

# **Qualitative analysis of career paths of women in the trades 2001 to 2010**

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## Key Findings

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This study tracks the fortunes of a group of women working in the trades occupations in 2001, following them through the labour market until 2010. It is a qualitative study, in so far as the findings reported here cannot be generalised to the Australian population. The insights provided by this study are considerable, and include:

- ◇ By the end of the ten year period most of the women who had been working in the trades in 2001 had moved into other occupations (37%), a sizeable proportion (16%) were no longer employed, and just 17% were still working in one of the trades occupations (the remaining 31% having been lost from the sample).
- ◇ The women who left the traditional male trades tended to be those with lower job tenure and lower occupational tenure. For example, about one fifth of them had been in that occupation less than two years and more than one third has been in that particular job less than two years.
- ◇ The women who left their jobs in the trades were on lower earnings than those who stayed. The former were earning between \$3 and \$5 per hour less than the former. In terms of annual wages, the gap was about \$2500.
- ◇ In terms of job satisfaction scores, the women who left the trades jobs scored lower than those who stayed on the pay, job security and hours of work items and the differences were quite large. Only on the work-life balance item did the women leaving score higher than those who stayed.
- ◇ Women who left a traditional male trade were slightly more likely to be better off financially than those who stayed in their job. Moreover, both groups were considerably better off than those women working in traditional female trades. For these women, it made no difference whether they left or stayed in their job. In summary, one could say that women were better off financially if they were working in a traditional male trade than in a traditional female trade, but they were also better off by leaving that trade!
- ◇ Women in the traditional female trades expressed higher levels of satisfaction with their jobs than did the women working in the traditional male trades. Being dissatisfied with the level of pay stands out as a salient feature for both groups, but dissatisfaction

with the hours of work seemed less of an issue for the women working in traditional female trades.

- ◇ In terms of occupational destinations, some 41 per cent of the women who left the trades had moved 'upwards', in terms of the occupational skills hierarchy, and the other 59 per cent had moved 'downwards'.
- ◇ Those women who remained in the trades had higher levels of trades qualifications, whereas those who left had split into those acquiring much higher qualifications, consistent with their upward occupational mobility, and those with minimal qualifications, consistent with their downward mobility or with their movement out of the labour market.
- ◇ Comparisons with male tradespersons also provide some useful insights:
  - ★ In this study only 197 women worked in the trades at the start of this period in 2001 whereas some 966 men were in these occupations, a ratio of nearly 5 to 1. The gender imbalance between the types of trades was also notable: whereas 29 per cent of women were working in their non-traditional area, only 19 per cent of men were working in their non-traditional area.
  - ★ The most important difference was the 'endurance' of the male tradespersons: 35 per cent of this group were still employed in the trades some 10 years later, whereas the equivalent figure for the women was just 17 per cent. At the end of this period, 37 per cent of these women were found in other occupations outside the trades, whereas among men only 20 per cent were found in other occupations.

# 1. Introduction

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This report is a study of women who worked in trades occupations in 2001 and who continued to be surveyed through to 2010. The geographical coverage is Australia and the sample of women is a representative sample of women working in the trades in 2001. The data for this study come from HILDA, the *Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey*, which is the largest and most comprehensive data source currently available for studying changes in the Australian labour market over time.

Despite the use of representative survey data, this study is a *qualitative* one. What does this mean? It means that the findings of this report, such as the patterns of labour mobility uncovered in this study, cannot be generalised to the Australian population. The reason is simple: the number of women in the study is too small, and diminishes considerably over time. If these findings were to be generalised to a larger population the margin of error for these population estimates would be such that no meaningful conclusions could be drawn. Moreover, even though the study begins in 2001 with a representative sample of women, by the end of the period that representativeness has been lost because of women leaving the sample.

Consequently, this study is qualitative in that no claims are made beyond the sample. As well as case study discussion, this report also contains numerous tables and diagrams. However, all of this quantitative material is still qualitative in scope, meaning that its conclusions refer only to this sample of women, not to the Australian population of women trades workers more generally. For this reason, no weighting has been applied to the data (which is usually done when one seeks to extrapolate beyond the sample and produce population estimates.)

Among the issues looked at, two are particularly illuminating: earnings and job satisfaction. The former are presented as age earnings profiles, which essentially depict the average earnings of a group of workers at each age level. This provides a particularly useful insight into the life-cycle aspects of work. The various aspects of job satisfaction include satisfaction with pay, job security, the job itself, hours of work, and work-life balance. Together with the earnings, these measures throw light on the possible motives which might explain some of the labour market transitions which are mapped in this report. Do women leave their jobs in the trades because the pay is too low, or because the hours don't suit them? These are the kinds of questions which these data items help answer.

The conclusions reached in this report are impressionistic, not definitive. This is because the sample size is so small. Not only does this prevent one generalising the findings to a larger population—as noted above—but it also means that the any conclusions drawn here are tentative. A small change in the sample, for example, might see a different conclusion drawn.

In the chapters which follow I refer interchangeably to the women in this study as ‘women in trades occupations’ and ‘women in the trades’ and it needs to be kept in mind that this was their situation in 2001, at the outset. As will become apparent, many of them move into other occupations in subsequent years.

## 2. Who worked in the trades?

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This study begins by selecting a group of women who were employed in 2001 in jobs which fell into the ANZSCO (Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations) category of ‘Technicians and tradespersons’. As noted above, 2001 marks the beginning of the period of study, and in the following chapters I track these workers over a ten year period. Their situation, as they move between jobs, as well as in and out of the labour market, is the main focus for this study.

These movements are often referred to as labour market ‘flows’, and in the next chapter I look more closely at this, making use of diagrams which illustrate these flows. In this chapter I look at labour market ‘stocks’. This entails taking a snapshot of these women, a static picture at one point in time. I begin by examining in detail the characteristics of this group of women as a way of providing *baseline* data, and in subsequent chapters I examine how things have changed at particular times during the period 2001 to 2010. The baseline data is useful because it provides the largest number of observations for these women, and it also represents their situation prior to their (potentially) moving into other labour market situations.

### 2.1 Occupational background

This broader group of tradespersons and technicians is divided into two specific groups, termed ‘traditional male trades’ and ‘traditional female trades’. The basis for the division is their more detailed occupational category (based on ANZSCO 3 and 4 digit codes) with the criterion for the distinction based on the proportion of women working in these various categories as shown in the 2006 Census. Where women made up 26 per cent or more of an occupational category, such a category was deemed ‘traditional female’ and where women made up 25 per cent or less, the category was deemed ‘traditional male’.<sup>1</sup>

In 2001 some 49 women out of the sample of 197 (25 per cent) were working in traditional male trades. Table 2.1 shows the details and lists the particular occupations (or occupational combinations) which make up this definition of traditional male trades.

The women working in these traditional male trades were spread across a number of occupations, but were concentrated in jobs like chefs and draftspersons, bakers and safety inspectors. The construction and metal trades were the least likely places to find these women. The split

between part-time and full-time was roughly fifty-fifty but in some trades, such as drafting, there was a greater likelihood that they were working full-time. In the most common occupation—that of chef—they were much more likely to be working part-time.

Turning to the traditional female trades (Table 2.2), where the remainder of the sample (75 per cent) were working, we find that hairdressing was the dominant occupation, followed by that of cook. Together these two jobs made up over 40 per cent of all the occupations. The next two most important occupational groups were agricultural, medical and science technicians, and clothing trades workers and jewellers. These four occupational groupings accounted for two thirds of all jobs.

