

## **Labour, Employment and Work 2004: Overview** **Stephen Blumenfeld and George Lafferty**

While the contributions to the conference proceedings were undoubtedly diverse, they nonetheless dealt with a number of related themes. In organising the various papers, we have grouped them under the following eleven main headings:

- Human Capability, Skills and Training.
- The 'Knowledge Society'.
- Labour Market Supply and Demand.
- Regional Labour Markets.
- Labour Force Transitions.
- Work-Life Balance and Multiple Job-Holding.
- Equity, Legislation and Labour Law.
- Occupational Health and Safety.
- Wages and Unions.
- Australia and New Zealand: Comparative Analyses.
- Precarious Employment.

### **1. Human Capability, Skills and Training**

Several contributors explore the intersecting issues of human capability, skills and training. These include **Jane Bryson**, **Mary Mallon** and **Kiri Merritt**, in their paper, 'Opportunities and tensions in New Zealand organisations: the individual and the organisation in development'. They report on the initial findings from a large research project on the development of human capability in New Zealand. In their pilot case study of a manufacturing company, Bryson, Mallon and Merritt identify three main factors influencing the development of skills and capabilities: self-directed teams, a pay-linked skills matrix, and a production and quality management system. The paper points to a number of problems with the available literature on organisational and individual development, while showing how the development of capability requires the continual negotiation of strategies to align and re-align organisational and individual capabilities.

In their paper, 'Factors influencing enterprise training: evidence from New Zealand', **Steve Blumenfeld** and **Ashish Malik** draw on data from the New Zealand Skills and Training Survey 2003. This survey was conducted jointly by Business New Zealand and the Industry Training Federation and supported by the New Zealand Department of Labour's Future of Work Contestable Fund. Blumenfeld and Malik consider the impact of organisational characteristics and employee demographics on the volume and diversity of training supported by New Zealand employers. The results of their analysis suggest that, among the firms in this sample, firm size and casualisation are the most significant and important factors affecting the volume of training. These findings also point to the conclusion that larger and older New Zealand organizations appear to offer a greater variety of training options to their employees than do smaller and/or less-established organisations.

In discussing 'Future dairy employment – an application of the human capability framework', **Rupert Tipples, Jude Wilson, Reuben Edkins and Xiaomeng Sun** suggest that the Department of Labour's Human Capability Framework (HCF) can be of more analytical value than a neo-classical model, since it can integrate a complex array of factors, yet still be readily understood. Their analysis focuses on several factors relating to dairy farm staff, including status in employment (whether employees, employers, self-employed or unpaid family workers), ethnicity, hours worked and qualifications. These are understood within the context of the regional distribution of farm staff and their migration patterns within New Zealand. The paper illustrates how these factors are related to the future composition of the dairy farm labour force, and the future demand and opportunities for dairy farm staff. The authors conclude by making several recommendations on strategies for expanding and developing the dairy farm labour force.

**Rupert Tipples** has contributed a sole-authored paper on a closely related topic, 'A solution to "too few" working down on the farm – the Human Capability in Agriculture and Horticulture initiative'. He discusses the labour and skills shortages in agriculture during recent years, and evaluates the effectiveness of government and industry responses to them. He shows how, despite predictions of agriculture's inevitable decline, the industry has continued to grow in both real dollar terms and its contribution to GDP. Tipples charts the evolution of the Human Capability in Agriculture and Horticulture initiative, providing several observations on the political complexities of the process. He identifies proximity to Wellington and effective networking as key factors in achieving support for research.

**Wei Wei Mao and Michelle Shields** also write on the problem of retaining skilled workers in their paper, 'Viticulture labour recruitment and retention issues'. The expansion of New Zealand's wine production industry has resulted in a tight labour market, and recent labour force projections suggest this trend will continue well into the foreseeable future. The recruitment and retention of casual workers in the sector is particularly problematic. The authors estimate that 58 percent of those who worked as contractors in the industry during the year prior to their surveys had ceased working in vineyards by the time the surveys were conducted. Some 90 percent of the workers surveyed for this study had less than a year of experience in the industry. Therefore, it is not surprising that 60 percent of the vineyard owners surveyed for the study identified labour shortages, no doubt due in large measure to the seasonal nature of the work, as being a major concern. Nevertheless, because they require a large number of labourers for relatively short periods of time, vineyard owners are compelled to employ contractors to perform this work. Critical factors with regard to the retention of these workers are limited financial rewards and a lack of affordable housing. More than two-thirds of the individual workers cited at least one of these factors for their decision to leave the industry.

