

4153.0 - How Australians Use Their Time, 2006

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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

This publication presents a summary of results from the 2006 Time Use Survey (TUS), the third such national survey conducted in Australia. Measuring the daily activity patterns of people in Australia provides time use profiles to describe the differences in the patterns of paid work and unpaid work across the community as people balance work, family and wider community obligations.

In this publication comparisons have also been made between the 2006 TUS results and those from the previous Time Use Surveys run in 1992 and 1997.

Unless otherwise specified, the analysis in this summary of findings refers to primary activities only.

The activities on which people spend their time can be divided into four main categories or types of time use. Necessary time describes activities which are performed for personal survival, such as sleeping, eating and personal hygiene. Contracted time describes activities such as paid work and regular education where there are explicit contracts which control the periods of time in which the activities are performed. Committed time describes activities to which a person has committed him/herself because of previous social or community interactions, such as establishing a household or volunteering. The consequent housework, other household management activities, child care, shopping or provision of help to others are all examples of committed time activities. Free time is the amount of time left when the previous three types of time have been taken out of a person's day.

In 2006, Australians spent an average of 46% of their time on necessary time activities, 16% on contracted time activities, 17% on committed time activities and 21% on free time activities. Compared with 1997 there has been a slight fall in the time used on necessary activities, which was more than offset by rises in time used on both contracted and committed activities, resulting in a slight fall in free time (from 22.0% to 20.5%) (table 3).

The time spent by men and women was similar for necessary time activities and free time activities. Men spent almost twice as much time, on average, as women on contracted time activities (21% compared with 12%), while women spent nearly twice as much time as men on committed time activities (22% compared with 12%) (table 3).

Four types of time by sex

Looking more closely, men and women spent their days in different ways. According to table 1, on average in 2006, men spent 4 hours 29 minutes a day (19% of the day) on recreation and leisure, 4 hours 33 minutes a day (19% of the day) on employment related activities and 1 hour 37 minutes a day (7% of the day) on domestic activities. Women spent much less time on recreation and leisure (3 hours 57 minutes a day, or 16%), nearly double the time spent by men on domestic activities (2 hours 52 minutes a day, or 12%), and about half the time that men spent on employment related activities (2 hours 21 minutes a day, or 10%).

NECESSARY TIME:

In 2006, men spent, on average, 10 hours 48 minutes a day (45% of the day) on personal care activities (necessary time) while women spent a little more (11 hours 6 minutes, or 46% of the day). Women spent more time on personal hygiene (54 minutes a day) than did men (43

minutes). The main difference compared with 1997 was a slight reduction in the time spent sleeping, down 7 minutes to 8 hours 30 minutes per day for men and down 3 minutes to 8 hours 32 minutes for women (see tables 1, 2 and 3 for more details).

For young people (aged 15 to 24 years), the amount of time spent sleeping (9 hours and 2 minutes) is more than half an hour per day longer than for all persons (8 hours 31 minutes), with young females sleeping significantly longer than young males. The amount of time spent on sleeping is much lower for the next age group (25 to 34 years), contributing to the lower total time spent on personal care (necessary) activities by that group. Time spent on personal care activities in the next age group (35-44 years) is little different to the previous age group, but the total time spent on personal care activities rises higher with each older age group, reflecting demand for time on health care and, progressively, lower demand in other types of activities such as work, education, and childcare (tables 4, 7 and 10).

Time spent on personal care activities by age

There is no significant difference between the amount of time spent on necessary activities for people living in a major city and people living in a regional area of Australia (table 8).

CONTRACTED TIME:

Contracted time has explicit contracts which control the time periods during which employment related and education related activities are undertaken.

Employment

In 2006, men spent, on average, 4 hours 33 minutes a day on employment related activities, similar to the amounts spent in both 1992 and 1997. Women spent 2 hours 21 minutes a day on these activities, up 12% on the time measured in the 1992 survey.

For both men and women, 96% of the time spent on employment related activities was in relation to their main job (88% of these activities for men and 87% for women), or in travel to and from work (table 1).

