

LACK OF TIME STILL THE BIG ISSUE FOR AUSTRALIAN FAMILIES

Juggling work and home life commitments remains the number one issue for Australian families and relationships, according to the *2006 Relationships Indicators Survey* released today by Relationships Australia.

Eighty-eight per cent of survey respondents believed more relationships were in trouble these days because of the difficulty of balancing work and family life and just over a third (34%) said they had no real choice when it came to balancing work and family commitments.

The survey also asked about negative issues impacting respondents' relationship with their spouse or partner. Topping the list was lack of time to spend together (36%). Related to this, 21 per cent said having 'both partners working full time' was having a negative impact. Other frequent responses included:

- lack of understanding of each other's view (23%)
- different values/perspectives (22%)
- lack of communication (21%)
- different goals/expectations (20%)
- housework (19%)
- financial difficulties (18%)

According to Anne Hollonds, Vice President, Relationships Australia: "Lack of time, lack of communication and different values and expectations, dominated people's concerns whereas difficult social problems, such as domestic violence, infidelity, gambling, unemployment and drug and alcohol abuse – though serious for some – each scored responses of less than 10 per cent each."

Respondents cited a number of factors or policies that could help them to better manage the balance. Some of these were factors that could be driven by employers such as more flexible working hours (42%), the option of part-time work (36%), a change in employer attitude or company culture (26%) and unpaid leave (21%).

Others were related more to government policies, such as increased government financial assistance (35%), lower child care fees (21%) and improved access to quality aged care (20%).

Other findings from the study include:

- People who worked part-time or at home were more satisfied about their employment status than those who worked full time – 76 per cent compared with 71 per cent. Retirees were happiest with their workforce status (83%) and the unemployed or those on a benefit the least satisfied (41%).
- Those not happy with their current employment status were more likely to say they had no choice in balancing work and family life – 48 per cent, compared with 29 per cent of those who were happy with their current work status.
- The percentage of respondents who agreed more relationships were in trouble these days because neither person was able to find employment fell from 71 per cent in 2003 to 51 per cent in 2006.

ENDS

**A full report of the Indicators Survey 2006 is on the Relationships Australia website: www.relationships.com.au
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