The paper by **Nicola North, Frances Hughes, Mary Finlayson, Erling Rasmussen, Toni Ashton, Taima Campbell and Sharon Tomkins**, 'Nursing Turnover and Staffing Practices in New Zealand's DHBs: a national survey', is also closely tied to the topic of labour retention. The authors investigate the chronic problem of nursing staff shortages both internationally and in New Zealand. Drawing on a pilot study of six countries, including New Zealand, and a national survey on nursing staff turnover and staffing

practices in 21 District Health Boards, they identify turnover as a growing problem. Difficulties have been particularly severe in metropolitan areas, where District Health Boards have to compete for nursing staff with private hospitals and non-hospital services. They point to the need for more research on why nurses stay and leave, in order to increase retention and to improve working conditions.

There are, though, many people in New Zealand whose skills are not being utilised. The paper by **Bernard Guérin, Pauline Guérin, Roda Omar Diirye and Abririzak Abdi**, 'What skills do Somali refugees bring with them?', is based on a series of interviews with 90 Somali refugees (35 men and 55 women). The authors asked these refugees about their employment experiences both before and after arriving in New Zealand. Despite the high levels of skills and experience exhibited by many of the interviewees, the paper reports that a variety of issues, particularly language and culture, have inhibited the translation of both skills and experience into the New Zealand context. Many of the interviewees have remained reliant on informal networks and economic relationships – their English language needs, in particular, do not appear to be met adequately by current services. The authors argue for programmes that are more tailored to suit the needs of Somali refugees, in order to maximise the benefit from their skills and experience.

## 2. The 'Knowledge Society'

Several papers addressed the closely related issue of the 'knowledge society' and how this might be achieved. In her paper, 'The "Knowledge Society": a glimpse inside the minds of management students', **Angela Mead** subjects the phrase to serious scrutiny. She starts from a dual premise: that the increasing need to respond to contemporary challenges has deepened the country's reliance on human capital investment, and that its chances of successfully developing a 'knowledge society' rest primarily with its ability to adapt to change. In essence, Mead offers a reality check on New Zealand's progress towards this goal. She addresses the 'knowledge society' through two distinct but interrelated themes: firstly, as a component of 'third way' strategies; and secondly, as a response to rapid social and economic change. Recognising that the 'knowledge society' can have multiple, often inchoate meanings, Mead seeks to give it greater substance through a qualitative study of the perceptions of a group of final-year business management students. She finds that, while the respondents have a strong awareness of globalisation (however understood) and technology as drivers of change, they lack any consistent understanding of the term 'knowledge society', uncritically associating knowledge with market value. The paper suggests a continuing dichotomy between 'Third Way' and 'New Right' views of the world.

In their paper, **Bill Cochrane, Michael Law and Gemma Piercy** investigate 'The knowledge society and high performance workplace systems: enhancing "worker voice"'. The paper is set against the backdrop of the revitalisation of New Zealand unionism, a gradual rebuilding process assisted by the Employment Relations Act, but still coping with the on-going effects of 1990s neo-liberalism. Cochrane, Law and Piercy examine the potential for 'worker voice' within the context of high performance workplace systems, strategies for the knowledge society/economy, and a government adopting broadly 'third way' policies. The paper draws on a survey of unionised dairy workers involved in a high performance workplace system, indicating how, within a unionised environment, a high performance workplace system can enhance worker participation and have generally positive outcomes.

A quite different aspect of the 'knowledge society' is addressed by **Chris Hector** in discussing 'The use of new technology and rising inequality in New Zealand: evidence from unit record data'. Due in large measure to adoption of new technologies, a number of New Zealand industries have undergone significant reorganisation since the 1970s. Concomitant with these changes has been an increase in wage inequality, leading some to conclude that the widening wage distribution is a consequence of increased returns to the knowledge and skills required in a growth economy dependent upon development of new information and communication technologies (ICT). To test this hypothesis, Hector employs data on investment in new technology from the 1996 Input-Output tables and unit record data derived from the June 2002 Income Supplement to the Household Labour Force Survey. Using quantile regression to estimate the impact industry spending on computers has on workers at the 10th and 90th percentiles of the wage distribution, Hector finds greater wage disparities in industries that are relatively high-end users of this technology than in other sectors. Notwithstanding this result, though, once controls for educational qualifications and occupations are introduced in the statistical model, this relationship is no longer apparent. Hector interprets this as suggesting that, rather being due to than any specific ICT effects, increased wage dispersion is more a consequence of a mismatch of labour supply and demand in those industries that make greater use of new technology. One implication of this finding is that the general level of education in New Zealand is likely to be a significant constraint on the Government's expressed desire for the country to advance towards the 'knowledge society' ideal.