Women working in the traditional female trades were slightly more likely to be working full-time than part-time (55 percent to 45 per cent). The jobs where their full-time presence was greater were in fields like ICT support technician, the printing trades and working as florists.

**Table 2.1 Occupations held by women in traditional male trades, 2001**

	Counts			Percentages		
	PT	FT	Total	PT	FT	Total
Chef	7	4	11	29	16	22
Draftsperson	2	6	8	8	24	16
Baker, butcher	3	3	6	12	12	12
Safety inspector	4	2	6	17	8	12
Automotive mechanic	0	3	3	0	12	6
Floor finisher, plasterer, tiler	3	0	3	12	0	6
Metal fitter	0	2	2	0	8	4
Painter	1	1	2	4	4	4
Electronic trades worker	1	1	2	4	4	4
Wood trades worker	1	1	2	4	4	4
Toolmaker, maintenance engineer	0	1	1	0	4	2
Bricklayer	0	1	1	0	4	2
Automotive electrician	1	0	1	4	0	2
Plumber	1	0	1	4	0	2
Total	24	25	49	100	100	100

**Table 2.2 Occupations held by women in traditional female trades, 2001**

	Counts			Percentages		
	PT	FT	Total	PT	FT	Total
Hairdresser	15	20	35	23	24	24
Cook	12	13	25	18	16	17
Agric, medical and science tech	13	11	24	20	13	16
Clothing trades worker, jeweller	6	9	15	9	11	10
Miscellaneous trades worker	3	6	9	5	7	6
ICT support technician	2	6	8	3	7	5
Printing trades worker	2	6	8	3	7	5
Shearer, animal attendant	3	5	8	5	6	5
Gardener, greenkeeper	5	2	7	8	2	5
Veterinary nurse	4	1	5	6	1	3
Florist	1	3	4	2	4	3
Total	66	82	148	100	100	100

How does this occupational distribution compare with the Australian population? As noted earlier, I am not generalising the findings of this study to the Australian population. Nevertheless, the HILDA sample, at the start of the period in 2001 is regarded as representative of the Australian population, at least at more aggregated levels. So it seems worth examining briefly how well the distribution of women in this study—at least at the outset—matches that of the Australian population of women working in trades occupations. Table 2.3 shows the HILDA data, with both counts and percentages, alongside the equivalent percentages from the 2006 Census.

It seems clear that the distribution of trades occupations within this sample of women closely matches that of the Australian population. The proportion of hairdressers is slightly lower, and the proportion of women working in the clothing trades, and as jewellers, is slightly higher. While some categories (such as safety inspectors) are clearly over-represented in the HILDA data, this is inevitable when dealing with occupations with a very number of incumbents. The conclusion from this comparison is that the overall match between the HILDA data and the Census is very close.

**Table 2.3 Occupation distribution comparisons, HILDA 2001 and Census 2006**

	HILDA (Count)	HILDA (%)	Census (%)
Agric, medical and science tech	24	12.2	13.0
Draftsperson	8	4.1	3.5
Safety inspector	6	3.0	0.8
ICT support technician	8	4.1	4.6
Automotive electrician	1	0.5	0.0
Automotive mechanic	3	1.5	0.4
Metal fitter	2	1.0	0.3
Toolmaker, maintenance engineer	1	0.5	0.1
Bricklayer	1	0.5	0.2
Floor finisher, plasterer, tiler	3	1.5	0.1
Painter	2	1.0	0.7
Plumber	1	0.5	0.3
Electronic trades worker	2	1.0	0.6
Baker, butcher	6	3.0	3.6
Chef	11	5.6	5.8
Cook	25	12.7	12.3
Shearer, animal attendant	8	4.1	3.0
Veterinary nurse	5	2.5	3.1
Florist	4	2.0	2.5
Gardener, greenkeeper	7	3.6	3.1
Hairdresser	35	17.8	21.2
Printing trades worker	8	4.1	2.5
Clothing trades worker, jeweller	15	7.6	4.2
Wood trades worker	2	1.0	0.8
Miscellaneous trades worker	9	4.6	2.6
Total	197	100.0	91.1

*Notes:* The Census percentages do not equal 100% because not all trades occupations are represented in this study (for example, carpenters and welders). Note that data are not weighted.

*Source:* HILDA data and 2006 Census (from Table Builder Pro).

*Population:* HILDA: all women working in ANZSCO category 'Technicians and Tradespersons' in 2001; Census: all women working in ANZSCO category 'Technicians and Tradespersons' in 2006.

## 2.2 Demographic background

In this section I look more closely at the demographic and labour market background of the women who were working in trades occupations in 2001, highlighting the differences between those in the traditional male occupations and those in the traditional female occupations. For this purpose percentage comparisons are most useful, but again, caution is warranted in extrapolating beyond the sample shown here, given the small number of women in the traditional male occupations.

The women working in these traditional female trades tended to be younger, with some 39 per cent aged under 30 (Table 2.4). By comparison, only 25 per cent of women in the traditional male trades were in this age group. The maturity of the latter was also evident at the other end of the age range, with 19 per cent of them aged 50 or over. The equivalent figure for women in the traditional female trades was 11 per cent.

When it came to marital status there was little difference between the two groups. About two thirds of women in each group were either married or de facto. Similarly, their family situations were similar. About 61 per cent in both groups had no children. Women working in traditional female trades were more likely to have one child (22 per cent compared to 14 per cent) whereas women working in traditional male trades were more likely to have two children (18 per cent to 10 per cent). This difference probably reflected the younger age profile of women in the traditional female trades who have been at an earlier stage in their child bearing years.

As far as educational attainment went, women working in traditional male trades tended to have higher levels of educational qualifications. Over one quarter had either a degree or an advanced diploma / diploma, compared with about 15 per cent among women working in the traditional female trades. The latter group had a higher concentration of certificate level qualifications and, notably, a higher concentration of women with no qualifications beyond Year 11 (see Table 2.5).

The cultural background of women in the trades was also interesting (Table 2.6) with women working in traditional male trades more likely to have come from immigrant backgrounds. Some 32 per cent of them were born overseas, with 18 per cent born in an English-speaking (ESB) country and 14 per cent born in a non-English speaking (NESB) country. The comparable figure for women in traditional female trades was just 19 per cent from immigrant backgrounds, with most of those from NESB countries (11 per cent).

One possible factor in the decision to enter a trade can be the occupational background of the parents. Tables 2.7 and 2.8 depict the occupations which the parents of these women held when they were aged 14. Interestingly, women whose father's worked in the trades area were slightly more likely to end up working in traditional female trades than in traditional male trades. Women who entered the traditional male trades tended to have fathers who worked as professionals, and to a lesser extent, in less skilled blue-collar jobs. The mother's occupation seemed to be particularly notable for women working in traditional male trades. Over one third of these women had mothers who were professionals. The comparable figure for women in traditional female trades was just 13 per cent.

