

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates

20-21 November 2013

Question: SBT83

Topic: Work Life and Family Survey

Hansard Page: 16, 21 November 2013

Senator PRATT asked:

83. Senator PRATT: It does come down to the specific aspects of this survey, which are about the work, life and family, which is particularly significant for mothers, from pregnancy and leaving the workforce right through the schooling years of their children, in terms of how they use their time and how they balance family responsibilities with participation in the workforce. Which of that information can you pick up elsewhere and which of that information has fallen by the wayside because this survey has been discontinued for the time being?

Dr Jelfs: I might take that one as a question on notice, if I may. That way I can give you a more detailed response in that.

Answer:

83. A number of ABS collections provide information relating to work and family life in Australia. These include:

- 2006 and 2011 Census of Population and Housing
- 2010 General Social Survey
- 2010 Survey of Voluntary Work
- 2009-10 Family Characteristics survey
- 2011-12 Survey of Income and Housing
- 2011 Childcare Education and Care Survey
- 2011 Pregnancy and Employment Transitions
- 2012 Persons not in the Labour Force
- 2012 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers
- 2012-13 Barriers and Incentives to Labour force Participation
- Labour Force Survey (monthly)

Collectively, these sources provide rich information on many aspects of Australian family life, including the structures and dynamics of families, child care costs, patterns of caring for children and persons with a disability, wider community and social participation, volunteering commitments and barriers faced in (re)joining the labour force.

Regarding time expended on family and work commitments, broad information on time spent undertaking unpaid work is available from the Census and supports analysis by the wide range of other personal and household characteristics collected in the Census.

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However, as previously advised, generic time use questions such as those used in the Census are not able to capture the detailed contextual information collected in the time use diary component of the proposed WoLFS collection. ABS is actively investigating options to collect this information through alternative approaches to better inform this aspect of work and family balance.