Universities play a crucial role in the pursuit of a 'knowledge society', and two papers focused specifically on the issue of work in universities. The implementation of 'new' managerialism in universities has been the topic of a substantial body of research internationally, with the erosion of the previous collegial system of governance. The question of whether or not this has improved opportunities for women in academic work has formed a significant part of this literature. In her paper, 'Flexibility or insecurity? Women's experiences of fixed-term research-only positions in the academy', **Josie Roberts** examines a specific group of women academic workers. While women have been successful in achieving research-only positions, these are predominantly fixed-term. Using both quantitative and qualitative research data, she illustrates the contradictions inherent to research-only positions and the dilemmas faced by the occupants of these positions. Women in fixed-term, research-only positions remain vulnerable, although the duties of such positions have become more complex. Roberts makes a persuasive case for universities to reconsider their extensive usage of fixed-term, research only positions, to achieve not only greater equity but also better research outcomes.

**Bruce Curtis**, in his paper on 'The PBRF and its implications for academics in the Humanities and Social Sciences', also addresses a specific aspect of 'new' managerialism in universities – the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) 2003 and its impact on academic work. PBRF, like its overseas equivalents, represents the assertion of managerial prerogative over the most autonomous of academic activities – research. Using his own and other survey data, Curtis illustrates how PBRF, along with related developments, has generated uncertainty among academic staff, who are already exhibiting high levels of workplace stress. Of particular concern is his finding that many academic staff are pursuing individualist strategies that could undermine professional control over such areas as employment and peer review. Overall, academic staff appear to have responded to PBRF in individualist terms – either despondency or euphoria, both of which further undermine a substantial collective response.

### 3. Labour Market Supply and Demand

Skills shortages have attracted considerable public attention in recent years, as labour market supply has fallen behind demand in some areas. The topic of the paper by **Andrew Whiteford** is 'The Department of Labour's Job Vacancy Monitoring Programme' (JVMP). He provides an overview of the JVMP, which is part of the government's Skills Action Plan. It comprises several components, including: the Job Vacancy Monitor, a monthly analysis of job advertisements; a short, large-sample Survey of Employers (SERA Extensive) which identifies those skilled occupations where vacancies have been difficult to fill; an intensive, small sample, qualitative survey (SERA Intensive), designed to provide an understanding of skills shortages; a statistical analysis of supply and demand in selected occupations; and detailed reports on these occupations. Whiteford indicates how the information provided through the JVMP can provide a comprehensive source of data on skills shortages and the forces contributing to them. This should enable government to make well-founded decisions on training, education and skills development.

Job vacancies also provide the focus for **Brian Silverstone**, in his paper, 'Help Wanted in New Zealand: the ANZ Bank Job Advertisement Series'. In examining the Series, Silverstone shows that, although it represents New Zealand's most significant source of data on job vacancies, there has been little research based on it. He analyses several aspects of the Series, indicating the importance of vacancy and hiring rates to any coherent understanding of labour market conditions.

Like Andrew Whiteford, **Stephanie Cropp** uses the JVMP, in conjunction with the Department of Labour's Survey of Employers Who Have Recently Advertised. In her paper, 'Information technology professionals: a skills shortage assessment', she examines supply and demand trends in the IT professional labour market. She observes a rapid growth in demand for IT professionals over the past decade, with a further surge in this demand during the 2000s. The level of labour supply from tertiary institutions and migratory intake has meant that most employers have been able to meet their IT professional needs in a reasonable time. Nonetheless, while there is no general shortage of IT professionals, there are shortfalls in specific areas, and these are listed in the paper.

### 4. Regional Labour Markets

The distribution of employment across New Zealand's regions provides the focus for several papers. **David C. Maré** examines the topic of 'Geographic concentration of New Zealand employment'. While concentration has been increasing over the past two decades, it is only around the same level as found in the United Kingdom, but still lower than the levels of the United States and France. Maré identifies the main industries that exhibit significant concentration, while indicating the future research that the Motu Economic and Public Policy Research Trust plans to conduct on the topic.

Also on the topic of the regional distribution of employment is the paper by **Sandra Baxendine, Bill Cochrane, Ian Pool and Jacques Poot**: 'An interpretation of New Zealand's regional employment change by means of classic shift-share analysis 1986-2001'. They examine the impact of economic restructuring, liberalisation and fluctuating economic growth patterns on employment outcomes in New Zealand's regions. Due to the time-series nature of the data used, their analysis accounts for regional changes from

one period to the next. The authors find that, while there are variations in employment growth across regions, the national growth effect dominated over this period.