**Table 2.4 Age profile of women in the trades, 2001 (%)**

	Traditional male trades	Traditional female trades	Total
Aged under 30	24	38	35
Aged 30 to 49	55	51	52
Aged 50 or over	20	11	14
Total	100	100	100
n	49	148	197

**Table 2.5 Educational qualifications of women in the trades, 2001 (%)**

	Traditional male trades	Traditional female trades	Total
Degree or above	8	7	8
Advanced diploma/diploma	18	8	11
Certificate III/IV	29	35	34
Certificate I/II ND	4	1	2
Year 12	16	16	16
Year 11 or below	24	32	30
Total	100	100	100
n	49	148	197

**Table 2.6 Birthplace of women in the trades, 2001 (%)**

	Traditional male trades	Traditional female trades	Total
Born Australia	67	81	78
Born ESB	18	8	11
Born NESB	14	11	12
Total	100	100	100
n	49	148	197

**Table 2.7 Fathers's occupational background, 2001 (%)**

	Traditional male trades	Traditional female trades	Total
Managers	18	23	22
Professionals	18	9	11
Technicians & trades	11	27	23
Service workers	5	7	6
Clerical workers	5	5	5
Salesworkers	9	8	8
Machinery & transport	18	12	14
Labourers	16	9	10
Total	100	100	100
n	44	128	172

**Table 2.8 Mother’s occupational background, 2001 (%)**

	Traditional male trades	Traditional female trades	Total
Managers	9	11	11
Professionals	35	13	18
Technicians & trades	9	10	10
Service workers	3	10	9
Clerical workers	26	20	21
Salesworkers	12	9	10
Machinery & transport	0	2	1
Labourers	6	24	20
Total	100	100	100
n	34	107	141

## 2.3 Labour market aspects

The occupational tenure of those women who were working in the trades occupations in 2001 is also quite interesting. On the one hand, women in traditional female trades had slightly longer mean tenure than women in traditional male trades (9.1 years compared with 8.6). On the other hand, they had lower median tenure (5.5 years compared with 6.0). This reflects the presence of a small number of women in the traditional female trades who had very long tenure (between 20 and 30 years). Table 2.9 illustrates this, and shows that larger proportions of women in traditional female trades were found at both the top and the bottom of the occupational tenure distribution. For example, there was a large percentage (25 per cent) of women in traditional female trades who had been in their occupation for less than two years, but also a larger proportion who had been in their occupation for twenty years or more (16 per cent). The comparable figures for women in the traditional male trades were 14 per cent and 12 per cent respectively.

When it came to job tenure—the length of time with the current employer—women in the traditional male trades also tended to have been in their jobs longer than those women working in traditional female trades. The mean length of time was 6.3 years (compared with 5.5 years for those in the traditional female trades) and the median was 5 years (compared with 3 years). In looking at the distribution (Table 2.10), there was a concentration in the 5 years to 10 years range among women in traditional male trades (31 per cent) which was lacking among the traditional female trades (the comparable figure was 19 per cent). Patterns of very long tenure, and recent entry, were similar for both groups, so the differences in the averages large reflected this difference in the concentration in the 5 years to 10 years range.

**Table 2.9 Occupational tenure of women in the trades, 2001 (%)**

	Traditional male trades	Traditional female trades	Total
Under one year	10	16	14
One year to under two years	4	9	8
Two years to under five yrs	20	18	18
Five years to under ten years	35	19	23
Ten years to under twenty years	18	23	22
Twenty years or over	12	16	15
Total	100	100	100
n	49	148	197

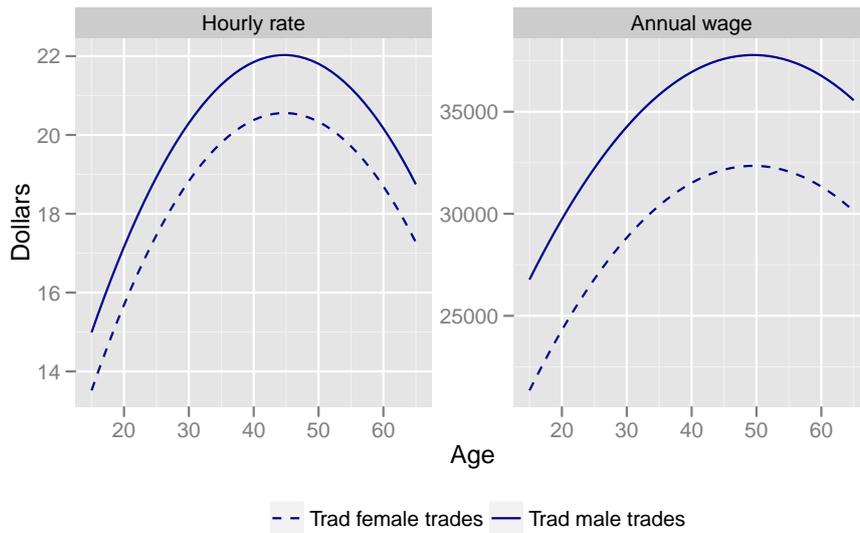
**Table 2.10 Job tenure of women in the trades, 2001 (%)**

	Traditional male trades	Traditional female trades	Total
Under one year	24	24	24
One year to under two years	2	11	9
Two years to under five yrs	22	26	25
Five years to under ten years	31	19	22
Ten years to under twenty years	16	14	15
Twenty years or over	4	5	5
Total	100	100	100
n	49	148	197

Earnings was one area where the distinction between traditional male trades and traditional female trades became particularly sharp. Women working in the traditional male trades in 2001 earned considerably more than their counterparts, whether measured as an hourly rate of pay or an annual wage. In the case of hourly rates, women in traditional male trades earned on average \$20.50 per hour whereas women working in traditional female trades earned \$18.64. For annual wages, the gap was considerable: \$35,029 compared to \$29,123. The median gaps were slightly smaller, but still considerable. These figures are (CPI indexed) 2010 dollar amounts, but it must be kept in mind that they refer to what this group of women were earning in 2001, since this is the baseline period for examining their situation.

A useful device for visualising earnings is an age-earnings profile, which shows what the average worker in a particular group earns at each age level. Typically these profiles are parabolic in shape, reflecting the fact that younger workers earn much less, and that earnings peak in the mid-to-late life period, before declining towards the end of the working life. Figure 2.1 shows such profiles for these two groups of women, with the first panel showing hourly rates of pay and the second annual wages. It is clear that women working in the traditional male trades experienced a considerable 'premium' over their counterparts in the traditional female trades at each stage of their working life. Moreover, the gap was slightly greater in respect to annual wages than was the case for hourly rates of pay.

**Figure 2.1 Age earnings profiles of women in trades occupations, 2001 (%)**



*Note:* Dollar amounts are (CPI indexed) 2010 dollars, but the period to which they refer is 2001.

Despite this sharp distinction in the actual level of earnings, when it came to assessing their pay, women working in traditional male trades expressed only a marginally better level of satisfaction than that expressed by women in traditional female trades. It is likely that their point of comparison was not these other women, but the men who worked alongside them. As Table 2.11 shows, women in traditional male trades had lower levels of satisfaction for most aspects of their job, compared with women in traditional female trades. Some of the differences were not particularly large, and median differences were often absent, but the overall pattern was consistent.

Two areas where the differences were notable were satisfaction with job security and satisfaction with the hours of work. In the case of the former, women in traditional male trades scored 7.0 (mean and median) compared with women in traditional female trades, where the average scores were 8.1 (mean) and 9.0 (median). For hours of work, the differences were 7.6 versus 8.1 (means) and 7.0 versus 8.0 (medians).

