restructuring Australia: Work and Welfare*, Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd, Sydney, NSW, 1995, p. 2.

¹⁶ Martin and Schumann, p. 166.

¹⁷ Martin and Schumann, p. 207.

¹⁸ Rosemary Du Plessis, 'Women in a restructured New Zealand: Lessons for Australia' in Edwards and Magarey, p. 244.

¹⁹ Belinda Probert, 'A restructuring world?' in Edwards and Magarey, p. 21.

²⁰ Sloan, p. 3.

²¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Labour Force Australia 6203.0*, July 1998, p. 58.

²² ABS, pp. 57-58. The ABS Labour Force Survey defines "employed" as:

Persons aged 15 and over who, during the reference week:

- worked for one hour or more for pay, profit, commission or payment in kind in a job or business, or on a farm; or
- worked for one hour or more without pay in a family business or on a farm; or
- ... were employees who had a job but were not at work and were: on paid leave, on leave without pay for less than four weeks up to the end of the reference week: stood down without pay ...; on strike or locked out; on workers' compensation and expected to be returning to their job; or receiving wages or salary while undertaking full-time study; or
- were employers, own account workers or contributing family workers who had a job, business or farm, but were not at work.

²³ Sloan, p. 8.

- ²⁴ Sloan, p. 4.
- ²⁵ Sloan, p. 6.
- ²⁶ Sloan, p. 6.
- ²⁷ Leo D'Angelo Fisher, 'Caught in the crossfire', *The Bulletin*, November 10, 1998, p. 52; Handy, pp. 32-35. These authors discuss the issue of employees working longer hours for no extra pay.
- ²⁸ Marc Lombard, 'Unemployment in Australia: the effects of macroeconomic policies', *Journal of Australian Political Economy*, No. 41, June 1998, p. 75.
- ²⁹ John Burgess, 'Government Policy on Restructuring the Labour Market: Australia', No. 1 ESC Working Paper Series, The University of Newcastle, November 1991, p. 3.
- ³⁰ Burgess, p. 19.
- ³¹ Probert, p. 20.
- ³² Stephen Deery, Ray Brooks and Alan Morris, 'Redundancy and Public Policy in Australia', Labour Studies Programme Working Paper No. 15, University of Melbourne, Parkville, Victoria, 1985, p. 12.
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- ⁴⁶ Lewis, p. 72.
- ⁴⁷ Peter Sheehan, 'The Changing Nature of Work: Some Implications', *Australian Bulletin of Labour*, Vol. 24, No. 4, December, 1998, pp. 317-332; Diana Bagnell, 'All Work No Jobs', *The Bulletin*, February 2, 1999, pp.12-15; Marilyn Lake, 'For too many women, it's all work and no pay', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, March 10, 1999, p. 17.
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- ⁵¹ Maslen, p. 47; Fisher, p. 52.
- ⁵² Ryan and Macky, p. 43.
- ⁵³ Craig Littler, Thomas Bramble and Jacquie McDonald, *Organisational Restructuring: Downsizing, Delaying and Managing Change At Work*, AGPS, Canberra, 1994, p. 1.
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- ⁵⁵ Wager, p. 18.
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- ¹¹⁷ Sharp, p. 183.
- ¹¹⁸ Sharp, p. 190.
- ¹¹⁹ Anne-Marie Guillemard and Martin Rein, 'Comparative Patterns of Retirement: Recent Trends in Developed Societies', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 19, 1993, pp. 475-6.
- ¹²⁰ Guillemard and Rein, p. 476.
- ¹²¹ Jenny Onyx, 'Issues Affecting Women's Retirement Planning', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 33, No. 4, November, 1998, p. 379.
- ¹²² Onyx, p. 385.
- ¹²³ Onyx, p. 390.
- ¹²⁴ Onyx, p. 390.
- ¹²⁵ Onyx, p. 391.
- ¹²⁶ Onyx, p. 392.
- ¹²⁷ Louise Glanville, 'Privatisation – The Latest Weapon in the Oppression of Women?', *Just Policy*, No. 3, June 1995, pp. 33-36, p. 33.
- ¹²⁸ Glanville, p. 36.
- ¹²⁹ Glanville, p. 36.
- ¹³⁰ Deborah Mitchell, 'Women's incomes' in Edwards and Magarey, p. 92-93.
- ¹³¹ Stephen McKay, 'Older workers in the labour market', *Labour Market Trends*, July 1998, p. 365
- ¹³² McKay, p. 369.
- ¹³³ Gordon F. Shea, *Managing Older Employees*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, USA, 1991, P. xiv.
- ¹³⁴ Shea, p. 6.
- ¹³⁵ Shea, p. 4.
- ¹³⁶ Shea, p. 6.
- ¹³⁷ Shea, p. 18.
- ¹³⁸ Douglas H. Powell, 'Stretching Your Workforce Options', *HR Magazine*, July 1998, p. 83.
- ¹³⁹ Sheldon Steinhauser, 'Is Your Corporate Culture in Need of an Overhaul?', *HR Magazine*, July 1998, p. 87.
- ¹⁴⁰ Brian P. McCall, 'The Determinants of Full-Time versus Part-Time Reemployment Following Job Displacement', *Journal of Labor Economics*, Vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 714-715.
- ¹⁴¹ McCall, p. 716.
- ¹⁴² Irene Krauss, Voluntary Reldundancy from the Australian Public Service – Its Impact on People and Families in the ACT, Discussion Paper No. 56, Public Policy Program, Australian National University, Canberra, 1998, p. iii.
- ¹⁴³ Krauss, pp. 36-37.
- ¹⁴⁴ Catriona Jackson, 'Survey finds more mature faces in changing profile', *The Canberra Times*, 21 July 1998, p. 3.

¹⁴⁵ However, the regulations relating to the access of superannuation funds may mean that respondents have notified Comsuper that they have retired, when in fact they have not entirely withdrawn from the work force. This was not an issue which was covered in my survey but was discussed with one of the interviewees and could be a factor in reports that large numbers of Australian Capital Territory (ACT) residents are retired.

¹⁴⁶ Belconnen Employment Solutions Taskforce (BEST), *Our Neglected Resource: A Canberra Challenge*, Canberra, 1998, p.9.

¹⁴⁷ BEST, p. 2.

¹⁴⁸ ABS, *Retirement and Retirement Intentions Australia 6238.0*, November 1997, p. 55.

¹⁴⁹ Shea, p. 20.

¹⁵⁰ Shea, p. 20.

¹⁵¹ Shea, p. 10.

¹⁵² Shea, p. 21.

¹⁵³ Shea, p. 5.

¹⁵⁴ Linda Rosenman, 'Superannuation guarantee charge. Benefits and risks' in Edwards and Magarey, p. 195.

¹⁵⁵ Guillemard and Rein, p. 469.

¹⁵⁶ Guillemard and Rein, p. 472.

¹⁵⁷ Guillemard and Rein, p. 473.

¹⁵⁸ Guillemard and Rein, p. 474-5.

¹⁵⁹ Maslen, August 18, 1998, p. 49.

¹⁶⁰ Ryan and Macky, p. 41.

¹⁶¹ Buchanan et al, p. iii.

¹⁶² Buchanan et al, p. iv.

¹⁶³ Ryan and Macky, p. 33.

¹⁶⁴ Krauss, p. 37.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

The intention of this study is to use quantitative and qualitative data from questionnaires and interviews to identify gender differences in the motivating factors for the acceptance of voluntary redundancy by older workers from the Australian Public Service (APS) and gender differences in their experiences before and after redundancy.

Much of the available business, self-help and academic literature on retrenchment assumes that recipients of voluntary redundancy packages are men. I attended retirement seminars a few years ago when under threat of retrenchment and was surprised that the presentations were aimed at men with dependent wives and provided advice on how they could minimise tax and claim pensions or other allowances from the Department of Social Security. The needs of single, divorced or married women were ignored. As the working and retirement experiences of women and men are likely to be different, I decided to survey and interview both women and men, expecting that there would be differences between the genders as well as differences within each gender.

Liz Stanley and Sue Wise argue that “the experience of ‘women’ is ontologically fractured and complex because we do not all share one single and unseamed material reality”.¹ On the surface, the women in this study could be seen as “white, middle-class, heterosexual, First World women”² and could be expected to share common experiences. Entry into the APS is limited to Australian citizens and the “White Australia” policy meant that migrants were selected on the grounds of their race until this discrimination “was finally abolished in the early 1970s”.³ Most of the respondents to this survey had long service and would therefore have entered a predominantly Anglo-Celtic public service.

Audre Lord discusses not only “race, sex and class as sites of difference but” also “age”.⁴ Again, the women and men in this study appear similar in race, class and age and could therefore be expected to share similar experiences of education, work and family life. However, while age, class and ethnic differences may be small, gender differences are likely to be significant. Most Australian women and men aged in their fifties and older were socialised into distinct roles, as discussed in the literature review.

Because of limited time and financial resources I decided to conduct a survey prior to interviewing selected respondents. Given the significance of the subject to the respondents and their education levels, I assumed that former APS staff would be willing and able to complete a long questionnaire. As the questionnaire allowed anonymity, I felt the respondents would be more likely to provide details which they may hesitate to discuss in a face to face interview with a stranger.

To gain an understanding of the extent of voluntary redundancies and the changes in the APS and to compare with my own results, I analysed data published in the *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin*. Using this data as a background, I have included a chapter on APS statistics to set the scene for my own survey results. The survey method allowed a large enough sample to test the representativeness of my sample. Demographic details of respondents are also reported in chapter 3.

Quantitative and Qualitative Data

While some feminist researchers have criticized survey research and quantitative data,⁵ Reinharz points out that survey research can be useful to feminists as it can be used to “help identify differences among groups and changes over time.”⁶ She also asserts that

“statistics comparing men and women have been used to document inequality and highlight areas where change is needed.”⁷ Statistics can also “demonstrate similarities and differences among women.”⁸

Statistics are seen by some feminists “as part of patriarchal culture’s monolithic [sic] definition of ‘hard facts’”,⁹ given they can often be interpreted to reinforce a particular viewpoint. For example, during 1998, full-time and part-time employment rose for women and fell for men.¹⁰ However this is not such a gain for women as it seems given that the participation rate for women is still much lower than that for men, and women have lower pay rates than men.¹¹ Also, as discussed in the literature review, definitions of employment hide the real numbers of under-employed people.

As I wished to use multiple research methods to gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter of the thesis, the questionnaire responses formed the framework to design interview questions. The interviews examined in more detail the major issues relating to the voluntary redundancy experiences of older APS workers. I used semi-structured recorded interviews to gather data from selected interviewees. To select survey respondents for interview, I examined the explanations and comments on completed questionnaires and focussed on issues where there were gender differences. Potential respondents who had already signed a consent form were then contacted and asked if they would be available for a short interview at their home or mine. Four interviews were recorded and transcribed and the subsequent data used in the results chapter.

Qualitative data aims to probe beneath the surface of perceived similarities and in this case aims to analyse the reasons why respondents accepted or sought voluntary redundancy and

the reasons behind their post redundancy choices. “Open-ended interview research produces nonstandardized information that allows researchers to make full use of differences among people.”¹²

Anne Oakley criticised sociological “recipes” for interviewing in 1981 and her criticism is still valid.¹³ One of the interview strategies she criticised was the concealing of the “interviewer’s beliefs and values”.¹⁴ This was not desirable in a study such as mine and it would have been absurd to try to survey or interview people without explaining my position and interest in the topic. I could not pretend to be detached and do not claim to be an objective bystander in this research.

I became interested in the topic of retrenched older public servants when my position in a CES office was abolished because of the closure of that CES office shortly after the election of the Coalition Government in 1996. If I wished to remain in the public service, I had to apply for any suitable vacancies advertised in the Commonwealth Gazette. The Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs had retrenched a number of staff in the preceding years under the Labor Government and was about to offer a large number of redundancy packages to staff at all levels. As a late starter in the public service I was reluctant to take a voluntary redundancy package because of my low superannuation entitlement and the lack of employment opportunities for older women workers. Several friends aged over fifty accepted redundancy packages and subsequently took different career paths.

I decided to examine the experiences of former APS staff who took voluntary redundancy at age 50 or over. I chose that age group because of my experience in the CES and a long

interest in the labour market experience of older workers. I and many of my friends are in that age group and we feel that we are, or still have the potential to be, valued employees.

In conversations with former public servants I found that many actively sought voluntary redundancy opportunities but did not intend to withdraw from the workforce. In spite of the abundance of literature suggesting older workers retire early, I suspected that many older workers did not intend to leave the workforce permanently. I also decided to examine whether media claims that “[t]he average age of retirement from full-time work [in Australia] is 48” and that men retire “at 58, while women retire at 41” could be confirmed.¹⁵

As discussed in the previous chapter, media coverage of retrenchment generally assumes that workers do not welcome retrenchment and that older workers take early retirement from the workforce. To test these hypotheses and to explore gender differences in the experience of voluntary redundancy, I designed a questionnaire for self-completion and placed an advertisement in the local newspaper, *The Canberra Times*, requesting former Australian Public Servants aged 50 and over, who had accepted voluntary retrenchment, to telephone me.¹⁶

I chose a convenience sample because of the difficulty in obtaining details of potential respondents in the 50 plus age group from notices in the *Australian Government Gazette*. Names and levels of staff leaving the APS are advertised but not birth dates or Australian Government Service (AGS) numbers. While AGS numbers could indicate an older person with long service, not all staff taking voluntary redundancy necessarily had long service. *The Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin* publishes statistics on Australian Public

Service staff in various categories but does not publish data on individuals. The Community and Public Sector Union could not provide names of potential respondents and the Privacy Act prevented government departments from disclosing names of people who have been retrenched.

The advertisement, seeking respondents and aimed at former Australian Public Service staff who had taken voluntary redundancy at age 50 or more, appeared in the public notices section of the *Canberra Times* on Sunday 25 October 1998 and Saturday 14 November 1998 (see Appendix A). When potential respondents telephoned I briefly explained the purpose of my study and asked if they would complete a questionnaire, which I would mail to them.

Thirty five people telephoned and agreed to complete questionnaires and thirty two completed questionnaires were returned. Because of the low response from women, I approached eight women and received five completed questionnaires from them. I met four of the women through workmates or at social gatherings and knew three from my previous job in South Australia. I had previously approached two men I knew socially and one I had worked with and received completed questionnaires from them. I also asked two temporary APS staff (a woman and a man) to complete questionnaires after casual work related conversations, and received completed questionnaires from them. Four women offered to distribute questionnaires to women they knew and one of these women also provided the name and address of a former work mate. I provided twelve questionnaires to these women but only received four responses.

As a result of all these efforts, a total of fifty nine questionnaires were posted out and forty five were returned, with one being received too late to include in the results. Forty four completed questionnaires were analysed, seventeen from women and twenty seven from men. The majority of women respondents are not married and the majority of men are married.

I was disappointed in the poor response from women. Several women told me they had been interviewed for another study but could not remember who was conducting the study.¹⁷ As mentioned above, my attempts to increase the number of women participants were only marginally successful.

When a potential respondent telephoned, I briefly advised the purpose of my study and asked if the respondent would complete and return a questionnaire which I would post, including a stamped self-addressed envelope for the return of the completed questionnaire. A letter of introduction and consent form for a recorded interview accompanied the questionnaire. Examples of these appear in Appendix B. I decided not to follow up any potential respondents who did not return the questionnaire as I felt that some people may have been intimidated by the length of the questionnaire or may have felt that I was asking for too many financial or personal details, even though the respondent could choose anonymity.

The introductory letter sent with the questionnaire guaranteed confidentiality and respondents were given the opportunity of using a pseudonym. However, only four respondents chose this option which left me with a dilemma. Canberra is a small city and I felt that individuals may easily be identified if I used their names. I have therefore

chosen a pseudonym for the respondents who gave their own given name. The respondents who were interviewed agreed to use their given names.

The questionnaire

The questionnaire comprised 70 questions and a space for comments (see Appendix B). The questions were divided into sections and were a mixture of closed, open and multiple choice questions. The aim of the questionnaire was to elicit information on the background of the respondents, factors in their acceptance of a voluntary redundancy package, how they accessed and disposed of their redundancy and superannuation packages, their intentions about work after voluntary redundancy, their experiences in seeking work after redundancy and their participation in voluntary or caring work.

Respondents were asked if they felt that they were somewhat coerced into accepting voluntary redundancy and to provide an explanation for their feelings. I included this question as a result of conversations with public servants which suggested that voluntary redundancy is not always entirely voluntary.