The topic of the paper by **David C. Maré** and **Jason Timmins** is 'Local job flows in New Zealand'. Focusing on whether local labour markets experience greater employment growth following periods of 'job churn', during which time both job growth and destruction occur, Maré and Timmins consider the implications of such patterns for local labour markets during the period 1987-2003. A key finding of this study is the inadvisability of easy generalisations about employment growth or decline in local labour markets. Specifically, the authors find no statistically significant evidence of any effect of the extent of 'job churn' on future employment growth within the New Zealand's regional labour markets. That is, declining markets often comprise a large number of vibrant and growing firms. Similarly, in expanding markets, a number of firms will fall into decline and some will even fail. Both phenomena can, in turn, affect significant shifts in local labour markets which, likewise, run counter to conditions in New Zealand's overall labour market.

## 5. Labour Force Transitions

In their paper on 'Household-based labour forced transitions: a new database and some methodological challenges', **Paul Callister** and **Susan Singley** address an issue which has attracted increasing attention from researchers in recent years: 'work-poor' households. They focus on the question, 'How long do "work-poor" households remain "work-poor"?' Using a specially developed Household Transitions database (itself based on the Household Labour Force Survey), they explore the characteristics of 'work-poor' households, indicating how these data can provide a more comprehensive picture of not only 'work-poor' households but also the dynamics of the broader labour market.

The paper by **Philip Morrison** and **Elisabeth Loeber**, 'Youth transition: the influence of the local labour market on expectations', assesses the relative influence of the local labour market on young people's expectations of the school-to-work transition. Within the context of a wider study on mobility and attachment in otherwise vulnerable communities, they compare the education, employment and income aspirations of senior students in two New Zealand schools, one located in a small, relatively economically depressed mill town in the Bay of Plenty and the other in the far more vibrant labour market around the nation's capital. Their findings indicate that, contrary to expectations derived from the education literature, a significant share of rural and small town youth, especially young women, manifest higher aspirations to enter the labour market than their metropolitan counterparts. This conclusion suggests that local unemployment rates influence the long-term aspirations of potential new entrants into the labour market, encouraging them to choose further schooling over employment. This phenomenon appears most pronounced among young men with lower levels of academic achievement.

In their paper on 'Pathways to employment for young New Zealanders: effects of social capital', **Ann Dupuis**, **Kerr Inkson** and **Eva McLaren** focus on how young people use social capital – in particular, personal networks – to obtain employment and develop their career paths. They use data from a survey of 866 participants, whose employment experiences and aspirations are assessed. Social capital is identified as crucial to the labour market knowledge and career planning of young people. The authors accordingly argue that the influence of social capital has been widely underestimated, and that it

needs to be integrated more coherently in policies and strategies to enhance young people's employment prospects.

The paper by **Libby Plumridge**, 'Social capital and the transition from school to work', addresses the same general topic, but with a quite different research strategy. Two 18-year-old males from a small, rural New Zealand community are interviewed concerning their future goals and ambitions as they near the end of their year 13 schooling. One was raised on a sheep farm and is now completing school in the local community. The other, having spent his early years on his family's dairy farm and attending primary school locally, is nearing completion of his studies at a boarding school. Based on insights gained from her discussions with these young men, the author concludes that there is a strong connection between social capital and expectations about the transition from school to work.

**Terry Moore's** paper on labour force transition addresses the 'Longitudinal analysis of labour force data'. Since the Quarterly Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS) produces cross-sectional estimates, most researchers have previously assumed that it is not possible to use these data for the purpose of longitudinal analysis. Moore suggests otherwise. In particular, this paper demonstrates that the HLFS data can be of considerable value with respect to deriving information about transitions in labour force status. However, a major caveat is that the methods suggested by the author for obtaining such information are generally limited to subgroups comprising larger numbers of people.

In her paper, 'Labour market dynamics from the survey of family, income and employment', **Diane Ramsay** explores the first year's results from Statistics New Zealand's longitudinal Survey of Family, Income and Employment Dynamics (SOPHIE). The SOPHIE data permit researchers to assess how the labour market circumstances of individuals change over an extended period. She observes that, in general, there is a limited degree of change over the period of a year. However, the use of 'spell' data allows examination of how long people remain in different states and how frequently they move from state to state. She illustrates how, as the SOPHIE data become more extensive and richer, more sophisticated analysis of changes in individuals' circumstances will be facilitated.