Ignoring group comparisons for the moment, the lowest level of satisfaction for women in traditional male trades was for pay and hours of work, and the highest levels were for the work itself and the job overall. For women in traditional female trades, the lowest level of satisfaction was also the pay, and the highest levels were for the job security and the work itself.

**Table 2.11 Satisfaction with aspects of the job, 2001**

Satisfaction with:	Mean		Median	
	Traditional male trades	Traditional female trades	Traditional male trades	Traditional female trades
Total pay	6.3	6.2	7.0	7.0
Job security	7.0	8.1	7.0	9.0
Work itself	7.6	8.1	8.0	8.0
Hours of work	6.7	7.4	7.0	8.0
Work-life balance	7.1	7.8	8.0	8.0
Overall	7.6	7.9	8.0	8.0

Notes: The original scale is scored from 0 (negative) to 10 (positive).

**Table 2.12 Assessment of aspects of the job, 2001**

Agree that:	Mean		Median	
	Traditional male trades	Traditional female trades	Traditional male trades	Traditional female trades
Paid fairly	4.5	4.7	5.0	5.0
Freedom in how do work	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Freedom about when do work	3.4	3.6	3.0	3.0
Lot of say in job	4.6	4.6	5.0	5.0
Use skills and abilities	5.6	5.6	6.0	6.0
Often learn new skills	4.3	4.7	5.0	5.0

Notes: The original scale is scored from 1 (negative) to 7 (positive).

In the HILDA data these survey questions which explore jobs satisfaction are complemented by another set of questions which also assess aspects of the job. Here the focus is not on satisfaction, but on agreement about particular elements of the job. There is a question on pay, for example, but it asks whether the respondent considers the pay to be fair. There are also questions on job autonomy and on skills. The results for these are shown in Table 2.12.

Keeping in mind that the scale is more compressed (1 to 7, rather than 0 to 10) and the items are not directly comparable, what is striking about these results was the absence of any real differences in the two areas of trades work. All the median values were the same and the differences in means were very small. Where the differences did show up, they tended to favour women working in the traditional female trades. The relativities, however, were more pronounced and did provide some useful insights. Women in both areas of the trades found that they did use their existing skills and abilities, but found less opportunity to learn new skills. While they were given freedom in *how* they did their work, freedom about the *timing* of that work was quite limited. Having a say about the work gained a higher score, but this domain still scored lower than the freedom allowed in how the work was done.

## 3. Labour market flows

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### 3.1 Overview

In this section I look at the broad patterns of labour market flows for the period from 2001 to 2010. I start with the same group of women examined in the last chapter—namely, those working in the trades and technicians occupational category in 2001—and then I track their movements over the next ten years. Following the framework set out in the last chapter, these women were initially divided into those working in traditional female trades and those working in traditional male trades at the time of the survey interview in 2001. In each subsequent year, the potential destinations for these women were defined in four ways:

1. traditional male trades (shown in black in the diagrams which follow);
2. traditional female trades (shown in blue);
3. other occupations, that is, those outside the category of trades and technician (shown in green);
4. not employed, which includes both unemployment and withdrawing from the labour market (shown in orange).

Another potential destination, not discussed here but shown in the diagrams as the 'Excluded' category (shown in red), were those women who were no longer tracked, sometimes because they exited the survey for good, were missing in that particular year, or failed to complete the information needed. In a few cases, these women did re-enter the survey, but generally they were lost to the study.

So what does the pattern of labour market flows look like? At the start of the period some three-quarters of these women were working in the traditional female occupations. Over time, there was considerable movement out of the trades for both traditional male and traditional female occupations, and much of this happened in the first period from 2001 to 2002. In the case of traditional male occupations, the numbers fell between 2001 and 2002 from 57 to 21 (or from 29% to 11%) and in the case of traditional female occupations the fall was from 140 to 69 (or from 71% to 35%). Most of these departures were into other occupations, rather than out of the labour market: 56 women in the former and just 16 in the latter. Some 35 were lost from the survey.

In the period from 2002 to 2004 there was reasonable stability in the numbers who stayed in the traditional male occupations, but after that period the numbers fell again, reaching their lowest levels in 2005, when just 9 women were still in these occupations (5%). The numbers then crept up again for the remainder of the period, hovering between 12 and 14.

There was something of a contrast here with the women working in traditional female occupations. Not only was there a large drop in 2001 to 2002, but another large drop occurred in the following period—from 69 down to 54—and again in the following period—from 54 down to 40. There was some stability in the numbers after that, but another sharp drop was evident in the final period.

Overall, the decline in numbers for women working in the traditional female occupations was from 140 to 21 while for women working in the traditional male occupations the fall was from 57 to 12. The attrition rate from these occupations was thus higher in the traditional female occupations—with just 15% remaining—than was the case for the traditional male occupations—where some 21% remained.

By the end of the ten year period most of the women had moved into other occupations (37%), a sizeable proportion (16%) were no longer employed, and just 17% were still working in one of the trades occupations (the remaining 31% having been lost from the sample).

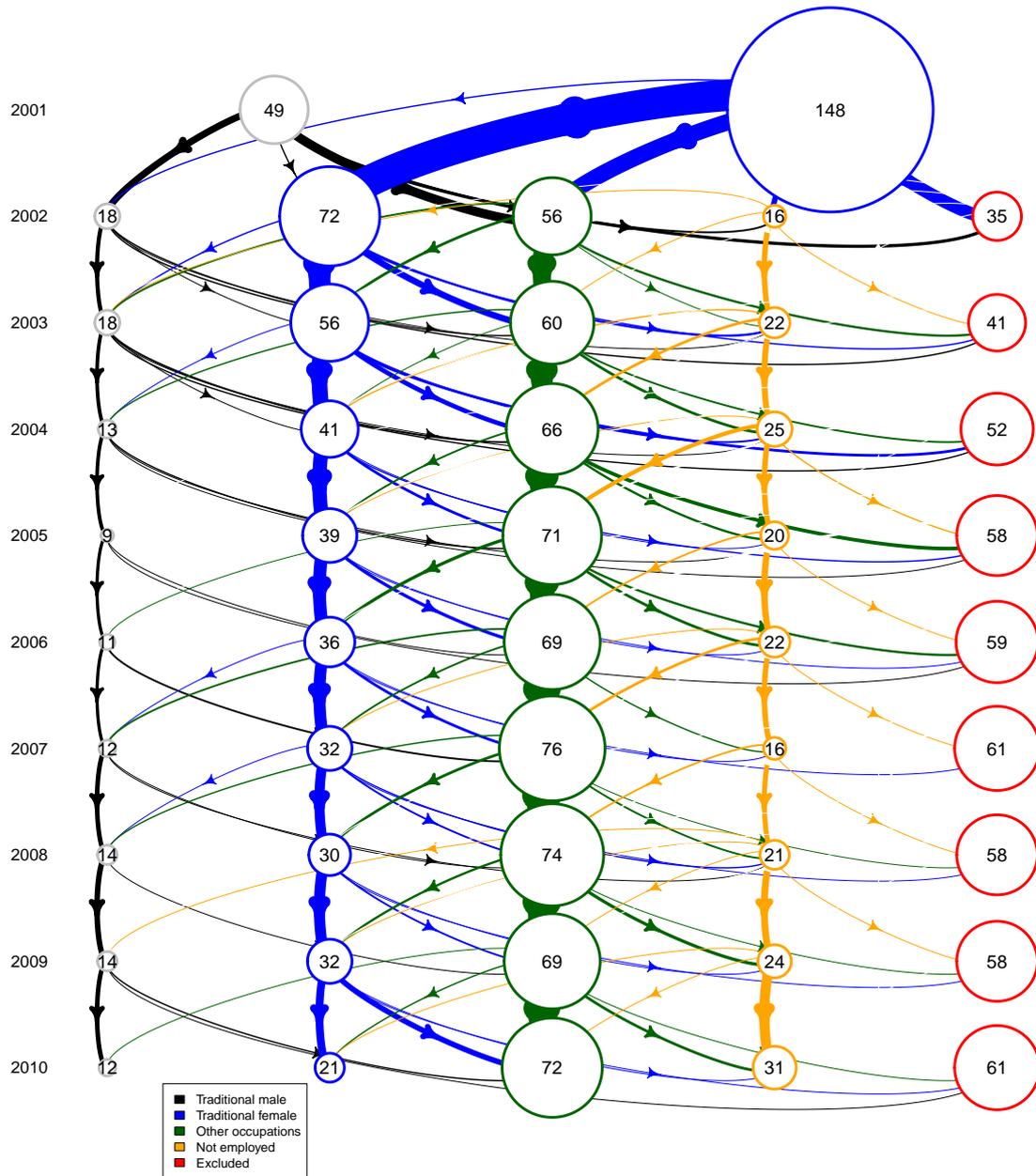
Other movements which are worth noting was the flow of women back into employment throughout the period, with the period 2003 to 2005 showing considerable movement. Nearly all of these flows were into other occupations, not back into the trades. The more notable flows into the trades came from women working in the other occupations. These inflows from other occupations were responsible for sustaining the numbers in these trades occupations and offsetting the departures.