The amount of time spent on employment changes as age increases. In 2006, young men (aged 15 to 24 years), on average, spent 3 hours 33 minutes on employment related activities, and 2 hours 23 minutes on education related activities. For men aged 25 to 34 years, time on employment related activities jumps to 6 hours 18 minutes while for education the time drops to just 12 minutes on average. Time spent by men on employment related activities drops a little in the next two age groups, but for those aged 55 to 64 years it falls to 3 hours 53 minutes a day (16% of the day), reflecting transition to retirement for many men. By age 75 years and over just 21 minutes a day, on average, is spent on employment activities. For women the amount of time spent on employment related activities also jumps from the youngest age group to the next age group. However, at all age groups women spent much less time in these activities than men. Women aged 25 to 34 years spent 3 hours 10 minutes a day on employment activities, about half the time spent by men of that age, reflecting the greater time spent by women in domestic, child care and purchasing activities.

For 2006, the amount of time spent on employment related activities is similar for men in major cities and regional areas of Australia, while for women, those living in inner regional areas spent a little less time on these activities than those living elsewhere (table 7).

Education

The amount of time spent on education activities in 2006 was 30 minutes per day on average, similar to the measure from the 1992 survey and up 15% on the measure from the 1997 survey. In 2006, men and women spent similar amounts of time on education both overall (30 minutes each) and in each age group, and for both sexes the time spent decreased as age increased. For

men aged 15 to 24 years, on average, 2 hours 23 minutes per day was spent on education and for women it was 2 hours 22 minutes. In the next age group it drops to 12 minutes for men and 15 minutes for women (tables 1 and 7).

COMMITTED TIME:

The total committed time in 2006 for domestic activities, child care, voluntary work and care, and purchasing rose slightly (up 6 minutes per day on average from 1997) (table 1). The measure of time spent on child care rose by 10 minutes, with an increase of 6 minutes for males and 14 minutes for females. However, for the component activity 'playing, reading and talking to children', which recorded a 7 minute increase in coded activity, changes to coding rules may have significantly affected the measure. See paragraph 18 of the Explanatory Notes for details.

Domestic activities

For men, the average time per day spent on total domestic activities, at 1 hour 37 minutes in 2006, has not changed since 1992. For women, the average time spent on domestic activities has declined over time, from 3 hours and 2 minutes in 1992 to 2 hours 52 minutes a day in 2006 (12% of the day) (table 1).

In 2006, men spent 43 minutes a day on average doing housework (food and drink preparation and clean up, laundry and clothes care and other housework such as general house cleaning), up from 37 minutes in 1992, and spent 45 minutes on other household work (grounds and animal care, home maintenance and household management), down from 54 minutes in 1992. Conversely, over the same period the time spent by women on housework fell from 2 hours 27 minutes in 1992 to 2 hours 11 minutes in 2006, while the time spent on other household work rose from 31 minutes in 1992 to 35 minutes in 2006 (table 1).

The amount of time spent on domestic activities increases with age for both men and women (table 7). Men aged 15 to 24 years spent, on average, 35 minutes a day on domestic activities, compared with 58 minutes for women. The time spent on domestic activities more than doubles for people in the next age group (25 to 34 years) to 1 hour 11 minutes a day for men and 2 hours 32 minutes for women. Men aged 75 years and over, on average, spent 2 hours 47 minutes on domestic activities while women spent 3 hours 33 minutes a day.

Time spent on domestic activities by age

Purchasing meals and household services is one way of reducing the time spent on domestic work (table 19). In 2006, in 64% of households, household members had purchased one or more meals at a restaurant in the fortnight prior to interview. In 67% of households, take-away meals had been purchased. The main household services purchased were 'gardening, lawn mowing, pruning or rubbish removal services' (13% of households) and 'dry cleaning, ironing or laundry services' (10% of households).

Child care

In 2006 men spent, on average, 22 minutes a day on child care activities, up from 14 minutes in 1992 and 16 minutes in 1997 (table 1). Women in 2006 spent 59 minutes a day on child care activities, up from 49 minutes in 1992 and 45 minutes in 1997. However, for the component activity 'playing, reading and talking to children', which recorded a 7 minute increase in coded activity, changes to coding rules may have significantly affected the measure. See paragraph 18 of the Explanatory Notes for details.

A substantial amount of time spent on child care activities is recorded as a secondary activity. For example, minding children may not be the main activity being undertaken, but a concurrent secondary activity. When taking secondary activities into account, the time spent each day by men on child care activities was 1 hour 6 minutes and 2 hours 39 minutes by women (tables 4 and 13).