To analyse the questionnaire data I designed an Excel spreadsheet with a column for each answer. This enabled me to examine specific questions or sections and analyse gender differences or differences within a gender. For analysis of open questions I entered the text into another Excel spreadsheet and looked for similarities and differences. The questionnaire analysis enabled me to isolate issues which could be examined in recorded interviews.

The next chapter provides an overview of the Australian Public Service and the changes which have occurred in recent years, particularly in relation to older workers. Demographic information on survey respondents is also included in this chapter.

¹ Liz Stanley and Sue Wise, 'Method, methodology and epistemology in feminist research processes' in Liz Stanley (ed) *Feminist Praxis: Research, Theory and Epistemology in Feminist Sociology*, Routledge, London, 1990, p. 22.

² Stanley and Wise, p. 22.

³ Gordon A Carmichael, 'So Many Children. Colonial and Post-Colonial Demographic Patterns' in Kay Saunders and Raymond Evans (Eds.), *Gender Relations in Australia. Domination and Negotiation*, Harcourt Brace & Company, Australia, Sydney, 1992, p. 115.

⁴ Stanley and Wise, p. 30.

⁵ Shulamit Reinharz, *Feminist Methods In Social Research*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1992, pp. 86-94.

⁶ Reinharz, p. 81.

⁷ Reinharz, p. 81.

⁸ Reinharz, p. 81.

⁹ Reinharz, p. 87.

¹⁰ ABS *Labour Force Australia 6203.0*, December 1998, p. 6.

¹¹ ABS *Average Weekly Earnings 6302.0*, August 1998.

¹² Reinharz, pp. 18-19.

¹³ Ann Oakley, 'Interviewing women: a contradiction in terms' in H. Roberts (ed.) *Doing Feminist Research*, Routledge, London, 1981, p.34.

¹⁴ Oakley, p. 35.

¹⁵ Anonymous, 'Retirement Average 48', *The Weekend Australian*, June 13-14, 1998, Personal Finance, p. 3.

¹⁶ See Appendix A.

¹⁷ At least two surveys have been conducted in the ACT. Belconnen Employment Solutions Taskforce (BEST), *Our Neglected Resource: A Canberra Challenge*, BEST, Canberra, 1998 surveyed mature workers aged 40 and over. Irene Krauss, 'Voluntary Redundancy from the Australian Public Service – The Impact on People and Families in the ACT', Discussion Paper No. 56, Public Policy program, Australian National University, Canberra, 1998, p. 18, surveyed 3 women and 7 men aged 50 or over.

CHAPTER 3: THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE (APS) and DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

In this thesis I investigate the reasons why older public sector workers accepted voluntary redundancy and their intentions and actual experience of seeking work after redundancy. This chapter provides an overview of the Australian Public Service and the changes which have occurred in recent years as well as demographic information on survey respondents.

Women's disadvantage at redundancy can be related to a long history of women's disadvantage in the APS. Until 1966 women had to resign on marriage¹ and were mainly confined to the lower status and paid Fourth Division.² In spite of being able to enter the clerical band, the Third Division, from 1949, in 1955 only four percent of women were in the Third Division, rising to 23% in 1980.³ From the inception of the APS, a "clerical position was the beginning of a career, and was therefore considered by both employers and male employees as a man's job".⁴ Deacon argues that the separation of the APS into male and female work cultures made "it difficult for men and women to interact comfortably as equals or potential equals within the same organisation".⁵

Government departments provided employment for many young women but until 1966 women in the Commonwealth Public Service were "deemed to have retired from the Commonwealth service" once they were married.⁶ Although the Boyer Committee Report of February 1959 had recommended "that married women shall be eligible for permanent or temporary employment in the Service on such terms and under such conditions as are prescribed"⁷ the Public Service Act was not amended until October 1966.⁸ In 1959 the

Administrative and Clerical Officers' Association was "firmly opposed to any alteration in the present restrictions on the retention of married women as permanent officers".⁹ The Association felt that there was no need for the retention of married women as there were "sufficient number of juniors ... available for the adequate staffing of the Commonwealth Public Service in the foreseeable future".¹⁰ The possibility that some of these juniors would probably become married women who wanted to continue in the service did not appear to be an issue in the argument. Women's organisations lobbied for the removal of the marriage bar for many years, with their lobbying strategies including case histories of women affected by the marriage bar.¹¹

The Boyer Committee Report of 1959 also drew attention to the inconsistencies between section 49 of the Public Service Act and section 4c of the Commonwealth Superannuation Act and recommended amendment of the Superannuation Act.¹² Married women were denied superannuation rights, even if they were contributing to the superannuation fund before marriage. The Boyer Committee also pointed out that "section 33(1) of the Superannuation Act confers pension rights on the children under 16 of widowed or divorced male officers, but not on those of female officers who are widows or divorcees".¹³ Superannuation now appears to be gender-neutral but women will not receive equal benefits to men "while paid and unpaid work remain unequally allocated".¹⁴

Women were also disadvantaged by the pay system and the long standing debate about equal pay for women and men continued up to December 1972 after which "women were awarded a male rate of pay no matter what work they were doing".¹⁵ However women are still clustered

in low paying jobs in a segregated workforce and their pay rates are still lower than those of men. In August 1998 average weekly earnings (full time adult ordinary time earnings) in the public sector were \$753.40 for women and \$859.30 for men.¹⁶

Retrenchment or redundancy in the Australian Public Service differs from that of many workers in private enterprise in that “the APS has a specific framework for managing excess staff – the Redeployment and Retirement framework”.¹⁷ Under the Redeployment and Retirement framework the union must be notified and involved in excess staff situations and employees who have been “invited to elect for voluntary retrenchment **must** be given one month to consider the offer and **must** be provided with appropriate financial and other information to make an informed decision”.¹⁸ This is in contrast to the situation of some workers in the private sector “who not only lost their jobs but were robbed of their holiday, long-service and retrenchment entitlements”.¹⁹

This chapter examines the Australian Public Service (APS) in general, as a background to reporting the findings from my survey of former APS staff. APS statistics used in this section are published annually on a financial year basis in the *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin*. However these statistics do not cover all public sector employment across Australia. “Staff employed in Commonwealth-owned companies, statutory authorities and government business enterprises who are not employed under the *Public Service Act 1922* are not included”²⁰ and there is “less than half of total Commonwealth employment and a relatively small part of total public sector employment” covered under the *Public Service Act*

1922.²¹ However, because of their accessibility and consistent approach, I am using these statistics to provide an indication of the changes in the APS over the last ten years.

Table 1 gives an overview of the numbers of permanent staff in the Australian Public Service over ten years to June 1998. Total staff numbers have dropped considerably since 1989 although there were slight increases in 1992 and 1993. Numbers started decreasing under the Federal Labor Government and declined rapidly after the election of the Federal Coalition Government in March 1996 as a result of changes to administrative arrangements when departments were reorganised and/or downsized. The Minister for Industrial Relations issued a discussion paper in November 1996, outlining the shortcomings of the Australian Public Service and promising reforms which would “provide the Australian people with better government”.²² The APS had to “prove that it is able to compete on cost and quality with best practice in the private sector”.²³

Table 1 also shows women and men as a percentage of the total of permanent staff in the Australian Public Service over ten years. There have been slow changes in the percentages of women and men from year to year over the whole period. The decrease in numbers of women public servants has not been as dramatic as that of men over the ten years and the percentage of women in the APS has actually increased given that the percentage of men has declined. These figures reflect the trend in the general labour market where there was a “fall in the participation rate trend for males” and the participation rate for women “rose from mid-1997 to mid-1998” and then fell slightly.²⁴ Full-time and part-time employment rose for women during 1998.²⁵

Table 1 Permanent staff in the Australian Public Service

Year	Number of Women	Number of Men	Total number	Women as a percentage of total	Men as a percentage of total
1989	60,956	79,235	140,191	43.5	56.5
1990	62,184	74,188	136,372	45.6	54.4
1991	64,881	75,840	140,721	46.1	53.9
1992	66,875	76,405	143,280	46.7	53.3
1993	68,226	75,490	143,716	47.5	52.5
1994	68,125	74,358	142,483	47.8	52.2
1995	61,563	68,778	130,341	47.2	52.8
1996	61,550	67,597	129,147	47.7	52.3
1997	57,226	62,069	119,295	48.0	52.0
1998	52,597	56,188	108,785	48.3	51.7

Source: *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin 1997-98*, p.12.

In the APS at June 1998, 48.3% of permanent staff were women. While the percentage of women in the APS has increased, women are still clustered in the lower levels “with 78.5% of women who were permanent staff employed in ASO [Administrative Services Officer] classifications compared to 50.7% of men”.²⁶ Only 21.8% of Senior Executive Service (SES) officers were women.²⁷ Separations by classification and gender in 1997-98 reflect the ASO percentages above, as 78.8% of the women and 50.1% of the men separating were in the ASO classifications.²⁸

Table 2 shows the numbers of permanent APS staff by age group and gender over ten years. As a percentage of the total APS staff, there has been a steady increase in staff aged over 35, as would be expected with the ageing of the ‘baby boomer’ generation and the declining recruitment of young people into the APS. The decline in the proportion of staff aged under 25 is “of particular concern given it is a factor contributing to the overall ageing of the APS”.²⁹ The percentage of permanent APS staff aged 50 and over increased from twelve percent in

1989 to eighteen percent in 1998. In contrast, the percentage of permanent staff under 25 years of age declined from thirteen percent of total staff in 1989 to five percent in 1998.³⁰ In 1997-98 the percentage of older women was more than double that of young women and the percentage of older men was more than five times that of young men. The median age for permanent staff in the APS in 1997-98 was 38 years for women and 42 years for men.³¹

Table 2 Age group by gender as percentage of total of permanent APS staff

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Under 25 women	8	8	7	6	5	5	4	4	3	3
25-34 women	17	18	18	18	18	18	17	17	16	16
35 to 49 women	14	16	17	18	20	20	21	22	23	23
50 & over women	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	6	7
Total women	43	46	46	47	48	48	47	48	48	49
<i>Under 25 men</i>	5	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	2	2
<i>25-34 men</i>	17	16	15	14	14	13	13	12	12	11
<i>35-49 men</i>	27	26	27	27	27	27	28	28	28	27
<i>50 & over men</i>	8	8	8	8	8	9	9	9	10	11
Total men	57	54	54	53	52	52	53	52	52	51

Source Source: *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin 1997-98*, p. 26.

Table 3 shows percentage by gender of permanent staff appointed in various age groups over 10 years. Annual recruitment into the APS has generally declined over the ten years to 1998, from 12,645 in 1989 to 5,185 in 1998.³² The participation rate in the general labour force for

Table 3 Appointments of permanent staff by age group and gender as a percentage of total staff.

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Under 25 women	20	20	18	17	16	22	17	13	16	16
25-34 women	15	15	16	18	19	15	18	17	19	20
35 to 49 women	15	15	16	16	19	14	16	17	19	18
50 & over women	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	3	2
<i>Under 25 men</i>	15	14	14	12	12	17	13	11	10	10
<i>25-34 men</i>	16	15	15	16	16	13	16	16	14	16
<i>35-49 men</i>	14	15	15	16	14	13	17	20	16	15
<i>50 & over men</i>	3	4	4	3	2	4	2	4	3	3

Source: *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin 1997-98*, p. 48.

women and men decreases rapidly from age 55.³³ However in appointments to the APS it has remained relatively steady. Appointments of staff aged under 25 has generally declined over ten years while appointments of staff aged 25 to 49 has risen.

Table 4 shows numbers and percentages of permanent part-time staff by gender. Women form the majority of permanent part-time staff, with only 701 men working part-time, compared with 4,578 women, out of a total of 108,785 permanent staff. Separations of staff in the part-time category are not reported in the *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin 1997-98*. In 1997-98 almost nine percent of women worked part-time and only one percent of men, while women part-time staff made up four percent of the total APS permanent staff compared to less than one percent of men. The proportion of women part-time staff rose from 1989 to 1994, dropped in 1995 and has risen since. The proportion of men working part-time has risen slightly from point two to point six of a percent over ten years. The statistics do not give any indication of the reasons people work part-time, but permanent part-time staff could move in and out of this category for a number of reasons, including caring for children or elderly relatives or for study purposes.

Table 4 Permanent part-time staff by gender as a percentage of total permanent staff

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Women	1.7	2.1	2.7	2.8	3.5	4.1	2.3	3.2	3.9	4.2
Men	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.6

Source: Various³⁴

Table 5 shows the percentage by gender of temporary staff in 1997-1998. In the APS, use of temporary staff has declined from sixteen percent of total staff in 1989 to ten percent in 1998. However the number of consultants, often former APS staff, is not included as temporary staff

in the *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin*. Consultants are hired by individual government departments under contract and are not counted as staff even though in some cases they may be performing the same work as in their previous positions. In all age groups except 50 and over there is a higher proportion of women temporary staff indicating women's disadvantage in the labour market. In the 50 and over age group there is a higher proportion of men taking temporary work although the differing retiring ages of women and men could be a factor in these figures.

Table 5 Temporary APS staff by age group and gender as a percentage of all temporary staff, 30 June 1998.

	Under 25 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 49 years	Unknown	50 and over
Women	9.6	18.4	22.8	2.6	6.2
Men	5.2	11.2	14.1	1.3	8.6

Source: *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin 1997-98*, p. 22.³⁵

As this thesis is examining the experiences of older workers the following table 6 gives an indication of the distribution of older staff in the APS. The table shows the numbers and

Table 6 Permanent APS staff by gender and numbers as a percentage of total staff in agency and percentage of permanent staff aged 50 and over in selected agencies 30 June 1998

Agency	Total staff	Percentage of women in agency	Percentage of men in agency	Number staff aged over 50	Percentage staff aged over 50
Affirmative Action Agency	15	80	20	0	0
Office of the Parliamentary Counsel	46	52	48	9	20
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies	53	68	32	23	43
Commonwealth Ombudsman	79	66	34	28	35
National Native Title Tribunal	185	64	36	11	6
Treasury	516	39	61	48	9
Finance and Administration	2326	39	61	584	25
DEETYA	4279	53	47	765	18
Defence	16218	32	68	4080	25
Australian Taxation Office	17159	50	50	2573	15
Centrelink	23587	63	37	2806	12

Source: *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin 1997-98*, pp. 27-30

percentages of staff aged 50 and over in selected agencies and demonstrates the wide variation in numbers of older staff, from none to 4,080. Overall, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies has the highest percentage of older staff at 43% while Defence has the highest numbers of older staff at 4,080.³⁶ The gender split for total staff ranged between 80% women and 20% men in the Affirmative Action Agency and 32% women and 68% men in Defence.

Classifications and salaries of APS staff change over time but the following table 7 reveals the most common classifications and salary ranges as at 18 June 1998. Occupations which are classified under 'Other' have salaries ranging from \$11,439 to \$73,206 per annum.³⁷

Table 7 Selected classifications and salary ranges for APS staff at 18 June 1998.

Classification	Annual salary range in \$
Administrative Services Officer Class 2 (ASO2)	27,091-30,042
Administrative Services Officer Class 3 (ASO3)	30,857-33,304
Administrative Services Officer Class 4 (ASO4)	34,391-37,341
Administrative Services Officer Class 5 (ASO5)	38,359-40,675
Administrative Services Officer Class 6 (ASO6)	41,430-47,591
Senior Officer Grade C (SOGC)	50,931-55,170
Senior Officer Grade B (SOGB)	57,983-66,175
Senior Officer Grade A (SOGA)	68,497-68,497
Senior Executive Service (SES) Band 1	No less than \$68,228
Senior Executive Service (SES) Band 2	No less than \$81,856
Senior Executive Service (SES) Band 3	No less than \$95,493

Source: *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette No. PS24*, 18 June 1998, pp. 2540-2588.

Table 8 shows the percentage of women and men in the various categories over ten years to 1998. Senior Officers (SO) were not a separate category in 1989 and 1990 but percentages have risen for women and men since 1991. Senior Executive Service (SES) staff percentages have remained relatively steady, with more men than women in SES.