## 3.2 Some key questions

This overview leads to a number of core questions worth pursuing:

1. who were the women who departed from these trades occupations in 2002, and were there differences between the traditional male trades and the traditional female trades?
2. who were the women who left employment altogether, and what were their destinations? Did they undertake parenting or studying?
3. what factors related to their jobs might have influenced these flows out of the trades occupations?
4. who were the women who re-entered the trades occupations from the other occupations in later years, and is it possible to find out what might have been behind this?

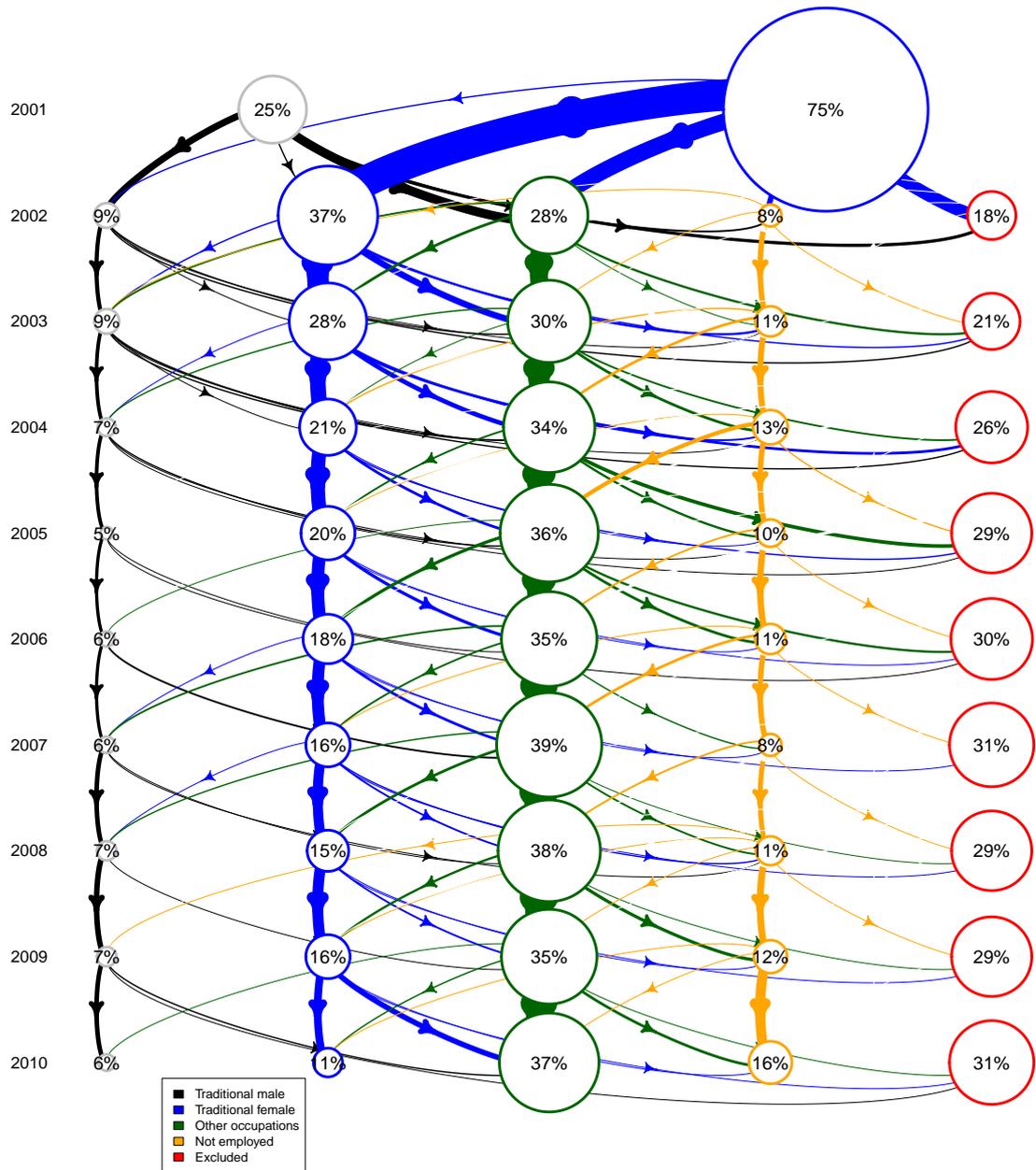
**Figure 3.1 Labour market flows: all women working in the trades in 2001**



Source: Table A.1.

Note: The size of each circle is proportional to the numbers in that situation. The actual numbers are also printed inside each circle. The thickness of each line is proportional to the numbers moving along that pathway.

Figure 3.2 Labour market flows: all women working in the trades in 2001 (%)



### **3.3 Who left the trades?**

During the period 2001 to 2002 there was a large departure of women from both the traditional male trades and the traditional female trades. In the case of the former, 34 of the 49 who were working in traditional male trades left, and 79 of the 148 who were working in the traditional female trades left. Where did they go?

#### **Destinations of those who left traditional male trades**

Of these 34 departing, three moved into traditional female trades, 20 went to other occupations, four were no longer employed, and seven were not tracked. The traditional female trades taken up were two jobs as cooks and one as a veterinary nurse. The other occupations were quite varied: four moved into managerial positions, three moved into professional occupations, three moved into jobs in community services, one moved into a personal services job, three moved into clerical jobs, three moved into sales jobs, and another three moved into labouring or machinery operating jobs. In all, seven of these women moved upwards in terms of the ANZSCO skills hierarchy, and the other thirteen moved downwards.

Of the four who were no longer employed, one was unemployed, but studying full-time, and the other three had left the labour market. One of these women was studying full-time, one became pregnant and the other gave birth to a child.