Purchasing

Apart from increased time spent travelling for general purchasing activities, there has been little change in the time spent on purchasing since 1992. However, changes to the coding rules between 1997 and 2006, so that travel to and from eating locales was coded as travel associated with purchasing in 2006 rather than travel associated with recreation and leisure, will have contributed to this increase. See the Explanatory Notes paragraph 18 for details.

In 2006, women undertook more than 60% of the goods and services purchasing, spending 58 minutes a day compared with men spending 38 minutes a day. In 1992 women spent 55 minutes a day compared with men's 34 minutes (table 1).

The amount of time spent on purchasing activities increases as age increases, but the differences between men's and women's purchasing time is more marked at younger ages. Men aged 15 to 24 years spent half the time purchasing as did women of the same age. The gap narrows in older age groups and by age 65 to 74 years there is little difference between men and women in the time spent on this activity (table 7).

Time spent on purchasing by age

Voluntary work and care

In 1992 both men and women spent, on average, 20 minutes a day on voluntary work and care activities. By 2006, men were spending 15 minutes a day and women 24 minutes (table 1). Nearly half the activity involves support for adults, which includes informal help.

The amount of time spent on voluntary work and care activities increases for both men and women up to the age group 55 to 64 years, with women spending proportionately more time than men in each of the age groups. Time spent on voluntary work and care activities declines for those aged 75 years or more (table 7).

Time spent on voluntary work and care by age

FREE TIME:

Free time is the time allocated to social and community interaction and recreation and leisure.

Social and Community Interaction

In 2006, the time spent on social and community interaction was, for both men and women, similar to the time spent in 1997. While the main activities undertaken by men and women were similar, overall women spent a little longer on these activities (47 minutes on average per day) than did men (40 minutes) (table 1).

Time spent on social and community interaction varies similarly for men and women as age increases. For both sexes the time spent on these activities by young people (aged 15 to 24 years) is at least as high as the other age groups (45 minutes for men and 53 minutes for women). For men the time spent falls in successive age groups to 33 minutes for the 45 to 54 year age group, then rises for 55 to 64 year olds to 44 minutes. For women the time spent falls to a low of 41 minutes for the 35 to 44 year age group.

For both men and women the time spent on social and community interaction is similar across the major cities, inner-regional and other areas of Australia (table 7).

Recreation and Leisure

In 2006, the time spent on recreation and leisure was 4 hours 13 minutes per day, down 15 minutes from 1997, with the largest falls being in time spent on: 'sport and outdoor activities'

(down 8 minutes on average); and 'games, hobbies, arts and crafts' (down 7 minutes). While the measured time spent 'talking or writing/reading own correspondence' was also 7 minutes lower than the time measured in 1997, in part this reflects a coding change which coded more talking activity to child care activities than was the case for 1997. See paragraph 18 of the Explanatory Notes for details. Overall, men spent 4 hours 29 minutes a day on recreation and leisure activities in 2006, compared with 3 hours 57 minutes spent by women on average (table 1).

While audio/visual media activities had accounted for more than half of the time spent on recreation and leisure activities for men in both 1992 and 1997, and did so again in 2006, by 2006 this was also the case for women.

For 2006, the distribution of time spent on recreation and leisure follows similar patterns for both men and women as age increases, although the gap generally narrows as age increases. For men aged 15 to 24 years, time spent on recreation and leisure accounted for 4 hours 51 minutes a day, on average (4 hours 9 minutes for women). This decreases to 3 hours 36 minutes a day for men aged 35 to 44 years (2 hours 59 minutes for women), and then increases with each successive age group to reach 6 hours 26 minutes a day for men aged 75 and over (6 hours 5 minutes for women) (table 7).

Time spent on recreation and leisure by age

The time spent on recreation and leisure activities is similar between major cities, inner regional and other areas of Australia (table 7).

YOUNG PEOPLE:

The use of time by young people (aged 15 to 24 years), on average, is different to the patterns observed for older age groups - they sleep more and spend more time in education, but spend a lot less time on domestic activities and child care. However, the young age group is a diverse group of students and non-students, the employed and those that are not employed, and their use of time changes markedly depending on these personal characteristics and on their living arrangements.