Table 8 Permanent APS staff by classification and gender as a percentage of total staff

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
ASO women	37.4	39.3	37.6	36.9	37.0	37.4	38.3	38.2	38.0	37.9
SO women	N/A	N/A	1.8	2.0	2.2	2.4	2.8	3.1	3.1	3.4
SES women	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3
Other women	5.9	6.0	6.5	7.5	8.0	7.8	5.9	6.1	6.5	6.7
ASO men	31.3	32.6	26.3	26.2	26.2	26.5	27.3	27.1	26.7	26.2
SO men	N/A	N/A	6.1	6.2	6.4	6.6	7.1	7.3	7.2	7.5
SES men	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
Other men	24.3	21.0	20.4	20.0	19.0	18.1	17.3	16.9	17.1	16.9

Source: Various³⁸

Table 9 shows the numbers of retrenchments of permanent staff by gender in the last ten years.

Numbers of staff retrenched have increased dramatically in the last two years.

Table 9 Retrenchments of permanent staff by gender 1988-89 to 1997-98

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Women	766	283	338	461	867	1072	2384	1143	4736	4493
Men	2315	679	1127	1234	1928	1876	2918	2006	5205	5331
TOTAL	3081	962	1465	1695	2795	2948	5302	3149	9941	9824

Source: *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin 1997-98*, p. 62

Table 10 shows retrenchments by classification and gender. In the *Australian Public Service*

Statistical Bulletin retrenchments are categorized by classification and gender but not with

Table 10 Retrenchments of permanent APS staff by classification and gender as a percentage of total retrenchments

	1989*	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
ASO women		17.6	14.4	21.0	24.9	24.1	23.8	29.4	39.7	39.0
SO women		0	0.5	0.4	1.0	1.2	1.1	2.3	3.7	2.2
SES women		0.3	0	0.1	0	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.2
Other ³⁹ women		3.7	5.0	5.5	4.9	7.4	21.3	4.0	4.0	4.3
ASO men		30.9	21.5	18.3	22.2	19.5	17.4	23.5	26.8	28.0
SO men		0	4.0	5.9	4.9	6.5	5.6	7.7	9.2	5.8
SES men		4.0	1.6	1.6	1.5	2.0	0.7	1.9	1.1	1.3
Other men		43.5	52.9	47.2	40.5	39.2	30.0	30.8	15.2	19.2

Source: Various⁴⁰

* Figures for retrenchments were not categorised separately in 1998-89.

age. Generally retrenchments reflect the percentages of women and men in each classification in the APS, as revealed by comparing table 10 with table 8, although there was a shift away from 'Other men' and towards ASO women from about the mid 1990s.

Separations of permanent staff are not listed by agency and age group but the agencies with the most retrenchments per year over the previous nine years are shown in table 11.⁴¹ In 1997-98 the Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) staff numbers declined dramatically with the closure of the national employment agency, the Commonwealth Employment Service. In 1996-97, 2,472 permanent staff were retrenched from DEETYA, with 409 separations for other reasons⁴² and during the financial year 1997-98 DEETYA permanent staff separations from all categories⁴³ amounted to 3,309 staff nationally.

Table 11 APS agencies with most retrenchments per year, with numbers of staff retrenched.

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
DEETYA	48			160			494	2472	2346
Defence	130		231		1179	629	681	1049	1021
Australian Taxation Office						419		701	982
Centrelink / Social Security	153	52		152		390	181		978
Finance & Administration							716	906	923
Health & Family Services								752	
Industrial Relations							155		
Veterans' Affairs			85		250	2210			
Australian Customs Service	33					415			
Spectrum Management Agency					691				
Administrative Services	61	526	681		454				
Primary Industries & Energy	164	205	190	191	208				
Aust National Audit Office					93				
Australian Electoral Commission				528					
ACT Public Service			169						
Transport & Communication		43							

Source Various – see footnote⁴⁴

Over the last ten years retrenchment has become the major method of separation from the APS as shown in table 12. In 1989, 30% of women and 28% of men resigned and four percent of

women and twelve percent of men were retrenched, while in 1998, eleven percent of women and men resigned and 29% of women and 34% of men were retrenched.

Table 12 Separations of permanent staff by type of separation and gender, 1988-89 to 1997-98 as a percentage of total separations⁴⁵

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Women resignation	30	22	35	30	25	15	13	23	14	11
Women age retirement	2	2	3	5	5	4	3	3	2	1
Women retrenchment	4	1	4	6	10	11	20	13	31	29
Women mobility provisions	2	8	4	2	2	6	0	1	0	6
Women other	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1
Men resignation	28	21	25	22	18	19	19	22	13	11
Men age retirement	6	4	8	10	9	6	5	6	3	2
Men retrenchment	12	4	12	17	22	19	24	22	34	34
Men mobility provisions	10	34	4	2	2	4	1	4	0	4
Men other	4	3	3	4	5	4	3	4	2	1

Source: *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin 1997-98*, p. 59.

Table 13 shows retrenchments of APS staff by gender and age groups over the last ten years. The percentage of retrenchments of staff aged between 25 and 49 rose dramatically while retrenchments of younger and older staff declined.

Table 13 Retrenchments of gender and age group over ten years as a percentage of total retrenchments.

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Under 25 women	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
25-34 women	8	12	9	9	11	11	15	10	17	14
35 to 49 women	10	11	7	10	11	14	19	17	21	21
50 & over women	6	5	6	7	8	10	10	8	8	9
Under 25 men	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
25-34 men	7	11	7	10	7	7	7	7	8	9
35-49 men	28	35	36	28	30	29	27	31	26	26
50 & over men	39	24	33	34	31	26	21	25	18	19

Source: *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin 1997-98*, p. 62.

Table 14 shows retrenchments by length of service and gender over the last four years. Data in these categories are not available prior to 1994-95. In 1997-98 there was not a large

difference in the percentages of women and men who had up to 20 years service, but the percentage of women with 20 or more years service is considerably less than that of men. As separation of permanent staff is not categorised by age, it is not possible to ascertain the ages of retrenched staff with long service. A person who commenced work at the age of fifteen could have 30 years service and still be only 45 years old.

Table 14 Retrenchments by length of service and gender over 4 years as a percentage of total retrenchments⁴⁶

Length Service	1995	1996	1997	1998
Women				
Under 5 years	11.3	3.0	4.5	5.6
5 & under 10 years	12.8	10.5	13.2	13.2
10 & under 15 years	10.6	10.4	15.8	13.5
15 & under 20 years	6.5	6.2	7.8	7.2
20 & under 30 years	4.7	5.3	5.8	5.4
30 & over years	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.8
Men				
<i>Under 5 years</i>	<i>5.0</i>	<i>5.4</i>	<i>4.5</i>	<i>5.2</i>
<i>5 & under 10 years</i>	<i>12.0</i>	<i>14.3</i>	<i>9.6</i>	<i>13.2</i>
<i>10 & under 15 years</i>	<i>8.6</i>	<i>11.9</i>	<i>10.0</i>	<i>11.4</i>
<i>15 & under 20 years</i>	<i>8.1</i>	<i>8.0</i>	<i>7.3</i>	<i>6.0</i>
<i>20 & under 30 years</i>	<i>13.9</i>	<i>17.9</i>	<i>14.2</i>	<i>12.6</i>
<i>30 & over years</i>	<i>6.0</i>	<i>6.6</i>	<i>6.6</i>	<i>5.9</i>

Source: Various⁴⁷

Survey Data

Survey data was obtained from a convenience sample of former APS workers aged over 50 at retrenchment and, in most cases, it therefore not representative of the APS as a whole. Survey respondents are ethnically homogeneous, reflecting the APS data generally, where less than three percent of women and men were born in non-English speaking countries.⁴⁸

None of the survey respondents had less than five years of service and two of the married men had forty one or more years of service. Table 15 shows the length of service in ranges of

years and whether the service was broken. Length of service is a strongly related to gender and as redundancy pay outs and superannuation pensions or lump sums increase with length of service, on average the women surveyed were disadvantaged compared with male respondents. Broken service will be discussed in chapter 4.

Table 15 Survey respondents' length of service in range of years and whether service was broken, by numbers in gender groups

	5-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41 +	Service Broken
Non-married women	2	1	2	2	3				3
Married Women	1	3	1	1					3
Non-married men				2	1				0
Married men	1	1		4	1	10	5	2	5

Number respondents 44

Table 16 shows the numbers of the survey respondents in categories of non-married women, married women, non-married men and married men. Where there appears to be differences within gender groups, tables are categorised by marital status. The non-married category includes respondents who identified as single, divorced, in a defacto relationship and a same sex partnership. I decided against including the respondents in defacto and same sex partnerships in the married category as these relationships may not be recognised for superannuation benefits. There are three men in the non-married men category, with one

Table 16 Survey respondents by number in marital status category

Marital status	Number
Non-married women	10
Married Women	7
Non-married men	3
Married men	24
TOTAL	44

being single, one divorced and one in a defacto partnership. In the non-married women category, five stated they are single, four are divorced and one is in a same sex partnership.

Table 17 shows percentage of married and unmarried respondents. Married men comprise 54.6% of total respondents, compared with married women who comprise just under sixteen percent of the total. Marital status is not reported in the *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin*. In other studies of retrenched workers in the Canberra area a majority of respondents were married.⁴⁹

Table 17 Percentage of married and unmarried respondents

	Female %	Male %
Married	15.9	54.6
Unmarried	22.7	6.8

Number of respondents - 44

Table 18 reveals that similar percentages of women and men respondents have post secondary qualifications. They have a wide range of qualifications including accounting, business, commerce, management, education, nursing, science, engineering, economics, communications and welfare. The *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin* does not categorise APS staff by qualification, however, education attainment for the Australian Capital Territory is higher than the Australian average.⁵⁰

Table 18 Survey Respondents by gender and post secondary qualifications

	No. with post secondary qualifications	Percentage of gender group with Post-Secondary Qualifications
Women	13	76.5
Men	21	77.8

Number respondents 44

As would be expected from a convenience sample, most of the respondents were located in Canberra at redundancy, 39 in all. This convenience sample produced 46.5% senior staff located in Canberra, 4.7% elsewhere; 39.5% ASO and other staff in Canberra, 9.3% elsewhere. This does not accord with the APS figures, which are 8.3% senior staff in Canberra and 4.1% elsewhere; 25.4% ASO and other in Canberra, 62.2% elsewhere.⁵¹ This is not surprising, given the production of a convenience sample requested by newspaper advertisement only in Canberra.

Almost a quarter of both the women and the men accepted redundancy at the age of fifty. The oldest woman was 63 while two men were aged 62 at redundancy. The majority of the respondents were aged under sixty, and most of the respondents were 55 years old or under at redundancy (see table 19).

Table 19 Age of survey respondents at voluntary redundancy

	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63
Women	4	2	3	2	2	3	3							1
Men	6	1	2	3	2	5	2	2	1	1			2	

Number respondents 44

Table 20 shows the classification of survey respondents at voluntary redundancy.⁵² One male respondent did not provide a response to this question. Men were generally at higher

Table 20 Classification of survey respondents at voluntary redundancy

	ASO2	ASO5	ASO6	SOGC	SOGB	SOGA	SES	Other	No response
Non-married women	0	3	2	3	1	0	0	1	0
Married women	0	1	0	2	0	1	1	2	0
Non-married men	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Married men	0	1	3	2	5	0	4	8	1

Number respondents 44

classification than women. All except one non-married woman were between ASO5 and Senior Officer Grade B while the married women were in various classifications, including one Senior Officer Grade A and one in the Senior Executive Service.

Table 21 shows the classifications of women and men respondents as a percentage of the total respondents. The percentage of respondents in the Administrative Services Officer (ASO) classifications is much lower than that of ASO staff in the APS as a whole and for Senior Officers (SO) and Senior Executive Service (SES) staff the percentage is much higher. However this could be because of the higher classification levels of staff in Canberra generally and the high numbers of Canberra respondents in the survey.

Table 21 Classification by gender – percentage of total respondents

	ASO	SO	SES	Other	No response
Women	13.6	15.9	2.3	6.8	0
Men	13.6	15.9	9.1	20.5	2.3
Total	27.2	31.8	11.4	27.3	2.3

Number of respondents - 44

Conclusion

Very few of my survey respondents were from non-English speaking backgrounds and the majority had post-secondary qualifications. Approximately one quarter of both women and men who responded were aged 50 at redundancy and only three people were aged 60 or over. Both women and men were spread over a variety of classification levels, with most of the women at SOGC level and the majority of men at the higher SOGB and SES levels. This indicates that the men would gain more financially from their redundancy packages.

The greatest gender difference is in length of service, as 63% of men who responded had more than 30 years of service and none of the women had this length of service. As with classification level, length of service is a major indicator of the amount of the redundancy package and superannuation a respondent may receive. Another indicator is whether or not the APS service had been broken, with almost twice the percentage of women having broken service, mainly for childbirth and child rearing.

In the Australian Public Service the generous superannuation benefits are a factor in the acceptance of voluntary redundancy. However, Garth Mansfield points out that there is “little likelihood of a public service career spanning 30-40 years and retirement at the traditional age of 60 to 65”⁵³ and argues that “[n]o superannuation scheme for officers aims to let people retire to a life of idle wealth at 55”.⁵⁴ It is difficult to say how much income is required for a life of idle wealth, or even for retirement income. A recent newspaper feature suggests that “60 per cent of your current earnings represents a good yardstick”.⁵⁵ Using salaries quoted earlier, for an ASO2 this would be approximately \$18,000 per annum and for the lowest paid SES Band 3 it would be approximately \$57,000 per annum. A newspaper article suggests that the “average annual retirement income expectations of \$37,600” may be beyond the reach of many Australians if they do not increase their savings.⁵⁶ Considering that the top of the salary range for an ASO4 in June 1998 was \$37,341⁵⁷, and that many industrial awards are considerably less than this, a retirement income of \$37,600 per annum certainly is beyond the reach of most people. This suggests that many older workers who have taken voluntary redundancy will need to seek employment. This issue will be examined in chapter 5.

The next chapter examines the voluntary redundancy experience and resulting financial situations of survey respondents.

¹ Marian Sawyer (ed), *Removal of the Commonwealth Marriage Bar: a documentary history*, Centre for Research in Public Sector Management, University of Canberra, Canberra, 1996, p. 1.

² Desley Deacon, 'The Employment of Women in the Commonwealth Public Service: The Creation and Reproduction of a Dual Labour Market' in M. Simms (ed) *Australian Women and the Political System*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1984, p. 138.

³ Deacon, p. 140.

⁴ Deacon, p. 142.

⁵ Deacon, p. 149.

⁶ Sawyer, p. 1.

⁷ Sawyer, p. 12.

⁸ Sawyer, p. 1.

⁹ Sawyer, p. 13.

¹⁰ Sawyer, p. 13.

¹¹ Sawyer, pp. 24-36.

¹² Sawyer, p. 12.

¹³ Sawyer, p. 12.

¹⁴ Bettina Cass, 'Gender in Australia's restructuring labour market and welfare state' in Edwards and Magarey, p. 57.

¹⁵ Edna Ryan and Anne Conlon, *Gentle Invaders: Australian Women at Work*, Penguin Books Australia Ltd, Ringwood, Victoria, 1989, p. 162.

¹⁶ ABS, *Average Weekly Earnings 6302.0*, August 1998, p. 9.

¹⁷ Public Service and Merit Protection Commission (PSMPC), *Management of Excess Staff Situations in the APS. Principles, Guidelines, Good Practice*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1997, p. xiv.

¹⁸ PSMPC, 1997, p. xvii. Bold type is in the original document.

¹⁹ David Nason, 'Silver lining comes too late to lift Cobar out of pits', *The Weekend Australian*, September 19-20, 1998, p. 4. Also Anonymous, 'Sacked miners close to winning entitlements', *The Canberra Times*, September 15, 1998, p. 3 and Andrew Kazar, 'Redundant miners to gain from auction', *The Canberra Times*, October 10, 1998, p. 3, on retrenched workers from Woodlawn Mine in Goulburn.

²⁰ Public Service and Merit Protection Commission (PSMPC), *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin 1997-98*, Canberra, November 1998, p. 1.

²¹ Australian National Audit Office (ANAO), *Staff Reductions in the Australian Public Service*, Canberra, 1999, p. 17. For example staff in the Civil Aviation Authority, ACT Government and Employment National are no longer covered under the *Public Service Act 1922*.

²² The Hon. Peter Reith MP, *Towards a best practice Australian Public Service*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1996, p. v.

²³ Reith, p. v.

²⁴ ABS, *Labour Force 6203.0*, December 1998, p.6.

²⁵ ABS, p. 7.

²⁶ PMSPC, 1998, p. 5.