#### **Destinations of those who left traditional female trades**

Of the 79 women who departed from the traditional female trades, the majority (36) moved into other non-trades jobs while twelve left employment. Three moved into traditional male trades and another 28 were not tracked.

The traditional male trades taken up were the job of safety inspector and chef while the other non-trades occupations consisted of managerial jobs (9), professional jobs (7), community services jobs (1), clerical jobs (6), sales jobs (4) and labouring and machinery operating jobs (9). Overall, sixteen women moved upwards in the skills hierarchy, 20 moved downwards.

Of the twelve women who left employment, one became unemployed and the remainder left the labour market. Two women took up full-time study, two became pregnant and two gave birth to children.

#### **Characteristics of those who left traditional male trades**

So who left the traditional male trades? What were the demographic and work characteristics of these women? The women departing from the traditional male trades were spread across all age groups. Seven left in their 50s, another seven left before they reached 30, and the

remainder left in their middle years. There were no clear patterns in terms of educational qualifications or birthplace.

Not surprisingly, the women who left the traditional male trades tended to be those with lower job tenure and lower occupational tenure. For example, about one fifth of them had been in that occupation less than two years and more than one third has been in that particular job less than two years.

As one might expect, given this pattern in job tenure, the women who left their jobs were on lower earnings than those who stayed. The former were earning between \$3 and \$5 per hour less than the former. In terms of annual wages, the gap was about \$2500.

Some of the other job characteristics provide possible insights into why these women left their jobs. Looking at the range of job satisfaction items, the women who left scored lower than those who stayed on the pay, job security and hours of work items and the differences were quite large (keeping in mind the small sample size). Only on the work-life balance item did the women leaving score higher than those who stayed. With the other set of attitudinal items—those concerning assessments of the job—the difference between the women who left and those who stayed was less pronounced. On one of the items related to job autonomy—freedom in how they do their job—and in the item concerning the opportunity to learn new skills—the women who left scored lower than their counterparts. On the other hand, they actually scored higher in assessing the pay for the job as fair.

## **Characteristics of those who left traditional female trades**

The women leaving the traditional female trades were more likely to be younger, with 28 of them aged under 30. Only 14 were in their fifties or older. In terms of education, the women leaving were also more likely to have lower qualifications—school level or below—and less likely to have Certificate III or IV qualifications. There was nothing distinctive in their country of birth.

As with the women leaving traditional male trades, those leaving traditional female trades were more likely to have had shorter job and occupational tenure. About 28 per cent of these women had been in their occupation less than two years, and 39 per cent had been in that particular job for less than two years.

Unlike the women in the traditional male trades, those leaving the traditional female trades were actually earning slightly more than those who stayed, though the figures are ambiguous. The mean hourly gap was about \$1, but the median gap (also about \$1) favoured those who stayed. In terms of annual wages, there was no difference between the two groups for the mean measure, but the median showed those who left earning about \$2,000 a year more than those who stayed.

The gaps in job satisfaction between those stayed and those who left were not as substantial among the traditional female trades as we saw earlier with the traditional male trades. In the areas of pay and hours of work, the women who left were less satisfied, but on most of the other items the differences were minor. Job security, for example, was much less of an issue among those who left compared with the situation for traditional male trades.

I noted earlier in looking at traditional male trades that the gap between those who left and those who stayed when it came to assessments of the job was not as sharp as was the case for job satisfaction. That is even more so here, with very small differences between the two groups. Those who left their job did have lower scores on all the items, but the differences were minor.

### **3.4 Were they better off?**

An obvious question which arises is whether these women were better off for having left their jobs? While the survey does not ask this question directly, it is possible to infer something from the differences in pay, before and after the move, and the differences in satisfaction scores, before and after. In this section, I look at some of these results. I present these as tables of percentages, but it's important to keep in mind that the numbers of women being discussed here are quite small and so only large percentage differences are worth noting. The time frame for these data are women who left their trades jobs between 2001 and 2002 with the changes reflecting the difference between the trades job held in 2001 and the job held in 2002.

Being better off financially is a major element of any job change. In this case, the results seem reasonably clear. Women who moved from a traditional male trade were slightly more likely to be better off than those who stayed in their job (Table 3.1). Moreover, both groups were considerably better off than those women working in traditional female trades. For these women, it made no difference whether they left or stayed in their job.

Satisfaction with pay followed a similar pattern. The women in traditional male trades who moved were slightly more likely to be better off than was the case for women who stayed. What's more the proportions who were worse off was considerably higher among the women who stayed. When we turn to women in traditional female trades, there is no real difference between those who stayed and those who moved, and the proportions of women being better off (for those who moved) are higher among the traditional male trades than among the traditional female trades (Table 3.2).

Looking at satisfaction with the job as whole, a similar pattern prevailed. The women working in traditional male trades were better off if they moved than if they didn't, and they were better off than those in

traditional female trades (though the gap was not very large here). The women in traditional male trades who stayed were much worse off than those moved, and worse off than those in traditional female trades (Table 3.3).

To summarise these patterns in a nutshell, one could say that women were better off working in a traditional male trade than in a traditional female trade, but they were also better off by leaving that trade!

**Table 3.1 Changes in hourly rates of pay, 2001 to 2002 (%)**

	Traditional male trades			Traditional female trades		
	Moved	Stayed	Total	Moved	Stayed	Total
Worse off	26	33	29	33	32	33
Same	5	8	6	30	27	28
Better off	68	58	65	37	40	39
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
n	19	12	31	30	62	92

Notes: 'Same' is defined as a change between -5% and +5%, 'worse off' is lower than -5% and 'better off' is higher than +5%. This latitude in the definition of 'same' is necessary because hardly anyone is on exactly the same wage and hours of work a year later.

**Table 3.2 Changes in satisfaction with pay, 2001 to 2002 (%)**

	Traditional male trades			Traditional female trades		
	Moved	Stayed	Total	Moved	Stayed	Total
Worse off	22	47	32	33	35	34
Same	35	20	29	41	36	38
Better off	43	33	39	26	29	28
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
n	23	15	38	39	69	108

Notes: 'Same' is defined as no change in score, worse off' is lower than 0 and 'better off' is higher than 0. Some individuals are missing because they were not working at the time of the second interview, or if they failed to fill in the self-completion questionnaire at either interview.

**Table 3.3 Changes in satisfaction with job overall, 2001 to 2002 (%)**

	Traditional male trades			Traditional female trades		
	Moved	Stayed	Total	Moved	Stayed	Total
Worse off	30	53	39	44	38	40
Same	26	20	24	21	32	28
Better off	43	27	37	36	30	32
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
n	23	15	38	39	69	108

Notes: See notes to Table 3.2.

## 3.5 Re-entering the trades

### Who re-entered?

Having left their trade occupation during 2001–2002 and worked in another occupation, some women returned to the trades during 2002–2003. Who were they, and what jobs did they leave?

Looking first at the jobs they left, we find that of women who left the traditional male trades, four returned in 2002–2003. One had been working in community services, one in recreation, one was in a sales job and one had been working as a food preparation assistant. All four women returned to the trades in which they had been working. Three of the women stayed employees throughout this period, but one took up self-employment when she returned to her trade.