Domestic activities

In 2006, while young men overall spent an average 4 hours 5 minutes a week on domestic activities, those who were studying full time spent much less time (2 hours 59 minutes a week) while those not studying at all spent more time than the average (5 hours 16 minutes a week). Young women spent, on average, much more time on domestic activities than young men (6 hours 46 minutes a week), with those not studying spending 9 hours 40 minutes (tables 7 and 10).

Child care

Young women overall spent an average 2 hours 34 minutes a week on child care activities in 2006 (table 7).

Recreation and leisure

Young men on average spent 3 hours 57 minutes a week on recreation and leisure activities. Those who were employed full-time spent much less (2 hours 24 minutes per week) and those not employed spent much more (3 hours 57 minutes). Most time was spent by young men in 'TV watching and listening' and 'other audio/visual' activities, together accounting for a little over half of the recreation and leisure time of young men regardless of their labour force status. Young women, on average, spent much less time than young men on recreation and leisure activities (2 hours 3 minutes per week). As with men, those women who were employed full-time spent much less time in recreation and leisure while those not employed spent much more (3 hours 43 minutes). And as with men, the main activities of young women were 'TV

watching and listening' and 'other audio/visual' activities accounting for a little over half of all recreation and leisure time regardless of labour force status (tables 7 and 10).

PARENTS OF CHILDREN UNDER 15 YEARS:

When considering primary activities only, parents of children under 15 years of age, on average, spent 2 hours 8 minutes a day on child care activities. Parents who were employed full-time spent, on average, 1 hour 24 minutes per day on child care activities, while those not employed spent 3 hours 34 minutes. When taking secondary activities into account as well as primary activities, parents who are employed full-time spent, on average, 4 hours 22 minutes per day on child care activities while those who were not employed spent 8 hours 51 minutes (tables 12 and 13).

Whether parents were employed or not, mothers spent much more time caring for children than fathers. Mothers employed full-time spent 2 hours 17 minutes a day on primary child care activities while fathers spent 1 hour 9 minutes. For those not employed, the mothers spent 3 hours 56 minutes a day while fathers spent 1 hour 45 minutes a day on child care activities. These relativities were maintained across secondary activities.

The pattern of mothers spending more time than fathers on child care activities was reflected across the age spectrum of the children and across the different types of caring. And for both mothers and fathers, the time spent on caring activities decreased significantly as the age of the youngest child increased (table 12).

Parents of children aged 0 to 4 years

Mothers of young children (where the youngest child in the family was aged 0 to 4 years) spent over 30 hours a week on primary child care activities (fathers spent just over 11 hours). More than half the time spent by mothers was on the physical and emotional care of children, while for fathers the most time (4 hours 39 minutes) was spent on playing/reading/talking with children. When taking secondary activities into account as well as primary activities, mothers of young children spent 83 hours 51 minutes per week on child care while fathers spent 36 hours 25 minutes per week. Most of the extra time was in 'minding children' for both fathers and mothers, which accounted for 91% of the secondary child care activities of mothers and 95% of those of fathers (table 13).

Parents of children aged 5 to 11 years

For families where the youngest child was aged from 5 to 11 years, the time spent by parents on child care as a primary activity (10 hours 21 minutes per week) was, on average, half that spent by parents in families with younger children (20 hours 46 minutes). As for families with younger children, mothers spent most primary activity time on the physical and emotional care of children (4 hours 5 minutes a week) while fathers spent most time (2 hours 38 minutes) playing/reading/talking with children. When taking into account both primary and secondary activities, mothers for whom their youngest child was aged 5 to 11 years spent 42 hours 23 minutes a week on child care while fathers spent 21 hours each week. As with parents of younger children, secondary activities were dominated by minding activities (table 13).

Parents of children aged 12 to 14 years

For families where the youngest child was aged from 12 to 14 years, the time spent by parents on primary child care activities (4 hours 43 minutes per week) was, on average, less than half that spent by parents in families with youngest child aged 5 to 11 years. For mothers in these older families, the most time consuming primary care activity had shifted to playing/reading/talking with children (1 hour 59 minutes). On average, mothers in these older families spent 24 hours and 19 minutes a week on both primary and secondary child care activities, again with minding children dominating the secondary activities (table 13).