²⁷ PMSPC, 1998, p. 5.

²⁸ PMSPC, 1998, p. 64.

²⁹ ANAO, 1999, p. 32.

³⁰ PMSPC, 1998, p.26.

³¹ PMSPC, 1998, p. 5.

³² PMSPC, 1998, p.48

³³ ABS *Labour Force 6203.0*, December 1998, p. 26.

³⁴ PMSPC, 1998, p. 14; PSMPC, *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin 1996-97*, Canberra, 1997, p. 14; Department of Finance, *APS Statistical Bulletin 1995-96*, Canberra, 1996, p. 24; Department of Finance, *APS Statistical Bulletin 1994-95*, Canberra, 1995, p. 23; Department of Finance, *Australian Public Service Statistical*

Bulletin 1993-94, Canberra, 1994, pp. 33-35; Department of Finance, *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin 1992-93*, Canberra, 1993, pp. 21-23; Department of Finance, *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin 1991-92*, Canberra 1992, pp. 26-28; Department of Finance, *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin B 1990-91*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991, pp. 4-6; Department of Finance, *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin B 1989-90*, Commonwealth Government Printer, Canberra, 1990, pp. 4-6; Department of Finance, *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin B 1988-89*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1990, pp. 4-6.

³⁵ Temporary overseas locally engaged staff are not included.

³⁶ PMSPC, 1998, p. 30.

³⁷ *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette No. PS24, 18 June, 1998*. 'Other' classifications in this example include Technical Officers, Professional Officers, Public Affairs Officers, Information Technology Officers, General Services Officers, Customs Officers and Research Scientists.

³⁸ Note: There was no category for SO in 1989 and 1990. PMSPC, 1998, pp. 27-29; PSMPC, *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin 1996-97*, Canberra, 1997, pp. 27-29; Department of Finance, 1996, pp. 40-42; Department of Finance, 1995, pp. 40-42; Department of Finance, 1994, pp. 55-57; Department of Finance, 1993, pp. 43-45; Department of Finance, 1992, pp. 47-49; Department of Finance, 1991, pp. 45-47; Department of Finance, 1990, pp. 45-47.

³⁹ 'Other' includes a variety of categories such as Cadet, Customs Officer, General Service Officer, Graduate Administrative Assistant, Information Technology Officer, Legal Officer, Medical Officer, Nurse, Professional Officer, Protective Services Officer, Public Affairs Officer, Research Officer, Schools Assistant, Stores Supervisor, Technical Officer, Valuer, Veterinary Officer and not elsewhere classified.

⁴⁰ Note: Senior Officers (SO) were not recorded in 1989 and 1990. PMSPC, 1998, p. 64; PSMPC, *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin 1996-97*, Canberra, 1997, p. 64; Department of Finance, 1996, p. 79; Department of Finance, 1995, p. 79; Department of Finance, 1994, p. 102; Department of Finance, 1993, p. 90; Department of Finance, 1992, p. 96; Department of Finance, 1991, p. 86; Department of Finance, 1990, p. 91.

⁴¹ There was no category for retrenchments in 1988-89.

⁴² PMSPC, 1998, p. 63.

⁴³ Categories of separation include resignation, age retirement, retrenchment, invalidity retirement, termination of appointment, mobility provisions, death and other (*Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin 1997-98*, p. 63.)

⁴⁴ Note: there was no category for retrenchment in 1989. Some of these agencies are no longer under the Public Service Act, no longer exist, or may exist in other forms. PMSPC, 1998, p. 30; PSMPC, *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin 1996-97*, Canberra, 1997, p. 63; Department of Finance, 1996, p. 78; Department of Finance, 1995, p. 78; Department of Finance, 1994, p. 107; Department of Finance, 1993, p. 95; Department of Finance, 1992, p. 101; Department of Finance, 1991, p. 91; Department of Finance, 1990, p. 96.

⁴⁵ Note: In this table 'other' included invalidity, termination, death and other (undefined). The term 'Mobility provisions' is not defined but appears to refer to inter-departmental or inter-agency transfers.

⁴⁶ Note: figures not available prior to 1995.

⁴⁷ PMSPC, 1998, p. 65; PSMPC, *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin 1996-97*, Canberra, 1997, p. 65; Department of Finance, 1996, p. 80; Department of Finance, 1995, p. 80.

⁴⁸ PMSPC, 1998, p. 70.

⁴⁹ Irene Krauss, 'Voluntary Redundancy from the Australian Public Service – The Impact on People and Families in the ACT', Discussion Paper No. 56, Public Policy Program, Australian National University, Canberra, 1998, p.15; Belconnen Employment Solutions Taskforce (BEST), *Our Neglected Resource: A Canberra Challenge*, Canberra, 1998, p. 9.

⁵⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian Social Trends 4102.0, 1998*, Ausinfo, Canberra, 1998, p. 75. Education attainment of a degree or higher for ACT in 1997 was 26.7% of the population, compared with 13.6% for Australia. 50.3% of ACT residents aged 15 to 64 had post-school qualifications.

⁵¹ PMSPC, 1998, p. 44.

⁵² The classification categories are as follows: Tech includes Technical and Information Technology Officers; Prof = Professional Officers such as engineering and scientific staff; ASO categories are Administrative Services Officers with the lowest level ASO1 and the highest ASO6; SOG categories are Senior Officers Grade C, B or A, with C the lowest level and A the highest; SES = Senior Executive Service; Other includes categories applicable to the ACT Government and ANU.

⁵³ Garth Mansfield, *Financial Planning for APS Staff*, Public Service and Merit Protection Commission, Canberra, 1998, p. 1.

⁵⁴ Mansfield, p. 10.

⁵⁵ Stephen O'Brien, 'Personal Finance', *The Australian Magazine*, June 5-6, 1999, p. 48.

⁵⁶ Andrew Hobbs, 'Retirement-savings time bomb ticking away for middle-Australians: manager', *The Canberra Times*, January 22, 1999, p. 19.

⁵⁷ *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette No. PS24, 18 June, 1998*, pp.2540-2588.

CHAPTER 4: THE VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY EXPERIENCE

Retrenchments in the Australian Public Service “have generally been voluntary, and award-based, with attractive benefits for the staff member”.¹ In this chapter the terms ‘separation’, ‘retrenched’, ‘took voluntary redundancy’ or ‘accepted voluntary redundancy’ all refer to “retrenchment, where the agency or the APS as employer chooses to reduce staff numbers.”²

Table 22 shows that most respondents to this survey took voluntary redundancy between 1995 and 1998. Of the respondents retrenched prior to 1992, the woman was employed in a technical capacity while the men were in clerical or senior positions.

Table 22 Numbers of women and men respondents and year of voluntary redundancy

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Women				1						1	5	6	4
Men	1		1	2			1	1	2	5	6	4	4

Number respondents 44

Table 23 shows the main reasons given by respondents for joining the APS. Respondents were given a list of words or terms to select from and were also able to provide other reasons. Apart from money and travel there was little gender difference, with career and security chosen by most respondents as their main reasons.

Ailsa, a single woman, joined the APS because she wanted to go overseas with foreign affairs, and says she did not start her career until midway through her service because she got RSI (repetition strain injury) and knew she wouldn't get employed anywhere else.³ Although the issue of a career versus a job was not canvassed in the questionnaire, women

and men had reasons other than career for joining the APS and, like Ailsa, may not have seriously sought promotion and a career until much later in their service.

In contrast to Ailsa, Ian made a deliberate decision to join the APS. He had already worked for ten years in the private sector before becoming a student with the Australian National University. He joined the APS for security as he was married with a child, and the APS offered a stable income and the opportunity to use his economics degree to develop new policies and programmes in his chosen area. He was also able to obtain a house in Canberra.⁴

Table 23 Main reasons for joining the Australian Public Service as a percentage of gender group

	Career	Security	Money	Training Provided	Travel	Relevant to skills	Convenient
Women as a % of total of 17 female respondents	47	41	24	12	24	6	6
Men as a % of total of 27 male respondents	52	44	15	19	7	11	11

Number 44 – total sums to more than 44 as respondents could enter more than one choice

Table 24 shows the main reasons respondents gave for being in the Australian Public Service prior to voluntary redundancy. Respondents were given a list of words or terms to select from and were also able to provide other reasons. Thirty one of the forty four respondents chose career and security as the main reasons they were in the APS, the same reasons most respondents gave for joining the APS.

Maggie joined the APS in 1973 and stayed because she enjoyed the work. She moved around several departments and felt that the service gave her “a lot”.⁵ Ian also moved around within the APS and felt that he was able to contribute to society by doing “things developmentally in the policy areas and programming”.⁶ The interviewees all remarked

on the relationships with the people they worked with and the satisfaction they obtained from their jobs.

Table 24 Main reasons for being in APS prior to voluntary redundancy as a percentage of gender group

	Career	Security	Money	It's a Job	Support Family	Location	Leave Provisions	Power
Women as % of total of 17 female respondents	59	65	53	59	18	18	29	6
Men as % of total of 27 male respondents	78	74	44	37	44	44	7	11

Number 44 – total sums to more than 44 as respondents could enter more than one choice

Table 25 shows the main reasons respondents gave for taking voluntary redundancy. In the APS there is an element of choice in taking or accepting voluntary redundancy even when a department is downsizing.⁷ Respondents were given a list of words or phrases to select from and could also include other reasons. They were also asked in separate

Table 25 Main reasons for taking voluntary redundancy as a percentage of gender group

Reasons for taking voluntary redundancy	Women as % of total of 17 female respondents	Men as % of total of 27 male respondents
Freedom	59	29
Lifestyle	53	37
Health	47	33
Office politics	29	56
Too many changes	29	44
Leisure activities	29	22
Travel	24	7
Management practices	18	15
Pursue other employment	12	30
No job satisfaction	12	11
No prospects	12	11
Set up own business	6	22
Seek rewarding career	6	15
Financial, ie mortgage	6	15
Department downsizing	6	11

Number 44 – total sums to more than 44 as respondents could enter more than one choice

questions to elaborate on their choices and whether their own or others' health were factors in the decision to take voluntary redundancy. There are significant gender differences in the reasons given, with women making lifestyle choices and men feeling pushed out by the nature of the work in the APS but taking the option of going to other work or self employment.

The reason chosen by most respondents, twenty of the forty-four, was office politics. A woman commented: "Office politics were HORRIBLE! I felt it was better to get out with my sanity intact than hold out for retraining and better package that were promised later."⁸ Four respondents felt they were forced to leave and six could no longer tolerate work practices. There was a financial incentive for four respondents, while two did not wish to leave for financial reasons. There were both similar and contrasting reasons for various age groups and within gender groups.

Both male and female respondents commented on poor management practices. Comments from four men indicated that they felt victimised. "Pushed out by administrative manipulation on like-to-like mapping exercise. I was pushed out by careful alleged intervention of remotely located manager."⁹ This man was in a department which matched some staff to jobs and the remaining staff had to apply for any vacant positions. He felt that a manager located in the head office intervened in the selection processes. Women had a different view of poor management practices:

Escape from an organisation which viewed loyal, skilled, conscientious staff as expendable. I could not come to terms with the way 'management' announced and handled the redundancy process – axing good staff and retaining deadwood. The pain from people was tangible – so insulting.¹⁰

A single woman “found ethical practices and values had changed to such an extent, they clashed with my own. My emotional and mental health triggered the decision to take voluntary redundancy. This was impacting on all aspects of my life and commitments.”¹¹

Comments from two of the older respondents give different views of their redundancy. “Being made redundant increased my pension entitlement quite considerably”¹² from a man aged 62 at redundancy. In contrast a woman aged 63 at redundancy says: “VR was actually involuntary – my position was removed as part of the reorganisation and about 40 out of 160 positions went.”¹³ But there is no clear picture that men seized the opportunity of redundancy and women were forced out. One of the male respondents pursued voluntary redundancy¹⁴ while another “saw the offer of a VR as being, in effect, a statement that I was no longer wanted”.¹⁵ Two fifty year old women¹⁶ had negative feelings about their redundancies while, in contrast, another fifty year woman stated she “had planned to seek a more caring rewarding career at 55 and the offer just came earlier”.¹⁷

A divorced woman aged 56 at redundancy stated that she “had always planned to work until I was 60 if possible because that would have put me in an acceptable financial position for the remainder of my life”.¹⁸ A married woman of the same age was planning to retire in the following year¹⁹ while another married woman aged 54 was advised by financial advisers to take voluntary redundancy as she “could be financially better off”.²⁰ A married man aged 55 stated that “terms of retrenchment made retirement affordable”,²¹ a view also held by a 56 year old married man who stated that if he had “continued four years to 60, the extra remuneration would have amounted to about \$1 hour”.²² A 53 year old married man “decided to try something different before I got older”.²³

Health was a factor in the decision to take voluntary redundancy for seventeen respondents. A married man “began experiencing weird symptoms – all psychosomatic but physically very real and unsettling, if not terrifying at times. Chest pains, asthmatic onset, agoraphobia, and finally.... It was the onset of migraines (never had them before) that vanished when I left work”.²⁴ Another married man “had an RSI problem, unresolved. I was forced to use sick leave for a work-related injury”.²⁵ A single woman who was working in another country “was medivacced ... with severe illness. Had approximately twelve months sick leave.”²⁶

Other major reasons were lifestyle, freedom and too many changes in the APS. Married women wanted to be able “to do things for me”²⁷ or have “more freedom to pursue other activities, particularly my part time [small business], sports and to be able to see more of my children and grandchildren”.²⁸ A single woman “realised I could afford to make a life style change while still being reasonably financially secure”.²⁹ A married man stated that he was offered a voluntary redundancy package, “the children were off our hands, wife was working part time, package was OK”.³⁰ Another married man felt that his job “did not have the same responsibilities and challenges any more. Policy decisions were being taken at a high level without consulting those with knowledge of the programs. I did not enjoy work as much as I used to”.³¹ A single woman realised that she “could afford to go – and I wanted to as the job had changed and the satisfaction gone”.³² A divorced woman suffered severe stress which “was compounded by continual restructuring in the Department, constant changes, low staff morale, increasing workloads, etc. The voluntary redundancy was therefore a life saver for me”.³³

Three married men saw the offer of a voluntary redundancy package as an opportunity. “I saw an opportunity to provide outsourced services to the public service in a business which I controlled, was financially rewarding, a challenge and something I had wanted to do for a while.”³⁴ Another “wanted to pursue my interest in art, cabinet making and support my son, who has developmental difficulties”.³⁵ The third man “decided to leave rather than go back to repetitive policy work. My income would not be greatly different (net after tax and without paying super).”³⁶

Only three respondents (7%) gave department downsizing as a reason for taking voluntary redundancy. This may not be a surprising omission considering that staff could opt for redeployment instead of voluntary redundancy and the fact that some respondents actively sought redundancy. If an excess staff member opted for redeployment, they were placed on a list of unallocated staff and had to apply for job swaps or for any vacancies advertised within the APS. If they could not obtain a position within the redeployment period, they had to separate from the APS without the voluntary redundancy package.³⁷

Respondents were asked if they felt that they were somewhat coerced into accepting voluntary redundancy and to provide an explanation for their feelings. Table 26 shows the

Table 26 Were respondents coerced into taking voluntary redundancy as a percentage of gender group

	Yes	No	Unsure	No answer	Requested voluntary redundancy
Women as a % of total of 17 female respondents	18	47		6	29
Men as a % of total of 27 male respondents	23	48	7	7	15
As a percentage of total of 44 respondents	21	48	4	6	21

Number respondents 44

responses to this question. Nine respondents felt they were coerced and gave a variety of reasons. Basically there were no gender differences apart from a higher percentage of women requesting voluntary redundancy.

One married man felt that his female superior coerced him, by the “constant sniping from women to me, the only man” and by the anti-migrant atmosphere that started in 1993.³⁸ Another married man stated that there was conflict with his superior who tried to block his advancement.³⁹ Two married men felt that they were coerced to the extent that there was really no viable or attractive alternative,⁴⁰ one commenting that it was a relief to leave.⁴¹ Another married man was given no work to do and was moved to an office full of smokers, even though he was an anti-smoking campaigner.⁴² A divorced man stated the senior management had lost confidence in him and that he “no longer had a career, as they did not want me to stay”.⁴³ He felt that he “was being sacked” and “took it as meaning he could “go with some honour” by taking voluntary redundancy.