Six women who had left the traditional female trades in 2001-2002 returned to these trades in 2002-2003. Three had been working as hospitality, retail or services managers, two had been working in clerical jobs, and one had been working in a sales jobs. Five of the six returned to the same trades in which they had been working. One woman, who had worked as a hairdresser, returned to work as a veterinary nurse.

What were the demographic characteristics of these women? One of the women returning to the traditional male trades was in her late 20s, the other three were in the 35 to 44 year age group. In the case of the women returning to the traditional female trades, all were aged over 35, and three were aged over 50. In the interval while away from their trade, two of the women in the traditional male trades had changed marital status: one had married, one had married and one had separated. For the women in the traditional female trades none had changed marital status. For both groups of women, none had taken up full-time study during the interval, nor had any children been born. It would seem that changes in personal circumstances had little bearing on these labour market transitions.

### Why did they leave and return?

Do the survey satisfaction items throw any light on why these women took the path they did? Can we regard their satisfaction scores as an indicator of the quality of the jobs they undertook, and assume that this may have influenced their movements between jobs? In this section I explore these questions and suggest, tentatively, that there do seem to be patterns in the job quality which would be consistent with job changing.

Looking first at women in traditional male trades, there are some interesting differences in satisfaction scores across this period 2001 to 2003. There are also insights to be gained by comparing job assessments across the different occupations. The numbers are so small that it's worth looking at each individual worker, treating each as a case study. For ease of expression, the women are given fictional names.

### **Rosie, metal fitter**

Rosie had been working as a metal fitter in 2001 and then moved into a job in community services (as a carer) in 2002, before moving back to metal fitting in 2003. She was very dissatisfied in her trades jobs in 2001 (scoring 3), something which improved considerably in 2002 when she moved to the non-trades job (scoring 6) and then improved again when she moved back to the trades job in 2003 (scoring 7). This was her rating of the job overall. In terms of the pay, or other aspects of the jobs (hours, flexibility etc) there were only minor changes as Rosie moved through these jobs. While it is difficult to know for sure, her trades job in 2001 was probably an apprenticeship: she was aged 24 and was earning less than \$12 an hour. In the carer's job Rosie was earning about twice this amount.

When Rosie assessed her use of skills in these jobs, as well as her opportunity to learn new skills, the trades jobs fared poorly, particularly when she returned. By contrast, she rated the skills content of the carer job much more highly. On the other hand, Rosie did not rate this caring job very highly in terms of job autonomy, nor the fairness of the pay for the work required.

### **Wendy, building industry tradesperson**

Wendy was employed as a building tradesperson in 2001, working in the floor finishing, plastering or tiling area. She moved to a job as a food preparation assistant in 2002 and then moved back into her trades job in 2003. Her levels of overall job satisfaction (and most of her other satisfaction scores) were high throughout the period and barely changed (around 8). However, Wendy's satisfaction with the hours was much lower in her trades job in 2001 (scoring 5) and this improved considerably when she moved into the non-trades job (jumping to 8). Wendy's movement back into the trades saw her move from employee status to self-employment, no doubt a position which gave her greater control over her hours. In terms of skills usage, Wendy rated the first building trades job very poorly and experienced an improvement in both of the subsequent jobs. In terms of learning new skills, all three jobs fared poorly.

### **Gabrielle, draftsperson**

Gabrielle was working as a draftsperson in 2001, moved into working in sales in 2002 and then moved back to drafting in 2003. Her overall job satisfaction scores were high throughout the period (around 9), as were most of the other satisfaction scores (around 8). However, her satisfaction with the pay was low in the trades job (at 6), but even lower in the sales job (at 4). When Gabrielle returned to drafting, the score lifted, but only back to 6. While she rated all her jobs highly in terms of skills content and the opportunity to learn new skills, she rated them poorly in terms of the fairness of the pay. During these three years, her pay never rose above \$17 per hour, and yet she was aged in her 40s.

### **Jeannette, draftsperson**

Jeannette also worked as a draftsperson in 2001, and she moved into working in a sports and personal services job in 2002, before moving back to drafting in 2003. She was not happy with the drafting job in 2001, scoring just 2 for her satisfaction with the pay, and 5 for her satisfaction with the hours and with the flexibility. On a question which asked about hours of work, Jeannette indicated she wished to work fewer hours. Her score for the satisfaction with the work itself was 6, her satisfaction with the job security was 7, and her overall score was 7. While the change to the non-trades job did not change her overall job satisfaction score, it did improve her satisfaction with the pay—which lifted to 7—and the flexibility which also lifted to 7. Jeannette's satisfaction with the job security jumped to 10 and her satisfaction with the work itself jumped from 6 to 9. However, her satisfaction with the hours did not improve and she still indicated that she would prefer to be working fewer hours.

Overall, Jeannette went from being pretty unhappy in the trades job to finding a much improved job. Nevertheless, she moved back into her trades job the following year, possibly because the hours situation improved. She now indicated that she was working the hours she wanted and her satisfaction score for hours of work increased to 7. Interestingly, Jeannette's other satisfaction scores remained high or improved with the move back, with only a small drop in her job security satisfaction (from 10 back to 9). When Jeannette assessed the skills content of her jobs, all of them scored well, but the opportunity to learn new skills was rated very low in the non-trades job and in her return to a trades job. Only her first trades job scored well on this measure. In terms of pay, her return to her trades job saw a considerable gain in earnings, with the hourly rate being more than \$4 per hour higher.

In looking at the women who left traditional female trades and then returned, I depart from this case study model. This is partly for reasons of space—there are six of these women—and partly because the traditional male trades is the core concern of this report. Instead, I will focus on interesting elements in their various trajectories which throw light on the broader theme of what motivates job changing. All of the women in this group expressed high levels of satisfaction with their jobs, with scores of 8, 9 and 10 being common. There were only a few abrupt changes in satisfaction coincident with job changing. In the case of one woman, who moved from being an agricultural, medical or science technician to being a self-employed sales representative, her score jumped from 7 to 10, and another women, who went back to being an ICT support technician in 2002–2003 after working in a clerical job during 2002–2003 saw her score drop from 9 to 6. For this woman, there was considerable dissatisfaction with her pay, which scored 4 in both jobs. Her earlier job as an ICT support technician (in 2001) had rated a 9 when it came to pay. She was also the least happy with the work itself, scoring the ICT support technician job with a 4.

By way of contrast, most of the other women who assessed the work itself, scored their jobs in the 8 to 10 range. These women were somewhat less happy about the pay, with a score of 5 for one woman working as a hairdresser and a score of 2 for another woman working as a florist. This last woman had earlier (in 2001) worked as a florist, and

her score on that occasion for her pay satisfaction was 10. Her interim job—in a clerical job in 2001–2002—scored 7.

Again, for most of the women there were high scores for satisfaction with the hours and with the job flexibility, but with a couple of notable exceptions. The woman who worked as a hairdresser scored the hours quite poorly (5 and 6) and the job flexibility even worse (5 and 0).

As with the satisfaction scores, the job assessment scores were also consistently high for this group of women. Keeping in mind that the scale is 0 to 7, most of the scores across most of the measures were in the 5 to 7 range. A notable exception was the woman working as an ICT support technician, who scored her use of skills at 2. When she moved to working in a clerical job, the score was even lower (at 1).

The woman who worked as a hairdresser in 2001 and later returned as a veterinary nurse in 2002-2003 was reasonably happy about the way her jobs made use of her existing skills (scoring 6) but she was much more pessimistic about her opportunity to learn new skills (scoring both with a 2).