Time spent on child care by parents of children under 15 years.

OLDER PEOPLE:

In 2006, men and women aged 65 and over generally spent their time in similar ways, except for the gender differences across age groups for time spent in: employment related activities and recreation and leisure, with older men spending more time than women on these activities, and domestic activities, voluntary work and care, with older women spending more time than men on these activities.

In 2006 men aged 65 to 74 years spent, on average, 1 hour and 6 minutes a day on employment related activities, and those aged 75 years and over spent 21 minutes a day. The time spent on employment activities by women in these two age groups is much lower (12 minutes and 2 minutes respectively) (table 14).

Men aged 65 years and over spent 2 hours 47 minutes a day, on average, on domestic activities, compared with women spending 3 hours 36 minutes a day. The time that older men spent on these activities was more than 40% higher than for the 55 to 64 year old group, somewhat closing the gap between the genders as men withdrew from employment related activities. However, within domestic duties there is still a marked difference in the nature of the activities that men and women undertake. Older women spent 2 hours 39 minutes a day on housework, more than twice that spent by men (1 hour 9 minutes) while older men spent more time on other household work (1 hour 26 minutes) than did women (52 minutes). The majority of the time spent by older people aged 65 and over on other household work was spent on grounds and animal care (men spent 49 minutes per day and women 38 minutes), while men did most of the home maintenance (23 minutes per day compared with just 3 minutes per day on average for women) (tables 7 and 14).

Men aged 65 and over spent 6 hours 19 minutes a day on recreation and leisure activities compared with women spending 5 hours 50 minutes a day. For both men and women most time was spent on audio/visual media (3 hours 31 minutes for men, 2 hours 53 minutes for women). Older men spent a little more time on sport and outdoor activities (36 minutes a day compared with women's 20 minutes) and a less time on games, hobbies, arts and crafts (15 minutes a day compared with 26 minutes for women) (table 14).

TIME SPENT WITH OTHERS:

Time spent with partner

The amount of time spent with a partner increased with age. Men aged 25 to 34 years spent, on average, 66 hours 38 minutes per week with a partner. Time spent by men with partners increased to 83 hours 57 minutes a week for those aged 45 to 54, and by age 65 to 74 years the time spent with a partner reached 118 hours 15 minutes a week (or 16 hours 54 minutes a day) on average. Women aged 25 to 34 years spent 74 hours 43 minutes a week, on average, with a partner. The amount of time women spent with a partner increased with each age group up to the 55 to 64 year olds (women in the latter group spending 92 hours 31 minutes with their partner), declined slightly in the 65 to 74 year age group, and fell away sharply to just 56 hours 36 minutes in 75 years and over age group (table 16), reflecting the higher life expectancy of women and the consequent large numbers of women surviving beyond the death of a partner.

Time spent with partner

Time spent with family in the same household, excluding partners

For young people aged 15 to 24 years the time spent by men with family in the same household (excluding partners) is 80 hours 47 minutes a week, a little lower on average than for young women (85 hours 12 minutes a week). However, the difference widens markedly for the next age group (25 to 34 years) with women spending 97 hours 27 minutes a week with other non-

partner family members in the household (reflecting the increased child care and domestic activities they take on with young families), while men in this age group spend 57 hours 53 minutes a week with other family members in the household. The gender gap in time spent on this activity narrows by age 45 to 54 years (75 hours 32 minutes a week for women and 67 hours 58 minutes on average for men) and for older groups the differences are much smaller (table 16).

Time spent with family in same household

Time spent with friends

There is little difference at each age group between men and women in the time they spent with friends. In 2006, young people aged 15 to 24 years spent around 30 hours a week with friends. However, as work and family activities increase with age the time spent with friends falls sharply, to around 12 hours per week for people aged 25 to 34 years, and falls to around 7 hours a week for people aged 75 years and over (table 16).

Time spent alone

Young men spend more time alone than do young women. In 2006, men aged 15 to 24 years spent around 18 hours a week alone, compared with about 15 hours a week for young women. However, by age 55 to 64 years, women were spending 38 hours a week alone compared with 32 hours for men. By age 75 years and over, women spent 76 hours a week alone, more than double the time spent alone by men (31 hours per week) reflecting a longer life expectancy for women (table 16).

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