The two single women felt that their age was a factor in their retrenchment. “I was working in a team which was split between two organisations. Men and women under 35 were offered the attractive jobs —the rest of us were offered mind numbing positions with inadequate resources to do anything meaningful.”⁴⁴ The other single woman said that positions at her level had been “downgraded or totally abolished” and that she “was declared unfit for overseas service and had also turned 50.”⁴⁵ A divorced woman felt that she was coerced and that “I could have resisted but this would merely have drawn out the whole process as it followed the legalities of attempting to be placed elsewhere in the [organisation] when the whole [organisation] was undergoing similar cuts”.⁴⁶

Two married men were unsure whether or not they were coerced. One stated that he had a choice – “VR or be put on the unallocated list with separation in twelve months”⁴⁷ while the other man thought that he may have been coerced: “Initial reaction to possibility was to fight for any position. With passing of time, VR became an only option”.⁴⁸

Nine respondents (approximately 20%) stated that they requested redundancy. One married man who took voluntary redundancy in 1992 actively pursued it “when getting one was still an achievement”. “I first asked for one a year before my campaign bore fruit. I felt, and still believe, my staff was being required to work too long and hard to satisfy political whims (Ministers through to Deputy Secretaries). I actively resisted many such proposals.”⁴⁹ Another married man also indicated he wanted voluntary redundancy and then had to wait for an opportunity. He also attempted some job swaps.⁵⁰ Job swaps are an option for people who want redundancy but who are not in departments that are downsizing. Similarly people under threat of retrenchment because their departments are downsizing can try to swap with people in secure departments who want a voluntary redundancy package. They can try to find someone at the same level and with similar skills to swap jobs. A married woman who sought voluntary redundancy stated that as she “worked in a specialist area it took me eight months to find a match, who had similar skills and years of service and who would be accepted by my department.”⁵¹

Two respondents requested assistance from the union when their departments tried to make them resign, rather than offering them voluntary redundancy. A married woman was refused voluntary redundancy because she had received a job offer from another Department. She “had to seek union assistance to gain a VR”.⁵² A married man had

previously indicated to his department that he would accept voluntary redundancy but was “rejected on three occasions as ‘I was too valuable’”.⁵³

At the end it was to some extent the reverse as I had to get the Union in to force the department to give me a VR rather than having to resign (which the new department Branch Head insisted on, despite my earlier offers to accept a VR having been rejected and the department now not being able to tell me what job they had for me when my overseas stint expired).⁵⁴

A married woman made “a spur of the moment decision. I had suggested that I reduce my hours to a four-day week to assist the Division to reduce its budget. When this request was rejected I applied for voluntary redundancy.”⁵⁵ Other women had indicated earlier that they would consider the option of voluntary redundancy with one stating that she “was very insistent re the VR”.⁵⁶ A married man who was aged 59 at redundancy stated that he “had a very small team and I considered the functions would be best served if it was outsourced. I proposed it and it was eventually accepted. As I planned to retire when I turned 60 I had no regrets”.⁵⁷

Table 27 shows the range of redundancy pay outs, excluding superannuation, by gender groups.⁵⁸ A married woman received the lowest range of \$10,000 to \$20,000 while six married men received the highest range of \$100,000 or more. None of the women received more than \$80,000 while 44% of men received over this amount.

Table 27 Amount of redundancy pay out – range in thousands of dollars as numbers and by percentage of gender group

	10-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	70-80	80-90	90-100	100+
Non-married women		2	1	2	3	2				
Married women	1	1	1		2	1	1			
Non-married men				1		1			1	
Married men		1	2	3	3	2	2	2	3	6
Women as a % of total of 17 female respondents	6	18	12	12	28	18	6			
Men as a % of total of 27 male respondents		4	7	15	11	11	7	7	15	23

Number respondents 44

Respondents were asked how they used the money from their redundancy pay out. Table 28 shows the responses given by gender groups. Eighteen respondents paid out their mortgages while three used the money for home improvements. Two non-married women and one non-married man used their redundancy pay out for living expenses while seeking work or resting before seeking work.

Two non-married women, one married woman and one non-married man contributed money to their children, but none of the married men did this. Maggie gave part of her voluntary redundancy pay out to her children to assist with the purchase of their first homes. Her situation was different from the other women in the survey, as her husband had taken a package a few years previously. They both took a mixture of lump sum and indexed pension and rolled their lump sums into a personal superannuation fund. Maggie has withdrawn from the paid workforce and her husband has a consulting business.⁵⁹

Two non-married women and two married men paid off debts while two non-married women and five married men bought cars. Seven respondents used the money for holidays and one married man has not used the money at all. One man used the money to assist his partner and three women and three married men used the money for self employment. Only one respondent, a married woman, did not provide an answer to this question.

The majority of respondents put the money into superannuation, savings, investments or annuities. Ian, a married man, paid off his mortgage and bought a new vehicle, then put the remainder into a rollover with his lump sum.⁶⁰ Ailsa, a single woman, bought a new car and house where she will retire, but which is rented in the meantime.⁶¹ Joan, a

divorced woman, invested her small voluntary redundancy pay out and was living comfortably on two small superannuation pensions and income from her investment before the investment failed, leaving her in a precarious financial situation. There is currently a class action against the financial adviser involved in her investment but Joan is again working, at the age of 65, to pay her debts.⁶²

Table 28 How respondents spent redundancy pay out as numbers and as percentage of gender group

	Mortgage	Debt	Super, savings, etc	Annuity	Self emp't	House	Car	Holiday	Live Off	Contribution to children	Assist Partner	Haven't used	No answer
Non-married women	6	2	5		1		2	1	2	2			
Married women	1		1	2	2			1		1			1
Non-married men	2		1					1	1	1	1		
Married men	9	2	13		3	3	5	4				1	
Women as a % of total of 17 female resp'nts	41	12	35	11	18		12	12	12	18			6
Men as a % of total of 27 male resp'nts	41	7	52		11	11	19	19	4	4	4	4	

Number 44 – total sums to more than 44 as respondents could enter more than one choice

As shown in Table 29, the majority (68%) of respondents would have continued in the APS if voluntary redundancy were not an option and only two married men would not have continued. Eight married men and four women were unsure if they would have continued. Respondents were asked to give an explanation for their answer and most felt that they would have continued for financial reasons, particularly to improve their superannuation pensions. Some felt that the offer of voluntary redundancy was too good an offer to refuse or were planning to retire or considering resignation in any case. One married man stated that his pension would be less if he retired younger than age 65 and that he “was trying to hang on for a better pension, but couldn’t have lasted much longer.”⁶³ A married woman would have remained in the APS⁶⁴ to try to increase her pension “as I ended up with a very small pension due to broken service”.

Two women and two men mentioned health in response to this question. A single woman who was unsure if should would have continued because of health problems provided details on conditions in the department:

Dependent on health. But felt disappointed that it appeared my career had finished without appreciation. Morale was dreadful. No one felt secure, wondering if and when the axe would fall! Officers returning from overseas (after their positions had been abolished) found no position available in [the department]. Officers had to apply and compete against fellow officers. Placements had been handed over to individual divisions and evolved into a full selection process.⁶⁵

Table 29 Would respondents have continued in APS as percentage of gender group?

	Yes	No	Unsure
Women as a % of total of 17 female respondents	77	0	23
Men as a % of total of 27 male respondents	63	7	30
Total as a % of total respondents	68	5	27

Number respondents 44

Conclusion (voluntary redundancy)

Most retrenchments (48%) in the survey group took place in 1996 and 1997. The major gender differences were in the reasons respondents gave for taking voluntary redundancy. Freedom was the main reason given by women for accepting voluntary redundancy while men chose office politics as their main reason. One fifth of the respondents felt they were coerced into taking voluntary redundancy while the same number requested a voluntary redundancy package. Women were more likely to request voluntary redundancy than men.

There was a wide gender difference in the voluntary redundancy pay out, with no women receiving over \$80,000 while 45% of men received over this amount.⁶⁶ Broken service had an obvious impact on redundancy pay out, particularly for some women respondents.

Approximately 41% of both women and men used their voluntary redundancy pay out to pay off a mortgage. There were differences based on marital status, with 60% of non-married women paying off a mortgage, compared with only 14% of married women.

When asked if they would have continued in the APS if voluntary redundancy was not an option, the majority of respondents indicated they would, with only two stating they would not, while twelve were unsure. Married men were least likely to have continued and more of them were unsure.

Superannuation

In 1990-1991 and 1996 Commonwealth public servants were given the choice of remaining in the Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme (CSS) which was closed off to new entrants, or transferring to a new scheme, the Public Sector Superannuation Scheme (PSS).⁶⁷ APS staff who were transferred to the ACT Government Service remained under the CSS or PSS schemes while those who worked for the Australian National University were covered under SSAU. All respondents made compulsory contributions to a superannuation scheme and most respondents contributed to CSS.

Some respondents commented on the generosity of APS superannuation schemes and two married men who had considered resigning commented that the superannuation benefits made the decision to take voluntary redundancy easier.⁶⁸ Another married man stated that he felt "the CSS was a generous scheme which compensated for lower salaries than the private sector. The VR arrangements protected my access to the full benefits".⁶⁹

The CSS scheme is particularly generous to some contributors who resign or are retrenched before they turn 55:

Programmers generally get promoted quickly and level off early hence their equity in the CSS is higher than average. After 55 one cannot take advantage of this unless one is made redundant – this ‘quirk’ in the system was much to my advantage.⁷⁰

Only one respondent, a woman, commented specifically on the PSS scheme. “The PSS scheme gave me a pension I can survive on until I die and it is indexed.”⁷¹ On the subject of indexation, the woman with the highest superannuation pension and lump sum stated that “indexation of pension arrangements (using CPI) may mean a relative reduction of income over time”.⁷² The pension is indexed to the Consumer Price Index.

Two married men commented on their lack of access to Centrelink benefits.⁷³ “I have provided for my retirement (financially) but have no access to DSS benefits, ie concessions, fares, medical, pharmaceutical.”⁷⁴

A woman and a man were very positive about the superannuation schemes. “In retrospect I can see that the CSS, PSS, SSAU and other industry schemes are particularly generous and yet not appreciated by members who regard government subsidy as a right.”⁷⁵

The pension has allowed me to sacrifice the maximum allowable from my salary and build another super lump sum. I still occasionally pinch myself that I got the indexed pension I did at [voluntary redundancy]. Not quite parliamentary class, but way ahead of most private enterprise schemes.⁷⁶

Two men felt that taking voluntary redundancy was like winning the lottery: “I had vaguely considered going private many years before, but felt financial security for my (then) young family was more important. The opportunity and its timing were perfect – like winning the lottery.”⁷⁷ The other man commented:

I know a few dozen people who have taken VRs. They are at all ages and APS levels and from various departments. My impression is that every one of them regards themselves as having won a kind of lottery, a commentary on APS conditions and the generosity of VRs.⁷⁸

Respondents were asked if they considered that they were disadvantaged by the superannuation system. Seven respondents, two women and five men, considered they were disadvantaged and provided explanations which mainly related to structural factors. Broken service, which is discussed later in this chapter, was mentioned by two women.

Two of the married men⁷⁹ mentioned lack of access to Centrelink (DSS) benefits as disadvantages while another felt that “pension arrangements are meagre, they could be pitched 10-15% higher of final salary to make lifestyle more pleasant. (Like politicians’ benefits!).”⁸⁰ A non-married woman commented “Taxed on payment and withdrawal. Unable to access until 55 except as tax disadvantage.”⁸¹ Two men stated they did not have the opportunity to get financial advice at the time of their redundancy and felt they had been disadvantaged by this.⁸²

Superannuation can be accessed in different ways which will be examined later, but generally the amount received from the scheme depends on the amount contributed and the length of service. The CSS scheme generally allows recipients to take a lump sum and pension mix while the PSS generally allows for a lump sum or a mixture of lump sum and pension or 100% pension. Table 30 shows how the respondents to this survey took their superannuation payments. Respondents were asked to choose one method from a list, including ‘other’ and to provide an explanation if they chose ‘other’.

More than half of the men took a lump sum and pension mix, with annual pensions ranging from \$15,000-\$20,000 to \$40,000+. Most of the women took either a pension or a mixture of lump sum and pension, but almost all women received an annual pension under \$25,000. Only one woman had a higher pension, at \$29,000 per annum. The three

women interviewed all took indexed pensions. Ailsa took a mixture of lump sum and pension and rolled the lump sum over. She took a pension because she wanted to be sure she had some income and knew that, although it was not much, it was enough to live on. “I could survive on it if I had to. And I knew having a small amount of money coming in would give me freedom about what I did do.”⁸³

Ian had almost a year to consider taking voluntary redundancy and deliberately moved from the CSS to PSS so that he could take a lump sum. He wanted to control his own superannuation and feels that “the vagaries of virtual annual changes of superannuation arrangements by the government have become a very bad joke”.⁸⁴ Ian eventually invested most of his superannuation and hopes this will produce a good income.

Table 30 How respondents took superannuation as percentage of gender groups

	Lump Sum	Pension	Lump Sum & Pension Mix	Rolled Over	Preserved	Pension & Rolled Over	Lump, Pension & Rolled Over	Lump Sum & Rolled Over	No answer
Women as a % of total of 17 female respondents	12	23	29		18	12	6		
Men as a % of total of 27 male respondents	4	11	55	15	7			4	4

Number respondents 44

Respondents were asked what type of payment they chose for their superannuation and were also asked to select the amount from a range for the appropriate type. Table 31 shows the ranges of the amount of superannuation received by each group and the way superannuation was accessed. None of the non-married women group reported taking their superannuation payment as a lump sum. This could be because they need a regular income and the superannuation pension provides an indexed pension for life. The lump

sum range for married women was less than that of non-married men and considerably less than that of married men. The married man who took a lump sum rolled this over to access at a later date. No non-married men reported taking a pension only and all women who accessed their superannuation as a pension received less than the married men.

The married men had the largest range, with lump sums ranging from \$30,000 to \$350,000 and pensions ranging from \$12,000 to \$40,000 per annum. Of the women who had broken service for childbirth and child rearing, the two women who had only six years of service received annual pensions under \$5,000 compared with the woman with thirteen years of service who took a pension in the range of \$20,000 to \$25,000 and a lump sum in the range of \$80,000 to \$90,000. The women with 28 years of service took a pension of \$29,000 and a lump sum of \$120,000. Women were more likely to choose a pension or lump sum and pension than a lump sum only, indicating a need for a secure income.

Table 31 Amount of superannuation received (range) by gender groups

	Lump sum	Pension per annum	Lump Sum part of mixture with pension	Pension part of mixture with lump sum
Non-married women		Under \$5,000 to \$20,000	\$50,000 to \$100,000	\$10,000 to \$25,000
Married women	\$50,000 to \$100,000	Under \$5,000 to \$20,000	\$100,000 to \$120,000	\$20,000 to \$29,000
Non-married men	\$150,000 to \$200,000		\$130,000	\$35,000
Married men	\$200,000 to \$250,000	\$20,000 to \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$350,000	\$12,000 to \$40,000+

Number respondents 44

Two of the three women who felt disadvantaged by the superannuation system mentioned broken service: "System does not suit women who have to break service for family reasons, but otherwise it seemed to be good".⁸⁵ A divorced woman who worked for an organisation that retrenched large numbers of women gave the following explanation: "As

I have moved from state to state and for family reasons I kept on losing my super. I lost it nine times before the government brought in a system that allowed it to be transferred to other systems".⁸⁶

Table 32 shows whether respondents had broken their service in the APS, clearly indicating a higher proportion of women had broken service. Of the eleven respondents who stated they had broken service, five were married men, three of whom had short periods of broken service as leave without pay, with the service still being counted for long service leave purposes.⁸⁷ Two married men had longer periods of broken service, one for seven years,⁸⁸ with no reason given, and another for three years for family reasons.⁸⁹ Four of the six women left the APS for childbirth and child rearing⁹⁰ while one left for two years to accompany her spouse overseas⁹¹ and one single woman had ten months leave without pay to study.⁹²

Table 32 Did respondents have broken service by number and gender group?

	Yes	No
Female	6	11
Male	5	22

Number of respondents: 44

Maggie took leave without pay for two years to accompany her husband on a overseas posting but continued to pay into the superannuation scheme and was able to have the leave counted as service. She also paid ten percent of her salary into the fund for a number of years and benefited from this when she chose to take a mixture of lump sum and pension. Maggie had to resign from the job she held before she joined the APS and was not able to transfer her superannuation to her new job.⁹³

The women who broke their APS service for childbirth and child rearing stated varying lengths of service ranging from six years to 28 years. A married woman had two breaks in her service and had three short periods in the APS of five, four and six years. A divorced woman had two longer periods of ten and thirteen years.