## 6. Work-Life Balance and Multiple Job-Holding

Several papers focus on the issue of work-life balance and the related topic of multiple job-holding. In their paper, **Penny Nelson** and **Trudie McNaughton** explore several themes in the work-life balance aspirations of New Zealanders. In the previous year, in conjunction with an inter-agency Steering Group, New Zealand's Department of Labour has overseen a process of public consultation, receiving input from a variety of individuals and organisations concerning their views regarding work-life balance. In general, the authors report that there is a range of factors affecting work-life balance and that the benefits of work-life balance will vary correspondingly. In this regard, they note that the Work-Life Balance Project established by the New Zealand Government in August 2003 has, from its inception, recognised that each person needs to find their own balance between work and other aspects of their life. Most New Zealanders, though, value both hard work and quality of life and, important to this debate, generally consider that they have good work-life balance. There remain, however, common concerns which the authors of this paper identify as having emerged from this process of public engagement. To this end, further progress can be made, the authors contend, by tailoring

solutions to balance the needs of workplaces with the needs of individuals, which will require on-going collaborative efforts involving employers, employees and government.

The interrelationships between work and life are explored in a qualitative, interpersonal manner by **Sonya Church**, in her paper, 'Superwomen: the work-life imbalance'. She draws on a series of in-depth interviews with female managers in the Rotorua tourism industry, to discuss the impact of work life imbalance on their family relationships. The paper indicates that, while there are certain negative effects arising from this imbalance, these are generally manageable with adequate support and any disadvantages are usually outweighed by positive lifestyle benefits. The paper affords several significant insights into contemporary debates on how women are able to balance work demands with other areas of their lives.

In his discussion of 'Changes in working hours for couples', **Paul Callister** examines the neglected topic of how the total usual hours worked by couples, rather than just individuals, have grown in recent years. Internationally, New Zealand is among the group of countries where individuals and especially couples work the longest hours. The paper indicates some possible explanations for this high incidence of long working hours and how the working hours of couples need to be evaluated in their own terms – for example, with respect to how couples make decisions on retirement or childcare commitments.

The past two decades have brought a substantial increase in the number of people holding down more than one job. In their paper, 'Multiple job holding in New Zealand: a growing presence in New Zealand's labour markets – 20 year trends', **James Baines** and **Jamie Newell** examine this phenomenon over the period 1981-2001, against a backdrop of major changes in the labour market – fluctuations in the unemployment rate, the increasing proportion of women in employment, and the growth or decline of specific industry sectors. They address the varied reasons behind the growth of multiple job holding, which include employers seeking more flexible working arrangements, low-paid workers struggling to maintain a reasonable living standard, and professionals using multiple job-holding to provide themselves with greater autonomy and flexibility. Baines and Newell point to some serious deficiencies in the national statistics – such as the absence of reliable New Zealand data on either casual or temporary work, or on multiple job-holding.

**Wayne McClintock**, **Nick Taylor** and **Julie Warren** use a series of in-depth interviews with male and female workers in three sectors – health, farming and cafés or restaurants – to examine the 'Effects of multiple job holding on the work-life balance'. They found that most of their interviewees wanted to work in multiple jobs, even though this meant that most had to work over 50 hours per week. For workers in these sectors, multiple job holding should be understood in relation to a variety of social, economic, family and educational considerations. Policies on work life balance consequently need to be informed by more analysis of these complex inter-relationships.

Another perspective on the topic of work-life balance is provided by **Lisa Mohn** in her paper, 'Human Resource Managers' views on implementing work-life balance'. Her discussion is based on interviews with Human Resource managers to investigate how work-life balance has been implemented in practice. Mohn identifies two main approaches: firstly, the corporate approach, which is primarily about using work-life balance to achieve organisational goals, in particular greater productivity; and secondly, a tripartite approach, involving government, employers and unions, which has a strong



commitment to providing greater flexibility for workers. She identifies several shortcomings in the relevant literature with respect to both the conceptualisation and analysis of work-life balance, going on to indicate that the HR managers in her interviews are primarily espousing the former, corporate approach. Mohn describes this approach as a 'wolf in sheep's clothing', whereby organisational performance is prioritised to the exclusion of workers' concerns.

In her paper, 'Paid work and relationships: maximising the benefits and minimising the losses', **Mervyl McPherson** draws on two main sources: the EEO Trust's survey on paid work and personal relationships; and interviews with relationship counsellors. She illustrates both the positive and negative effects relationships can have on the workplace, and how these effects differ among various social groups – for example, a trend has emerged among younger groups, whereby they are more likely to place a higher priority on relationships than on paid work. The paper concludes by exploring the role of government, and how more effective programmes for improving the interaction between paid work and relationships might be developed.