For some women with broken service, length of service had an obvious impact on redundancy pay outs, with the two women with six years of service reporting receiving between \$10,000 and \$20,000 and \$20,000 and \$30,000 compared with \$50,000 to \$60,000 for the woman with thirteen years service and \$70,000 to \$80,000 for the woman with 28 years. The women with only six years of service each also had much lower superannuation pensions with both receiving under \$5,000 per annum.

Conclusion

Some respondents commented on the generosity of the superannuation scheme, particularly the Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme (CSS) but seven of the 44 respondents, three women and four men, felt they were disadvantaged by the superannuation system. They mostly identified structural factors in super scheme rather than the level of pay out. Most men (55%) took their superannuation as a mixture of lump sum and pension, compared with 29% of women, and there were differences within the gender groups in the way respondents accessed superannuation.

Married men reported the largest range of annual income from a pension whether they accessed superannuation as a pension only or as a mixture of lump sum and pension. Married men also reported the largest range of lump sum payment whether as part of a mixture of pension and lump sum or lump sum only. Married and non-married women had the lowest income range from accessing superannuation solely as an annual pension

and non-married women had the lowest range of pension when accessing superannuation as a mixture of lump sum and pension. This shows women's disadvantage in the superannuation system.

Ironically the woman with the highest superannuation and lump sum mixture broke her service for five years in the 1970s. From her years of service I have to assume that she was able to count her prior service for superannuation purposes. Her financial situation is in stark contrast to the woman who lost her superannuation nine times.

The next chapter examines the respondents' lives after voluntary redundancy, particularly in relation to seeking work.

¹ Julie Bozza and Peter Wild, *Leaving the APS: Resignations, Retirements and Retrenchments, Working Paper, June 1994*, Department of Finance, Canberra, 1994, p. 4.

² Bozza and Wild, p. 4.

³ Interview with Ailsa, 9 June, 1999.

⁴ Interview with Ian, 10 June, 1999.

⁵ Interview with Maggie, 16 June, 1999.

⁶ Ian.

⁷ Public Service and Merit Protection Commission (PSMPC), *Management of Excess Staff Situations in the APS*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1996, p. xvii – "An employee who is declared excess and seeks redeployment or who has rejected a formal offer of voluntary retrenchment **must** immediately be referred ... for redeployment assistance."

⁸ Kay.

⁹ Simon.

¹⁰ Nell.

¹¹ Peg.

¹² Colin.

¹³ Joan.

¹⁴ John.

¹⁵ Ernest.

¹⁶ Karen and Kate.

¹⁷ Judy.

¹⁸ Dana.

¹⁹ Jo.

²⁰ Ellen.

²¹ Bill.

²² Vern.

²³ Ray.

²⁴ Fred.

²⁵ David.

²⁶ Karen.

²⁷ Maggie.

²⁸ Roslyn.

²⁹ Marie.

³⁰ Luke.

³¹ Rick.

³² Jan.

³³ Dana

³⁴ Patrick.

³⁵ Don.

³⁶ Rick.

³⁷ PSMPC, p. xix.

³⁸ Fred.

³⁹ Mal.

⁴⁰ Ray and Russ.

⁴¹ Russ.

⁴² David.

⁴³ Ernest

⁴⁴ Ailsa.

⁴⁵ Karen.

⁴⁶ Joan.

⁴⁷ Ben.

⁴⁸ Simon.

⁴⁹ John.

⁵⁰ Bill.

⁵¹ Maggie.

⁵² Kay.

⁵³ Henry.

⁵⁴ Henry.

⁵⁵ Roslyn.

⁵⁶ Judy.

⁵⁷ Rob. He did not explain how his team felt.

⁵⁸ The pay out could include payment in lieu of any unused leave, "a severance payment calculated on the basis of two weeks salary for completed years and months of service, up to a maximum period of 48 weeks" and payment of 5 weeks salary in lieu of notice for staff aged over 45 years who had more than 5 years service. *Voluntary Retrenchment Program Information Package*, DEETYA, April, 1996, pp. 1-2.

⁵⁹ Maggie.

⁶⁰ Ian.

⁶¹ Ailsa.

⁶² Interview with Joan, 16 June 1999.

⁶³ Luke.

⁶⁴ Kay.

⁶⁵ Karen.

⁶⁶ As redundancy payments can include payment of salary in lieu of leave, this could also be a factor in the amounts received. I did not ask for a break down of the amounts in the redundancy pay out.

⁶⁷ *The PSS Board Annual Report 1996-97*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1997, p.5.

⁶⁸ Patrick and Ray.

⁶⁹ Patrick, 32 years service.

⁷⁰ Colin, 30 years service.

⁷¹ Nell, 20 years service.

⁷² Ellen, 28 years service.

⁷³ Simon and John.

⁷⁴ John.

⁷⁵ Roslyn.

⁷⁶ John.

⁷⁷ Tim.

⁷⁸ John.

⁷⁹ John and Simon.

⁸⁰ Gus.

⁸¹ Karen

⁸² Fred and Ernest.

⁸³ Ailsa.

⁸⁴ Ian.

⁸⁵ Kay.

⁸⁶ Joan.

⁸⁷ Although the service was counted as continuous, the respondents may not have paid superannuation for these short periods.

⁸⁸ Luke.

⁸⁹ Phil.

⁹⁰ Kate, Joan, Kay and Ellen.

⁹¹ Maggie.

⁹² Marie.

⁹³ Maggie.

CHAPTER 5: LIFE AFTER VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY

Respondents were asked a number of questions about their future work intentions prior to accepting voluntary redundancy and about their actual experience after voluntary redundancy. If, as the Australian Bureau of Statistics reports, 53% of the Australian population aged 45 and over were retired¹, it would be expected that former APS staff with generous superannuation benefits would intend to withdraw from the labour force. However only eighteen percent of respondents intended to leave the labour force after voluntary redundancy.

Respondents were asked whether they had envisaged seeking work prior to actually accepting voluntary redundancy. Table 33 shows their responses. Ten women (59% of the women)

Table 33 Intentions about seeking work prior to taking voluntary redundancy by percentage of gender group

	Intend to leave paid workforce	Intend to seek work	Unsure	No answer	When will seek work – time range	Job lined up	How many hours work per week – time range
Non-married women	10	50	30	10	Immediately to 6 months	30	5 to 40
Married women	14	72	14	0	Immediately to 1 year	29	20 to 45
Non-married men	33	67	0	0	Immediately to 3 months	0	12 to 38
Married men	21	75	4	0	Immediately to 3 years	38	1 to 90
Women as a % of total of 17 female respondents	11	59	23	6		29	
Men as a % of total of 27 male respondents	22	74	4			33	

Number respondents 44

and twenty men (74% of the men) intended to seek work in the first three years after taking voluntary redundancy. Five of the women (29%) and nine of the men (33%) had a job lined up prior to being retrenched. Respondents were prepared to work a wide range of hours per week, between one and ninety, with wide variations in all groups. More women than men were unsure if they would seek work.

There were a variety of reasons given for intending to seek work and these were grouped into the categories shown in table 34. Financial reasons were given by 35% of female and 41% of male respondents. Some men thought that they were too young to retire but no women gave this reason. More men than women wanted to use their skills and interests in a job. Only women chose social contact and travel as reasons why they wanted to work. These results support the supposition that paid work is still a more significant identity for men than women.

Fourteen respondents noted that they still had children at home and this had an influence on the decision of some respondents to take up the offer of voluntary redundancy and on their need to seek further work. One woman and one man commented that they were educating children and needed to continue to work.²

Table 34 Main reasons why intended to seek work by percentage of gender group

	Financial	Too young	Skills & interests	Still supporting children	Personal challenge or satisfaction	Habit, fill in time, convenient	Social contact	Travel
Women as a % of total of 17 female respondents	35	0	18	6	29	0	18	6
Men as a % of total of 27 male respondents	41	19	33	15	22	15	0	0

Number 44 – total sums to more than 44 as respondents could enter more than one choice

Some respondents undertook vocational and interest courses prior to or after taking voluntary redundancy. Table 35 shows the percentage in each group who did courses. Respondents took mainly vocational courses before they accepted voluntary redundancy, including computing, accounting and care worker, while courses taken after voluntary redundancy included psychology, computing, financial planning, languages and human resources. Women were more likely to do pre-redundancy and post redundancy vocational courses and men more likely to do post- redundancy vocational courses. Reasons given for undertaking courses were similar for women and men, with interest and preparation for the future the most common. As a whole, slightly more men did vocationally oriented courses than women, possibly because they define themselves by paid employment more than women. However, women received lower pay outs and superannuation than men and may have needed to gain or update qualifications to improve their chances of finding work.

Table 35 Respondents undertaking courses before and after voluntary redundancy as a percentage of gender group

	Did course prior to VR	Did course after VR
Non-married women	30	40
Married women	14	14
Non-married men	33	0
Married men	17	46
Women as a % of total of 17 female respondents	24	29
Men as a % of total of 27 male respondents	19	41

Number respondents 44

Joan has done two courses in an effort to obtain more income. She recently completed a tax preparation course and will be able to work for a company for approximately four months at a

very low hourly rate of pay. She also did a course on building web sites and has used this knowledge to tutor tertiary students and to obtain several contracts to build sites.³

As the average duration of unemployment for older job seekers has increased from 48.9 weeks in December 1990 to 78.8 weeks in December 1998,⁴ respondents were asked to indicate on a five point scale what they thought their chances of obtaining work were, before and after taking voluntary redundancy. Table 36 shows respondents' beliefs concerning their chances of obtaining work. Eleven respondents did not respond to the questions concerning their chances of obtaining work after redundancy. Five of these did not intend to seek work, one had a job to go to and two were unsure of their intentions. Overall, positive responses concerning work chances (good or excellent) were received from 41% of women and 55% of men.

Table 36 Prior to voluntary redundancy – Respondents' views of chances of obtaining work as a percentage of gender group

	Little	Some	Didn't think	Good	Excellent	No response
Women as a % of total of 17 female respondents	6	12	6	29	12	35
Men as a % of total of 27 male respondents		15	11	26	29	19

Number respondents 44

Table 37 shows the length of service, approximate voluntary redundancy pay outs, superannuation lump sum and approximate annual pension for respondents who actually sought work after voluntary redundancy. A total of thirty one of the respondents (65% of the women and 74% of the men) sought work within a year after redundancy, only one less than had indicated an intention to seek work before they were retrenched. Two respondents

Table 37 Length of service, approximate voluntary redundancy pay out, superannuation lump sum and approximate annual pension of respondents who sought work after redundancy

Marital Status *	Years of Service	Total of VR Pay Out and Lump Sum (Approximate) \$	Approximate Annual Pension \$
Rob	43	190,000	35,000
Gus	41	185,000	24,000
Jack	39	90,000	Rolled super over
Paul	37	100,000	Preserved
Rick	37	105,000	21,000
Ray	36	425,000	40,000
Greg	34	95,000	25,000
Henry	34	155,000	25,000
John	32	100,000	30,000
Russ	32	235,000	28,000
Patrick	32	265,000	26,000
Vern	31	220,000	30,000
Bill	31	300,000	35,000
Tim	29	75,000	Rolled super over
<i>Ellen</i>	28	<i>105,000</i>	<i>29,000</i>
<i>Peg</i>	27	<i>55,000</i>	<i>Preserved</i>
<i>Karen</i>	27	<i>110,000</i>	<i>10,000</i>
<i>Marie</i>	26	<i>65,000</i>	<i>20,000</i>
David	24	50,000	25,000
Fred	23	70,000	20,000
Ernest	22	240,000	Lump sum only
Ian	22	270,000	Lump sum only
Mal	22	275,000	24,000
<i>Ailsa</i>	22	<i>120,000</i>	<i>20,000</i>
<i>Nell</i>	20	<i>55,000</i>	<i>20,000</i>
<i>Kate</i>	13	<i>140,000</i>	<i>25,000</i>
Wally	12	45,000	Rolled super over
<i>Roslyn</i>	12	<i>35,000</i>	<i>Preserved</i>
<i>Jo</i>	11	<i>100,000</i>	<i>Lump sum only</i>
Ben	10	95,000	12,000
<i>Judy</i>	7	<i>25,000</i>	<i>5,000</i>
<i>Kay</i>	6	<i>15,000</i>	<i>5,000</i>
<i>Joan</i>	6	<i>25,000</i>	<i>5,000</i>

Number of respondents 33.

Pseudonyms are used except for respondents who were interviewed.

Some respondents have delayed receiving their superannuation pension until they retire from the work force.

indicated they were not seeking work as they had already arranged post voluntary redundancy employment.

Women's disadvantage is clear in this table. Men generally had longer service, received higher payments for their voluntary redundancy pay out and super lump sum and received larger annual pensions. Fourteen men, but no women, had more than 28 years of service, with two men having in excess of 40 years. Years of service have an impact on voluntary redundancy and superannuation, but classification also has an effect. The man with the highest voluntary redundancy and superannuation pay out and the highest annual pension was in the Senior Executive Service when he left the APS. The woman with the highest annual pension was also in the Senior Executive Service. The two women with the lowest voluntary redundancy and superannuation pay outs and pensions also had the lowest length of service.

Respondents were asked to give reasons for seeking work. These varied from "starvation is scary"⁵ to: "I had no interest in retiring and want to build investments to over \$1M before retiring, so as to have a comfortable income".⁶ The most common reason given for seeking work by women and men was money while some respondents also mentioned enjoying work, maintaining an interest and mental stimulation. Two men said they were too young to retire⁷ and one man wanted "to keep up the routine of a productive and useful lifestyle".⁸ One woman wanted a "worthwhile job"⁹ while another wanted "stimulation, social contact and to contribute to society".¹⁰

Table 38 shows the responses to the question about rating chances of getting a job after retrenchment had occurred. There was a low rate of response to this question, possibly

because respondents already had work or were no longer seeking work. Women were more likely to respond in the negative and men with positive responses.

Table 38 After voluntary redundancy – Chances of getting work by percentage of gender group

	Little	Some	Don't think about it	Good	Excellent	No response	Not applicable
Women as a % of total of 17 female respondents		12	6			59	23
Men as a % of total of 27 male respondents	4	4		11	11	55	15

Number respondents 27

Table 39 shows respondents who were working during the survey period of late October to December 1998, the range of hours per week for each group, whether the work was similar to

Table 39 Current Work - respondents working during survey period as a percentage of gender group, job similarity to APS and whether like current job more than APS job

	Currently working as a % of respondents in each group	Job similar to APS as a % of currently working in each group	Like the job more than the APS as a % of currently working in each group
Non-married women	70	57	86
Married women	71	80	80
Non-married men	33		100
Married men	71	41	76
Women as % of 17 female respondents	71	67	83
Men as % of 27 male respondents	67	39	78

Number respondents working during survey period 30

the APS and whether they liked the job more than the APS. Apart from the non-married men group, the majority of respondents in each group were working, with hours ranging from zero to eighty hours per week. The women respondents were more likely than the men to be working in jobs similar to their former Australian Public Services positions although it is not clear why.

Almost all respondents who were working enjoyed their current jobs better than their APS jobs although not all respondents enjoyed their former jobs. One man stated that he “was bored and exhausted with public service as had missed out on interesting positions, fed up with meaningless changes and getting nowhere”.¹¹ In contrast another man “thoroughly enjoyed my public service career, it was challenging and rewarding and I would have happily stayed to retirement. VR gave me the opportunity to achieve a further career ambition”.¹² There was no indication that respondents with the lowest financial incentive to work enjoyed their new jobs better than their APS jobs as respondents who received the highest and the lowest pay outs and superannuation pensions, and most in between, liked their new jobs better.

Women were more likely than men to be working less than 35 hours a week: 58.3% of the working women compared with 35.3% of the working men. A married man who reported working 50 hours a week commented:

I was surprised at how difficult it was to obtain a job. Relatively low level positions that I thought that I would almost walk into did not eventuate. I was fortunate in getting a position in a new company where I could use both my technical knowledge and management skills. The company has grown and the job has grown with it. I enjoy being able to make my own decisions and live with the results.¹³

A non-married man who felt his redundancy was “effectively, a dismissal” commented on his search for work:

My hopes of being able to find another job were dashed very quickly. For about 6 months I had only lots of polite refusals. It was humiliating and I became worried about money. I got some temporary, lowly-paid job through a friend for about three months, then I was unemployed for another 3 months before I could start another career, starting at the bottom. I became depressed during the period when it appeared that I might not have a future and this depression could have contributed to a minor heart attack that I had some 12 months later.¹⁴

A married woman who is working part-time stated that she was offered work “to suit myself – three days permanent part-time”.¹⁵ She also cares for her grand-daughter two days a week.

Her position is in contrast to that of a single woman:

I have been shocked since I left by the discrimination against public servants in the private sector. I have found this to be a far greater barrier to finding another position than my age. I have applied for countless positions in Sydney and Melbourne for which I was well qualified and they are very keen when I talk to them until they discover I was a public servant. I think it is very difficult for anyone who has been a public servant more than 10 years to find an equivalent position outside.¹⁶

The oldest woman (age 63 at voluntary redundancy) in the survey felt she was suffering from age discrimination: “Employers are very reluctant even to consider any one of my age even though people are always surprised when I give my age. I look and act much younger than I am. But experience and maturity are little valued.”¹⁷

Table 40 shows whether the working respondents were earning more, less or about the same as their previous APS jobs. All of the non-married women who were working were earning less

Table 40 Current salary during survey period compared to APS salary by percentage of gender group currently working

	Earning more	Earning less	Earning about the same
Non-married women		100	
Married women		60	40
Non-married men	100		
Married men	41	53	6
Women as % of females currently working	0	83	17
Men as % of males currently working	44	50	6

Number respondents currently working: 30

than in their previous APS jobs, while the married women earned less or about the same. The only single man who was working earned more than his previous APS job while seven of the

seventeen men earned more, nine earned less and one earned about the same. The number of hours worked per week as well as the type of work done obviously make a difference to earnings. But women, earning less on average than men in the APS, earn even less on average when they leave.

Table 41 shows sources of income during the survey period for each group of respondents, with the majority reporting they were mainly dependent on a superannuation pension. Many of the respondents had more than one source of income and some worked to supplement their superannuation pensions.

Table 41 Sources of income during survey period by percentage of gender group

	Salary or Wage	Redundancy Payout	Super Pension	DSS Pension	Annuity	Self Employment	Interest on Investments	Spouse income
Non-married women	50	10	80		10	20	20	
Married women	29		57		29	14	43	
Non-married men	33		33					
Married men	42		79	4	4	29	21	4
Women as a % of total of 17 female respondents	41	6	71		18	18	29	
Men as a % of total of 27 male respondents	41		74	4	4	26	18	4

Number 44 – total sums to more than 44 as respondents could enter more than one choice

In interviews conducted seven months after the survey, respondents gave explanations of their current income. Maggie has withdrawn from the work force and is receiving an indexed pension from Comsuper, even though she is only 53 years old. This pension will continue for the rest of her life. Her husband also took a pension and is working as a consultant.¹⁸ Ian took a lump sum, which he has invested after considerable research. Since taking his voluntary redundancy he has had a long term contract and has done some consulting work.

After spending some time researching investment opportunities and investing most of his lump sum, he is now seeking further consulting work. His wife is still working.¹⁹

The two non-married women are receiving indexed pensions from their superannuation schemes. Ailsa spent some time seeking work and initially looked for something different from her APS job. She found that employers were not willing to give her a job and explained that retrenched people who were in lower classifications in her APS organisation easily found work but those who had more skills had difficulties. Even though she was prepared to take secretarial work and has good skills in that area, the agencies she applied to considered she was overqualified. She was eventually offered a short term contract job, which continued for some months and currently has a further contract. She was 50 when she took voluntary redundancy and her accountant has advised her that she will need to work until she is 65 as she cannot afford to retire on her superannuation pension.²⁰

Joan is already over 65 and still needs to continue to seek work. As previously reported, she lost the funds she had invested and was left in a precarious financial position. She also moved around Australia with her ex-husband and left work to have children, losing her superannuation nine times before changes to the superannuation system which allowed contributions to be preserved. She had borrowed to invest in a property for which she receives rent, but is paying a mortgage on this property and also on the dual occupancy property which she shares with her elderly mother. She takes any work she can get in order to pay her debts and mortgages as her only steady income is from two small superannuation pensions from previous jobs. Joan has attempted to restructure her loans and roll them into one loan but because she does not have a permanent full time position the banks will not

consider this. She was retrenched with 40 others when the organisation was restructured and considers she was retrenched involuntarily.²¹ Of all the respondents she most closely fits the image of “Me Inc.” discussed in the literature review.²² As Joan could be considered disadvantaged in both the superannuation system and in her search for work, this seems to suggest that “Me Inc.” is not a panacea for older women.

Table 42 shows the amount of personal and household income range during the survey period for each group. Non-married men had a personal income range from \$30,000 to \$80,000 with one man reporting a household range of \$100,000 plus. The other three groups reported a personal range starting at \$10,000 with married men having the widest range, followed by married women. In household incomes, married women and men had the widest ranges,

Table 42 Current Income – personal and household range by gender group

	Current – Personal (range)	Current – household (range)
Non-married women	\$10,000 to \$30,000	\$10,000 to \$60,000
Married women	\$10,000 to \$70,000	\$30,000 to \$100,000+
Non-married men	\$30,000 to \$80,000	\$100,000+
Married men	\$10,000 to \$100,000+	\$10,000 to \$100,000+

with the upper range for both being over \$100,000. Non-married women had a household range from \$10,000 to \$60,000, the higher range presumably as a result of contributions from partner, children or a shared household.²³

As people who have taken voluntary redundancy are likely to have lower incomes, as well as different expectations about life after work in the APS, respondents were asked to explain what changes they have made to their lifestyle since taking voluntary redundancy. Table 43

shows the main changes identified. While women's lives changed more than men's in terms of positive factors, negative changes to lifestyle were given by approximately the same percentage of women and men.²⁴

One woman reported the changes in her lifestyle:

Reduced social outings which cost money, e.g. lunches, dinners and coffees with friends are now past. Spend very little on personal needs such as clothes, makeup, etc. More conscious of what I spend. Now have nothing to save.²⁵

However, financial difficulties are her only regret:

For other reasons, personal, lifestyle, freedom from regimented hours, flexibility of time, I have no regrets. Also my supervisor was a highly critical person who destroyed my self esteem – which I am slowly regaining – so it is great not to be working to him now.²⁶

A married man who regrets taking voluntary redundancy detailed the changes to his lifestyle:

I no longer go out to cinema, theatre, concerts. I no longer have a decent car, and no motorcycle. All my clothes and wife's clothes are 5 years or older. I no longer buy books, CDs or magazines.²⁷

Other respondents reported positive changes to their lifestyles:

I don't get sick any more. I have been to the doctor once in 18 months, for a skin problem. I garden more, I read more, I like me more! I think more. I give my community more. I nurture my relationship more. I sleep more restfully.²⁸

Similarly a woman notes: "more relaxed lifestyle – and a back problem (which I never related to work) has disappeared."²⁹

A married man stated that he is working much harder "but thoroughly enjoying it".³⁰ Another starts work later, takes more time off yet still works "hard when it is needed".³¹ Two men described changes as minimal:

None except that my wife remained in employment and I have taken over the cooking and cleaning duties.³²

Amazingly few. I had three or four fairly serious hobbies. I still have them, but spend a little more time as each. And for part of most days I'm in my home office managing my super fund and its investments. In many ways, very similar "job" to my APS one (but without staff and direction from above).³³

Table 43 Main changes to lifestyle after voluntary redundancy by percentage of gender group

	Less stress	Take up interests	Personal activities	More control	Holidays	None	Negative
Non-married women	70	40	30	10	10		20
Married women	57	29	43	29	43	14	
Non-married men				33		33	
Married men	25	13	17	17	4	13	13
Women as a % of total of 17 female respondents	65	35	35	18	24	6	12
Men as a % of total of 27 male respondents	22	11	15	18	4	15	11

Number respondents 44 – total sums to more than 44 as respondents could enter more than one choice

As shown in table 44, 86% (thirty eight out of the forty four respondents) had no regrets about taking voluntary redundancy.

Table 44 Any regrets about taking voluntary redundancy by percentage of gender group

	Yes	No	Unsure
Non-married women	10	90	0
Married women	14	72	14
Non-married men	0	33	67
Married men	4	96	
Women as a % of total of 17 female respondents	12	82	6
Men as a % of total of 27 male respondents	4	89	7
% of total of 44 respondents	7	86	7

Number respondents 44

Some respondents were critical of the changes and the politicisation of the Australian Public Service:

My feelings towards the APS and the government which saw 'downsizing' as 'in the public interest' are strongly negative. I am still incredulous that so much waste of

talented, experienced, well-trained people were off-loaded, especially as most of the training was paid for by the public who ended up losing valuable services. I have lost any interest in career, loyalty and extra effort in employment.³⁴

A non-married woman was also very happy about taking voluntary redundancy and, unlike some of the other respondents, keeps in touch with former workmates:

There were five people in our section who were offered redundancies, and who accepted. We're all happily employed in other areas. Three of us were 50 or over and we had all worked in lots of other areas before joining the PS, nursing, teaching, welfare, so we all had other 'strings to our bows'. We stay in touch and all believe it was the best move we've ever made. Don't get sick any more (five of us). We all look and feel great!³⁵

A married man who was 55 when he took voluntary redundancy had no regrets and does not miss his former work.

I thought that after 32 years, I would feel some separation pain, but I have not had any regrets. I have managed to keep in touch with several of my former workmates, and in fact have a small business in partnership with one of them. I was unsure of whether or not I had made the correct choice in taking a VR as opposed to Staff Redeployment Unit (SRU), but having seen very few of my colleagues find jobs from the SRU (regardless of their age, many younger) I am certain of the appropriateness of my choice.³⁶

Table 45 reveals that over 50% of respondents were doing voluntary work at the time of the survey, with hours ranging from two to thirty a week. Some of the beneficiaries of the hours of voluntary work include community groups, sporting organisations, senior citizens, political parties, churches, community radio, students, Amnesty International and historical houses. Both women and men stated that they wanted to contribute to society and that their voluntary work was stimulating, satisfying and interesting.

Although twelve percent of women and fifteen percent of men stated they left paid work for another person's health, 23% of women and seven percent of men stated they were in a caring role at the time of the survey. Caring hours ranged from one to 30 hours a week. A married man reported caring for his wife, a disabled child and two small children for approximately 30 hours a week³⁷ and another married man cared for his wife and son for ten hours a week.³⁸ Women cared for grandchildren³⁹ and elderly parents.⁴⁰

Table 45 Voluntary / Community Work by percentage of gender group

	Doing voluntary work	Left for other's health	Caring at time of survey
Non-married women	50	10	30
Married women	57	14	14
Non-married men	33		
Married men	54	17	8
Women as a % of total of 17 female respondents	53	12	23
Men as a % of total of 27 male respondents	52	15	7

Number of respondents 44

Conclusion

Men have better financial options both from redundancy and in paid work after redundancy than women. Paid work appears more central to men's identities than to women's identities. The survey findings confirm that men earned more while in the Australian Public Service and therefore had access to higher voluntary redundancy pay outs and superannuation benefits than women. Men also found better paying jobs after redundancy, so that the man with the highest personal income earned over \$30,000 per annum more than the woman with the highest personal income. Men were also more confident that they would find work after voluntary redundancy although some were surprised at how difficult it was to find work.

Men identify more with work and were more likely than women to be working full time after voluntary redundancy. Although there was little gender difference in the percentage of each group doing voluntary work, three times more women than men were in caring roles at the time of the survey. These women are conforming to society's gender role expectation of women as carers. Women respondents also used their non-work time for personal activities, to take up interests and have holidays. This confirms the findings for the main reasons for taking voluntary redundancy - women chose freedom, lifestyle and health as their main reasons and men were far more likely to choose voluntary redundancy to pursue other employment. Several men who have retired from the work force mentioned that they had taken on the housework role but no women mentioned this, probably because responsibility for household work is expected of women in Australian society, whether or not they are in paid work.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Retirement and Retirement Intentions Australia*, 6238.0, November 1997, p. 3.

² Kay and Russ.

³ Interview with Joan, 16 June, 1999.

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Labour Force Australia*, 6203.0, December 1990, p. 26; Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Labour Force Australia*, 6203.0, December 1998, p. 35. Duration is not given for specific age groups over 35 but is for job seekers aged 35 to 54.

⁵ Fred.

⁶ Ian.

⁷ John and Paul.

⁸ Gus.

⁹ Judy.

¹⁰ Nell.

¹¹ Bill.

¹² Patrick.

¹³ Rick.

¹⁴ Ernest.

¹⁵ Jo.

¹⁶ Interview with Ailsa, 9 June, 1999.

¹⁷ Joan.

¹⁸ Interview with Maggie, 16 June, 1999.

¹⁹ Interview with Ian, 10 June, 1999.

²⁰ Ailsa.

²¹ Joan.

²² Geoffrey Maslen quoting Tom Peters, an “American management guru” in ‘Welcome to “Me Inc.”’, *The Bulletin*, August 18, 1998, p. 49.

²³ I did not ask the constitution of the household.

²⁴ Two non-married women and three married men.

²⁵ Joan.

²⁶ Joan.

²⁷ Fred.

²⁸ Judy.

²⁹ Jan.

³⁰ Jack, who is working more than 40 hours a week.

³¹ Patrick.

³² Phil. Several married men mentioned reversing roles, but women did not mention this.

³³ Vern.

³⁴ Nell.

³⁵ Judy.

³⁶ Russ.

³⁷ Fred.

³⁸ Don.

³⁹ Dana and Jo.

⁴⁰ Joan, Peg and Nell.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study challenge the popular and even some academic literature covering redundancy. First, that literature generally assumes a male worker, and more recently a middle-management worker. Secondly, the literature presents an image of that male worker as either a total victim of restructuring, globalisation and the destruction of the welfare state or as a self-possessed "Me Inc."¹ individual who can seize the opportunity for change, although there is a tendency for the victim to be a blue-collar worker and "Me Inc." to be a middle manager. Finally, older workers are assumed to leave the workforce for retirement. This thesis provides a much more complex picture, at least for the 44 people who participated in the study.

This study shows that the retrenched worker is not the male middle management professional assumed by the literature. The Australian Public Service has retrenched 28,216 permanent staff since 1995 and almost half of these were women.² The majority of staff retrenched was in the lower paid classifications of Administrative Services Officer, not middle management.³ Approximately one third of the respondents were in Senior Officer (middle management) classifications and eleven percent was in Senior Executive Officer positions. The remaining staff were in Administrative Services Officer or Other classifications.⁴

The retrenched workers who participated in this study could not be categorised simply as either victims or individuals seizing the opportunity for change. Nine respondents (21%) actively sought voluntary redundancy and the same number felt they were coerced into taking voluntary redundancy. The majority of respondents accepted the offer of voluntary redundancy, for a variety of reasons. Respondents faced a combination of push

and pull factors in their decision making. They had to decide whether or not to attempt to stay in the APS through the redeployment scheme or through job swaps. They had to weigh up their chances of obtaining employment after redundancy and whether they had the financial resources to live comfortably after redundancy. For some respondents, their own, or another's health, was a factor.

The majority of the respondents did not withdraw from paid work but remained in the work force. Although they commented on the generosity of the superannuation scheme, they sought work for a variety of reasons, not only financial. This suggests that reports of older workers taking early retirement may be incorrect.

Voluntary redundancy is now the most common means of separation from the Australian Public Service and for people with long service the financial rewards can be considerable. However, years of service and classification level have a financial impact on redundancy packages and superannuation benefits. The women in this study were disadvantaged by their lower years of service and lower classifications compared with the men. In this study 63% of men had more than 30 years of service but none of the women had this length of service. Almost half of the men received over \$80,000 in their redundancy pay out and none of the women received this amount.

The lower classification and shorter length of service had an effect on the amount of voluntary redundancy pay out and superannuation lump sum and annual pension for the women in this study, meaning that they received considerably less financial benefit from redundancy than the men. From a financial point of view, the gender differences were considerable, with no woman having more than 28 years of service compared with fourteen

men, two of whom had in excess of 40 years of service. The woman with the lowest length of service received the lowest amount of voluntary redundancy pay out and superannuation lump sum and the lowest annual pension. Only two men received an annual pension under \$21,000 compared with seven women, and only two women received an annual pension over \$24,000.