**Judith Davey** and **Sally Keeling** take a very different slant on work-life balance in their paper, 'Combining work and eldercare: a neglected work-life balance issue'. They introduce the issue of those employees who care for elderly relatives into current debates on work-life balance. Their research project on employees of the Wellington and Christchurch City Councils indicates how eldercare responsibilities can compound stress and have a considerable impact on both the quality of care and workplace effectiveness. Since eldercare is bound to become a responsibility for many of us, the issues they raise for carers and ageing communities require the development of policies that can resolve these competing demands on employees.

## 7. Equity, Legislation and Labour Law

Several contributors addressed topics within the broad area of equity, legislation and labour law. In the paper by **Paul Roth**, 'The impact of privacy legislation on the workplace: the New Zealand experience', he highlights several major shortcomings of the Privacy Act. Despite being in force since 1998, it has had relatively little impact on the imbalance of power between employers and employees in the area of workplace privacy. Labour law, rather than privacy legislation, continues to provide the most valuable safeguard for employees' privacy. Roth argues for regulation appropriate to specific sectors that can override both managerial prerogative and employees' ability to contract out of their own rights.

**Prue Hyman** also addresses the limitations of legislation, in her discussion of 'Pay equity and Equal Employment Opportunity: rhetoric and reality in the 2004 New Zealand labour market'. She argues that there is a substantial gulf between the Labour Party's official rhetoric and the actual outcomes achieved by its legislation. For several sections of the community – for example, people with disabilities, Pacific Islanders and Maori – equity remains a distant promise, while women continue to experience substantial disadvantages in employment. The paper identifies several important gaps in the available data, while arguing that priority should be accorded to the implementation of practical strategies designed to achieve pay and employment equity.

In 'Tracking the Employment Relations Reform Bill', **Janet Bedggood** analyses the passage of a contentious piece of recent employment legislation. She does this through an

examination of the coverage given to the Bill in specific publications. Seeing the media as a 'site of struggle', she discusses the efforts of different interest groups to influence the content of the Bill, and the Government's responses to these efforts. The paper then goes on to compare the requirements for bargaining in the Bill with those in the Employment Contracts Act 1991.

The paper by **Steven J. La Grow**, 'Employment status, job type and employer description among persons with a significant visual impairment in New Zealand', focuses on an important aspect of equity in employment. It is based on a survey of a random sample of 150 working age members of the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind. La Grow indicates that people with visual impairment are employed at only around half the rate of the general working age population, while people with the least amount of vision fare the worst. He concludes, however, that persons with visual impairment are very interested in employment, and are able to perform most types of job across all economic sectors.

Also on the topic of employment and people with disabilities is the paper by **John Jensen, Sathi Sathiyandra, Mike Rochford, Davina Jones, Vasantha Krishnan and Keith McLeod** – 'How much does disability affect the likelihood of employment?' They use data from the 2001 New Zealand Disability Survey and the 2001 Household Labour Force Survey to examine the impact of disability (including type of disability, severity of disability, and multiple types of impairment) on the likelihood of employment. Through analysis of numerous interrelated factors, they show not only how people with disabilities have a far lower likelihood of full-time employment, but also how different factors complicate this general picture. They go on to illustrate how more effective policies might increase the participation of people with disabilities in full-time employment.

## **8. Occupational Health and Safety**

The issue of Occupational Health and Safety always occupies a prominent place in any discussions of employment. Several of the papers adopted quite innovative approaches to the issue. In his paper on 'High rates of male injuries in the workplace', **Timothy Duke** examines 'maleness' as a significant factor contributing to workplace injuries, and why being male increases the overall likelihood of workplace injury. Although in some industries there is no significant difference in injury rates between men and women, men still comprise the substantial majority of workplace injury claims across most occupations. More extensive survey data on the psychological and physiological reasons for workplace accidents will be required to give a comprehensive picture of the influence of 'maleness' on workplace injury rates.

**Mike Lloyd's** paper on 'Practical phenomenology and the OSH inspector' uses the transcription of a documentary on one OSH inspector's working day to develop a 'practical phenomenology' of an OSH inspector's work. This enables Lloyd to identify how the OSH inspector's words and actions are responded to by others in the workplace, and how language shapes the inspector's interventions. Drawing on a comparison with the work of haematologists, Lloyd highlights the complexities and difficulties of the OSH inspector role, exploring the techniques adopted to address potentially life-and-death issues in the workplace.

In their paper, 'Reporting on Occupational Health and Safety in annual reports: a look at disclosure practices in New Zealand', **Judy Brown and Frances Butcher** examine

corporate disclosure of OHS information. They locate their discussion within the context of debates concerning the most appropriate conceptual foundations for social and environmental accounting. Through analysing the voluntary disclosure practices of 100 larger New Zealand companies, they indicate some significant shortcomings in OHS reporting. They go on, with reference to international benchmarks on the quality and quantity of reporting, to illustrate the limitations of voluntary OHS reporting and they detail how substantive improvements might be achieved.

**Jacqui Campbell** deals with an intriguing area of Occupational Health and Safety in her paper, 'Market researchers absorbing risk: contrasting training policies with workers' experience'. Her study of market researchers considers the health and safety risks of door-to-door surveying work in New Zealand by comparing formal policies and procedures with actual practice and workers' experiences in the field. She uses semi-structured, in-depth interviews and open-ended questions to stimulate workers' memories of health and safety issues – a research strategy designed to provide respondents with the freedom to speak more candidly about their experiences. Thirty individuals representing the diversity of market research workers and three supervisors at two organisations were interviewed for the study. Her findings suggest that, while training prepares the market researchers for many of the more obvious hazards, they eventually come to accept other, often unforeseen and more serious dangers, as simply part of the job. These include the very real risk of physical and sexual assault.

## 9. Wages and Unions

One of the most vexed current issues in the New Zealand workplace is wage increases and the question of why they have not been greater in a buoyant labour market, with historically low levels of unemployment and widely-reported skills shortages. In his paper, 'Recent trends in wage growth', **Simon McLoughlin** demonstrates that wage pressures are relatively high – for example, the unadjusted Labour Cost Index is at its highest since 1995 and there was a record high of 14% of settlements in the September 2004 quarter with wage rises above 5%. He illustrates also how the lag between labour market conditions and wage growth is likely to mean increasing wage growth, even if there is a decline in overall economic growth.

**Patrick Nolan's** paper, 'Welfare reform for low-wage workers in New Zealand: will Working for Families work?', reflects on how successful the Working for Families (WFF) reforms have been in reducing child poverty and providing financial incentives for lower-paid work. Nolan argues that, while the WFF financial incentives should reduce child poverty and encourage greater labour force participation by sole parents, they will discourage participation by some secondary earners in partnered households. They will also have the most dramatic impact on those people at the margins of labour force participation, and their decisions on whether to remain as caregivers or enter paid work.

This section is supplemented by a recent overview of unionism in New Zealand during 2004. In their paper, 'Unions and Union Membership in New Zealand: Annual Review for 2004', **Goldie Feinberg-Danieli, Leda Blackwood** and **George Lafferty** detail how union membership grew steadily during 2004, while just failing to keep pace with labour market growth, thereby leading to a slight decline in overall union density. Yet the union movement has been generally successful during recent years in arresting the decline of the 1990s. The Employment Relations Act has no doubt contributed to this relative

success, and the situation is likely to remain reasonably favourable for unions, with the recent re-election of a Labour-led government.

## 10. Australia and New Zealand: Comparative Analyses

Several papers provided comparative discussions of work-related issues in Australia and New Zealand. In the first of these, 'Re-conceptualising labour market regulation in Australia and New Zealand', **Michael Barry** provides an alternative perspective on labour market regulation in the two countries. Most commentators have suggested that institutional change during the mid-1980s to mid-1990s period was more extensive in New Zealand than in Australia. Barry, though, argues that there has been significant institutional re-convergence since then. Drawing on the political economy of Karl Polanyi, he develops a conceptualisation of labour market regulation designed to be broader and more socially embedded than analysis confined to the role of institutions.

In their paper, **Iain Campbell** and **Peter Brosnan** ask the question, 'Why is casual employment and casualisation less significant in New Zealand than in Australia?'. Definitions of 'casual' employment can vary considerably between nations, making cross-national comparisons difficult. Yet, as Campbell and Brosnan show, New Zealand and Australia have had similar histories with respect to casual employment. In recent years, though, the rate of growth in casual employment in New Zealand has not matched the rate of growth in Australia. The paper raises several reasons for this difference, focusing particularly on employer calculations and choices. In New Zealand, the use of casual employment offers fewer advantages for employers than in Australia – casual employees have greater entitlements in New Zealand, while permanent employees have fewer than in Australia. While pointing to the need for more comprehensive and comparable data, they illustrate the importance of New Zealand's more restrictive legal provisions on casual employment, which make it easier for casual workers to be reclassified as permanent workers.