The literature mostly neglects the implications of redundancy for women whose average weekly earnings are still less than those of men. In the APS, women generally are at lower public service classifications than men. Women are still clustered in the lower paid Administrative Services Officer classifications of the APS. Women are disproportionately represented in part-time work, another indicator of lower salary, and therefore lower superannuation contributions. Broken service is another factor in women's disadvantage in the work force. One woman respondent, who moved around Australia because of her former husband's job, lost her superannuation nine times before the regulations were changed and she was able to preserve her superannuation to be accessed when she retired.

There were also gender differences in the income of the respondents who continued in the labour force after voluntary redundancy. No women received an income greater than in their previous APS jobs and the majority of women earned less in their new jobs. Women were more likely than men to be working in jobs similar to their APS jobs. More than half of the women working after voluntary redundancy were in part-time jobs compared with approximately one third of the men.

Twice as many male as female respondents intended to leave the work force after voluntary redundancy but the majority of respondents intended to seek work, mainly for

financial reasons. Some respondents had jobs lined up before taking redundancy. Of the 44 respondents, all aged 50 or over at redundancy, 33 sought work after they accepted voluntary redundancy. For most of the respondents, redundancy was not a prelude to retirement. Although some respondents were surprised at how difficult it was to find work, most appear to have found satisfying employment and do not regret taking redundancy. Those who have retired report that they are happy and have found they do not miss the stress of paid work.

There were no major gender differences in the main reasons for seeking work, which included financial, skills and interests, personal challenge and personal satisfaction. Only women chose social contact and travel and only men felt that they were too young to retire. This supports the effects of gender role categorisation in society, men as breadwinners and women as nurturers, and the strong significance of paid work in men's identities.

Men's identity through paid work is also evident in the main reasons for taking voluntary redundancy, as more men than women left to pursue other employment. Men were also more likely to choose office politics and too many changes in the APS while women were more likely to choose freedom, lifestyle and health as their reasons for taking voluntary redundancy.

Only three respondents regretted taking voluntary redundancy, and three were unsure of their feelings. Although some respondents were forced to make major changes to their lifestyle for financial reasons, the majority felt that the benefits far outweighed the lower incomes. There were no gender differences in respondents reporting negative changes to their lifestyles. Both women and men reported an improvement to their health and in

having more control over their lives. Women were more like to report less stress and that they took up interests and personal activities and had more holidays. Again, this suggests that women's identities are not bound up in paid work as men's are.

There were no gender differences in respondents who reported doing voluntary work. Although there were no gender differences in the percentage of respondents who stated they left work because of another person's health, women were three times more likely to be caring for another at the time of the survey, thus conforming to society's expectations of women's role in society.

Even if the redundancy is involuntary, the term voluntary redundancy is generally used, and some former APS workers felt that they were coerced into taking voluntary redundancy. Most would have continued in the APS if voluntary redundancy had not been an option. The generous pay out was one factor in acceptance of the voluntary redundancy, as was the difficulty of obtaining redeployment into other departments or agencies in the APS. Some respondents gave considerable thought to taking voluntary redundancy, one made a spur of the moment decision and some felt it was inevitable. Approximately one fifth of the respondents requested voluntary redundancy; two respondents requested union assistance when their departments tried to make them resign, rather than offering them voluntary redundancy. As a redundancy exercise is costly to an employer, requests for voluntary redundancy are likely to increase, rather than cut, costs. This indicates that the issue of retrenchment is perhaps more complex than is suggested in the literature where it is a simple matter of reducing staff to cut costs.

The experiences of this group of retrenched white collar workers are no doubt vastly different from those of unskilled and semi-skilled blue and pink collar workers as are the financial benefits the respondents have accrued from their careers in the APS. But only one of the respondents has a superannuation pension more than the “average retirement income expectations of \$37,600” suggested earlier this year in the media.⁵ This suggests that there will be vast numbers of workers born in the baby boomer era who will still be seeking work for a number of years.

The ACT Government has recognised the difficulty some older workers have in finding employment and has offered employers financial incentives to take on mature workers.⁶ The ACT Government has also published an information kit to assist women who have been made redundant. However, the ACT Opposition has criticised the kit, saying it “was designed to undermine voluntary redundancies and a move to prepare for compulsory redundancies in the ACT Public Service”.⁷ Whatever political games are played, it appears that redundancies in the public sector, voluntary or involuntary, are set to increase.⁸ Generally speaking, the recent structural changes made to superannuation have come too late for most older women, especially those who broke their working lives to raise children. Hopefully, these changes will assist younger women and men in a future where permanent full time work is a nostalgic memory.

¹ Geoffrey Maslen, ‘Welcome to “Me Inc.”’, *The Bulletin*, August 18, 1998, p. 49.

² Public Service and Merit Protection Commission (PSMPC), *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin 1997-98*, Canberra, 1998, p. 62.

³ PSMPC, p. 64.

⁴ ‘Other’ classifications in this example include Technical Officers, Professional Officers, Information Technology Officers and Research Scientists.

⁵ Andrew Hobbs, ‘Retirement-savings time bomb ticking away for middle-Australians: manager’, *The Canberra Times*, January 22, 1999, p. 19.

⁶ David McLennan, ‘Restart program has reached half its target, will go on’, *The Canberra Times*, June 26, 1999, p. C10.

⁷ Mark Ludlow, 'Kit to help women find way after redundancy', *The Canberra Times*, March 30, 1999, p. 13, quoting Labor MLA Wayne Berry.

⁸ Deborah Light, 'Surviving the Revolution', *The Bulletin*, July 6, 1999, p. 27.

APPENDIX A**WANTED****Former APS staff who took voluntary redundancy at age 50 or more**

I am surveying women and men who were age 50 or more when they took a VR from the Australian Public Service. The survey will form part of my Master of Arts thesis

If you took a VR and are retired, self employed, working or seeking work, I would like to ask you about your experiences. I am interested in whether people's expectations of their post-VR life have been realised.

To take part in this confidential survey please phone as soon as possible

Anne Woodcock

MA Student, University of Adelaide

APPENDIX B**Letter of Introduction**

My name is Anne Woodcock and I am undertaking a research project as part of my Master of Arts degree in Women's Studies at the University of Adelaide.

In my project I am looking at former public servants aged 50+ who have accepted voluntary redundancy from the Australian Public Service since 1994. I hope to survey a number of women and men to find out why they took voluntary redundancy and their expectations about employment and life after the Australian Public Service. I would like participants to reflect on the positive and negative aspects of taking voluntary redundancy.

The survey is completely confidential so no information you give will be reported in a way that you or any other individual will be able to be identified.

If you are willing to participate in the survey please complete the attached questionnaire and return it in the attached stamped addressed envelope. The questionnaire will take about 45 minutes to complete.

I am also planning to interview some respondents about their feelings and experiences with voluntary redundancy. The interview will be more like a conversation than a formal interview and will take 45 to 60 minutes. It can be conducted at a time and place to suit you.

If you agree to be interviewed I would like to tape our conversation and will provide you with a copy of the transcript of the interview. No identifying information will be included in the study and you may choose a pseudonym if you wish. A consent form is attached. If you are willing to be interviewed please complete the form and return it with your questionnaire. I will contact you to discuss interview arrangements.

If you decide to participate in the study you are free to change your mind and withdraw at any time. You are not obliged to answer questions or to discuss any issues that you do not wish to discuss. You are free to withdraw your interview material up until the time that I have completed all the interviews. You do not have to give me any reason if you do decide to withdraw from the study.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you want more information about the project. If you have concerns which you do not wish to discuss with me directly, contact Professor Chilla Bulbeck who is Head of the Department of Social Inquiry at the University of Adelaide and also my thesis supervisor.

I look forward to your participation.

Yours sincerely

Anne Woodcock

Phone: Work () ()
Home () ()

Chilla Bulbeck
Professor of Women's Studies
Department of Social Inquiry
University of Adelaide SA 5005
Phone: () ()

Consent Form

Study of former public servants aged 50+ who have accepted voluntary redundancy from the Australian Public Service

Research undertaken by M. Anne Woodcock as part of her Master of Arts Women’s Studies Degree within the Department of Social Inquiry at the University of Adelaide.

I (*print your name*) have been provided with a description of the aims and purpose of this research. I give my permission for this interview with Anne Woodcock of the University of Adelaide.

I understand that my name will never be connected with any information that I provide, and that I may choose a pseudonym. The identity of any person or institution I name will not be revealed in connection with this interview unless the information I give about the person or institution is already publicly known.

I agree to have the interview tape recorded.

I am aware that my participation is completely voluntary and that:

- I am free to withdraw from the research at any time
- I do not have to give reasons or justification if I choose to withdraw
- I can withdraw the information that I provide at any time during the information gathering stage of the study
- I am under no obligation to divulge information or to discuss issues if I do not wish to do so.

I understand that the researcher will provide me with information about the results of the research if I so desire and I will receive a copy of the transcript of the interview.

Please provide a postal address and phone number. The researcher, Anne Woodcock, will contact you to discuss interview arrangements.

.....
.....

Phone number:

Best time to contact:

Signed (Participant) Date:

Signed (Interviewer) Date:

TO BE COMPLETED BY PERSON WHO HAS ACCEPTED VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY FROM APS AT AGE 50 OR MORE

NOTE: THIS INFORMATION IS CONFIDENTIAL AND NO INFORMATION YOU GIVE WILL BE REPORTED IN A WAY THAT YOU OR ANY OTHER INDIVIDUAL WILL BE ABLE TO BE IDENTIFIED. PLEASE USE A PSEUDONYM IF YOU WISH.

Education

- 1. At what age did you leave high school?
- 2. What is the highest level of education you have attained and approximate year attained?

.....

.....

Australian Public Service

- 3. Why did you join the APS? (career, security, money, etc - please list as many as applicable)

.....

.....

.....

- 4. Your age at voluntary redundancy
- 5. Year you took VR from APS
- 6. APS classification at voluntary redundancy
- 7. Length of service
- 8. If your service was broken for any reason, for how long and why?

.....

.....

.....

Voluntary Redundancy

9. Which Department/Agency were you working in when you took voluntary redundancy?

.....

10. Your location (city/town) when you took VR?

11. Was your voluntary redundancy part of a general downsizing of your Department?
(Please circle one) YES / NO

12. Your Superannuation scheme (please circle one) CSS / PSS / Other

13. Please list the main duties in the work you were doing when you accepted voluntary redundancy.

.....

.....

.....

14. Prior to accepting a VR, what were your main reasons for being in the APS? (circle as many as appropriate and add more if you wish)

- | | | | |
|-------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| career | job | money | security |
| social life | support family | save for holidays | location |
| routine | leave provisions | power | fame |

other reasons.....

.....

15. What were the main reasons for taking voluntary redundancy? (tick as many as appropriate and add more if you wish)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> health | <input type="checkbox"/> care for spouse | <input type="checkbox"/> care for children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> care for grandchildren | <input type="checkbox"/> care for elderly relatives | <input type="checkbox"/> spouse moving interstate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> voluntary community work | <input type="checkbox"/> seek a more rewarding career | <input type="checkbox"/> pursue other employment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> set up own business | <input type="checkbox"/> freedom | <input type="checkbox"/> leisure activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> lifestyle | <input type="checkbox"/> needed the money | <input type="checkbox"/> financial, ie mortgage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> too many changes in the APS | <input type="checkbox"/> travel | <input type="checkbox"/> sporting activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> new car | <input type="checkbox"/> study | <input type="checkbox"/> office politics |

other reasons

.....

Please elaborate on your choice

.....
.....
.....

16. If your health was a consideration in your decision to take voluntary redundancy please give brief details.

.....
.....

17. If the health of another person, such as spouse, ageing parent, child, was a consideration in your decision to take voluntary redundancy please give brief details

.....
.....

18. Do you feel that you were somewhat coerced into accepting voluntary redundancy? (please provide an explanation for your feelings)

.....
.....
.....
.....

19. Would you have continued in the APS if a VR was not an option? YES/NO/UNSURE

Why?

.....
.....
.....

Redundancy payment

20. How much was your redundancy pay out (excluding superannuation)?
(please tick one range)

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> under \$5,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000 to \$10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 to \$20,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 to \$30,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000 to \$40,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000 to \$50,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000 to \$60,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60,000 to \$70,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$70,000 to \$80,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$80,000 to \$90,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$90,000 to \$100,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> over \$100,000 |

21. What did you use the money for (ie annuity, holiday, mortgage, new car, start business, etc)?

.....

.....

Superannuation

22. What type of payment did you choose for your superannuation (please tick one)

- lump sum (go to question 23)
- pension (go to question 24)
- mixture lump sum and pension (go to question 25)
- rolled superannuation over (When will you access this money?
- preserved superannuation (When will you access this money?
- other (please provide brief details)

23. If you took a lump sum only, how much did you get (tick one, then go to question 26)

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> under \$50,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> between \$50,000 & \$100,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> between \$100,000 & \$150,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> between \$150,000 & \$200,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> between \$200,000 & \$250,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> between \$250,000 & \$300,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> between \$300,000 & \$350,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> between \$350,000 & \$400,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> over \$400,000 |

24. If you took a pension only, what is your annual pension from this source (tick one, then go to question 26)

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> under \$5,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> between \$5,000 & \$10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> between \$10,000 & \$15,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> between \$15,000 & \$20,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> between \$20,000 & \$25,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> between \$25,000 & \$30,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> between \$30,000 & \$35,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> between \$35,000 & \$40,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> more than \$40,000 |

25. If you took a mixture of lump sum and pension please provide a range similar to the above (questions 23 and 24) for each

Lump sumAnnual Pension

26. Do you believe that you have been disadvantaged by the superannuation system? YES/NO

Please give an explanation for your answer

.....

.....

.....

Current Income

27. What is the source of your current income? (please tick one or more)

- salary/wage
- superannuation pension
- DSS age or other pension
- annuity
- Newstart allowance
- other (please give brief details)

.....

28. What is your current income range? (please tick one)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under \$10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 to \$20,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 to \$30,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000 to \$40,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000 to \$50,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000 to \$60,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$60,000 to \$70,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$70,000 to \$80,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$80,000 to \$90,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$90,000 to \$100,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> over \$100,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> other |

29. What is your current household income range? (please tick one)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under \$10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 to \$20,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 to \$30,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000 to \$40,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000 to \$50,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000 to \$60,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$60,000 to \$70,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$70,000 to \$80,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$80,000 to \$90,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$90,000 to \$100,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> over \$100,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> other |

30. Will you apply for an age pension? YES / NO

Intentions about future work before taking voluntary redundancy

- 31. Did you intend to permanently leave the paid work force? YES/NO/UNSURE
- 32. Did you intend to seek paid work once you accepted a VR? YES/NO/UNSURE
If yes, go to question 33
If no or unsure, go to question 39
- 33. How soon after your VR did you intend to seek work?
- 34. Why did you intend to seek work?
.....
.....
- 35. Did you have a job lined up?
- 36. What type of work did you intend to see
- 37. How many hours a week did you intend to work?
- 38. If you intended to seek work, how did you rate your chances of getting work when you took voluntary redundancy? (Please circle one)

Little chance some chance didn't think about it good chance excellent chance

Experience after voluntary redundancy

- 39. Did you actually seek work once you accepted voluntary redundancy? YES/NO
If no go to question 51
- 40. Why did you seek / are you seeking work?
.....
.....
- 41. How soon after your VR did you start to seek work?.....
- 42. What type of work did you seek / are you seeking?
.....
- 43. How many hours a week did you wish / do you wish to work?

55. Who are you caring for and why?

.....

Study

56. Did you undertake any study or course prior to your voluntary redundancy? YES/NO

57. If yes, what course(s)?

.....

58. Why did you undertake this study or course?

.....

59. Did you undertake any study or course after your voluntary redundancy? YES/NO

60. If yes, what course(s)?

.....

61. Why did you undertake this study or course?

.....

Now

62. What changes have you made to your lifestyle since taking voluntary redundancy? (Please explain)

.....

.....

.....

.....

63. Do you regret taking voluntary redundancy? YES/NO/UNSURE

Why?

.....

.....

Personal Information

- 64. Given name or pseudonym
- 65. Gender
- 66. Country of birth
- 67. Marital status at VR (circle one) married/defacto single divorced other
- 68. Marital status now, if different
- 69. If you have a partner, does your partner have paid work or an income?
- 70. If you have children at home - Ages

Comments

Please add any comments you wish to make.

.....

.....

.....

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Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

Please return it in the attached stamped envelope by

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