The paper by **Chris Dunn**, 'Industry training strategies in Australia and New Zealand', is also oriented around a comparative analysis of the two countries – in this case, an examination of the two countries' respective approaches to industry training. Since the early 1990s, there has been a massive expansion of training provision, coupled with a shift from traditional apprenticeships to industry-based vocational education and training, on both sides of the Tasman. Dunn demonstrates, however, that there are considerable differences between the two countries in the organisation and delivery of this training. In Australia, the Federal Government provides huge training incentives to employers, whereas government funding in New Zealand is very limited. Nonetheless, Dunn argues that the relative effectiveness of the New Zealand system, which is administratively simpler and based around Industry Training Organisations, may hold some lessons for Australia.

In his paper, 'Age trends in the New Zealand and Australian trades workforce 1991 to 2001', **Robert Haig** provides a comparison of the changing age profiles of trades workers in New Zealand and Australia. While in both countries the age profile has increased between 1991 and 2001, this trend has been more pronounced in New Zealand, particularly in the 15-24 age range, indicating problems in attracting and retaining younger trades workers. Given the continuing high demand for trades workers, the aging trades population means that policy development needs to concentrate on ensuring the

attraction and retention of trades workers to prevent supply becoming even less dependable.

Trans-Tasman cooperation provides the focus for the paper by **Andrew Hancock**, 'The review/development of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO)'. At the end of 2001, in order to facilitate closer working relations and to utilise resources and knowledge that exist in both agencies, Statistics New Zealand and the Australian Bureau of Statistics began to consider producing a joint Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO). Soon after, an ANZSCO project was set up between both statistical agencies. Hancock discusses the reasons and background for the project. As he notes, developing such a classification requires balancing historical comparability with the need to provide an accurate framework for reporting on future changes in a given classification or category. In this regard, development of ANZSCO, in particular identifying current terminology for occupation titles, benefited greatly from the input of stakeholders and end-users. Moreover, an occupation classification has to reflect changes in society and be dynamic enough to cater for emerging occupations. To this end, Statistics NZ and the ABS plan to update the classification more regularly, via both agencies' websites, to take account of labour market changes.

## 11. Precarious Employment

Although call centres have attracted increasing attention from researchers in recent years, there has been little research on the extent of precarious employment in New Zealand call centres or on the experiences of call centre workers. The paper by **Zeenobiyah Naadiyah Hannif** and **Felicity Lamm**, 'Precarious employment in the New Zealand call centre industry', addresses this gap in the extant literature. They introduce a framework for measuring precariousness in their examination of two call centre case studies. Drawing on a series of in-depth interviews, they illustrate the significance of precarious employment in New Zealand call centres and how, unless more effective policies, work and management practices are developed, the problems faced by people in precarious call centre employment could become chronic.

In her paper on 'Precarious work, citizenship and the law: challenges and opportunities', **Amanda Reilly** assesses the capacity of labour law to take account of major labour market changes, focusing on the growth of precarious work. Ideas such as the wage earners' welfare state were constructed around an understanding of the workforce as primarily male, in full-time, permanent employment – the 'job for life' scenario of male 'breadwinners'. She introduces feminist labour law theory to illustrate how orthodox labour law can entrench inequalities between different sections of the contemporary workforce, which is characterised by the prevalence of precarious employment. Using the International Labour Organisation's concept of 'decent work', the paper focuses on the situation of precariously employed workers. Reilly argues for an inclusive understanding of labour law, whereby citizenship rights, not just labour force participation, might be extended.

**Pauline Guerin**, **Elsie Ho** and **Richard Bedford** investigate the problem of 'Who are the most unemployed people in New Zealand and what can we do about it?'. Using data from the 2001 Census and other sources, they look at the ten groups who, according to ethnicity and birthplace, had the highest rates of unemployment. They argue that more effective employment interventions for migrant groups require that more than educational

qualifications and language are addressed. The diversity of the various migrant groups requires a comparable diversity in employment intervention programmes, addressing such issues as social networking and labour market discrimination.

Finally, **Ayesha Udugampolage** and **Kunal D'Souza** address the situations of those members of the working-age population who are 'Marginally attached to the labour force'. Using data from the Household Labour Force Survey, they contend that, if these people are to be encouraged to enter the labour force, more creative policies and strategies, supplemented by workplace incentives, support and training, are required.