While it is very hard to know for sure, there seems little doubt that these assessments of their various jobs played a role in the labour market movements discussed here. In general, it seems clear that women in the traditional female trades expressed higher levels of satisfaction with their jobs than did the women working in the traditional male trades. Being dissatisfied with the level of pay stands out as a salient feature for both groups, but dissatisfaction with the hours of work seemed less of an issue for the women working in traditional female trades. Possibly the latter are already better structured to suit women's needs than are the traditional male trades.

## 4. Who remained in the trades?

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After tracking these women workers for 10 years, were there any patterns in their characteristics, or in their jobs, which helped explain who was still working in the trades in 2010? How did the women who stayed in the trades compare with those who had left? And, finally, were there any patterns among those who stayed in the traditional male trades compared with the traditional female trades?

### 4.1 Who remained & who left?

By 2010 only 12 women from the original group were employed in the traditional male trades and only 21 were employed in the traditional female trades. In the case of the former the occupations they held were quite diverse: three were working as chefs, three were draftspersons, and three were safety inspectors. Of the remainder, one worked as a building tradesperson, one was a baker or butcher, and one was a woods trades worker. By contrast, among the women working in the traditional female trades well over half (12) worked as hairdressers. Three of the other were agricultural, medical or science technicians, two were cooks, one was a veterinary nurse, one was in the printing trades and the remaining two were in miscellaneous trades.

What happened to those women who left the trades? Some 72 of them were still working and among this group the largest destination was working in a professional occupation, where 21 (or 29 per cent) were to be found. Another 14 (or 19 per cent) were working in clerical jobs and 12 (or 17 per cent) were working in sales jobs. The remainder were spread across the other occupational groups in smaller numbers. Overall, some 41 per cent of these women had moved 'upwards', in terms of the occupational skills hierarchy, and the other 59 per cent had moved 'downwards'.

**Table 4.1 Occupational destinations of those leaving the trades**

	Counts	Percentages
Managers	9	12
Professionals	21	29
Technicians & trades	0	0
Service workers	7	10
Clerical workers	14	19
Salesworkers	12	17
Machinery & transport	3	4
Labourers	6	8
Total	72	100

*Notes: These are the occupational destinations in 2010 of those who were working in the trades in 2001.*

## 4.2 Comparisons: stayers and leavers

In terms of demographics, there were only minor difference between those who remained in the trades and those who left. Looking first at age groups, some 42 per cent of the former were aged over 50, but the figure for those who left was not very different, just 39 per cent, though this dropped to 36 per cent among those who left and were still employed (in non-trades occupations). Women born in non-English speaking background countries (NESB) were more likely to still be working than not employed, and this was slightly higher among those still working in the trades.

There was some difference in marital status, with 82 per cent of those who remained being married, 15 per cent being separated, divorced or widowed, and just 3 per cent never married. The equivalent figures for the women who left the trades were 74 per cent, 11 per cent and 16 per cent.

The parenting situation also showed some differences: some 52 per cent of those who remained had no dependent children (which obviously excludes grown up children) whereas the figure for those who left was 66 per cent. This was even higher among those who left and were still employed.

**Table 4.2 Demographic characteristics in 2010**

	Remained	Left the trades		All
		Employed	Not employed	
<b>Age group</b>				
Aged under 30	12	8	10	9
Aged 30 to 49	45	56	45	52
Aged 50 or over	42	36	45	39
Total	100	100	100	100
<b>Birthplace</b>				
Born Australia	79	83	90	85
Born ESB	9	8	6	8
Born NESB	12	8	3	7
Total	100	100	100	100
<b>Marital status</b>				
Married/de facto	82	72	77	74
Separated/divorced/widowed	15	10	13	11
Never married	3	18	10	16
Total	100	100	100	100
<b>Dependent children</b>				
None	52	71	55	66
One	27	18	29	21
Two	12	8	10	9
Three or more	9	3	6	4
Total	100	100	100	100
n	33	72	31	103

Notes: These are the demographic characteristics in 2010 of women who had been working in the trades in 2001 and were either still working in the trades in 2010 ('Remained') or were working in a non-trades area in 2010 ('Left: employed') or were not working at all in 2010 ('Left: not employed'). The final column is a total of these last two ('Left: all').

The pattern in educational qualifications was quite striking, and is consistent with the occupational destinations mentioned earlier. As Table 4.3 shows, some 13 per cent of the women who left the trades had degrees (or above), compared with just 3 per cent among those who remained. This was higher among those who left and who were still working (15 per cent) compared with those who were not employed (6 per cent).

On the other hand, among the women who remained in the trades there was a solid concentration of Certificate III and IV qualifications (52 per cent). Among the women who left the trades, some 34 per cent had this level of qualifications. These women who left the trades were much more likely to have only Year 12 or Year 11 behind them—41 per cent—than those women who remained—30 per cent. It is particularly notable that the proportion of women who were no longer employed who held only educational qualifications to Year 11 (or below) was much higher, at 39 per cent, a result consistent with general findings on the links between education and labour force participation.

In summary, as one might expect those women still in the trades had higher levels of trades qualifications, whereas those who left has split into those acquiring much higher qualifications—consistent with their upward occupational mobility—and those with minimal qualifications—consistent with their downward mobility or with their movement out of the labour market.

**Table 4.3 Educational attainment in 2010**

	Remained	Left the trades		All
		Employed	Not employed	
Degree or above	3	15	6	13
Advanced diploma/diploma	15	10	10	10
Cert III/IV	52	36	29	34
Cert I/II ND	0	0	10	3
Year 12	9	18	6	15
Year 11 or below	21	21	39	26
Total	100	100	100	100
n	33	72	31	103

*Notes:* These are the highest level of educational qualifications held as reported in 2010 of women who had been working in the trades in 2001 and were either still working in the trades in 2010 ('Remained') or were working in a non-trades area in 2010 ('Left: employed') or were not working at all in 2010 (Left: not employed). The final column is a total of these last two ('Left: all').

### 4.3 Changes in earnings

How did the earnings of these women change over the period 2001 to 2010? Did the women who left the trades fare better or worse than those who remained working in the trades? Clearly, we need to distinguish between those women who moved 'upward' into managerial-professional jobs, and those who moved into other occupations. This is done by providing a table showing all occupations held in 2010 (except machinery and transport operators, where the counts are too low), and the hourly wage rates earned by these women in 2001 (when they all worked in the trades) and then in 2010 (when only some still worked in the trades). These figures are shown in Table 4.4 as 2010 dollar amounts (CPI indexed).

The results rely on a small number of observations, so median earnings are presented. Some tentative conclusions are that women in the trades fared much worse than those who went on to work as professionals and service workers, but they fared better than those who changed to occupations as clerical workers, sales workers. The differences with this latter group are, however, quite minor. The fact that women working as managers did not fare better was probably due to the fact that 'manager' can be a designation in quite a number of low paying jobs.

**Table 4.4 Earnings comparison 2001 to 2010**

	Median hourly rates of pay			n
	2001 (\$)	2010 (\$)	Change (%)	
Managers	15.82	20.00	26	9
Professionals	19.78	31.75	60	21
Technicians & trades	17.40	20.53	18	32
Service workers	17.61	24.45	39	8
Clerical workers	20.02	23.20	16	14
Salesworkers	15.50	18.05	17	12
Labourers	15.22	18.33	20	6

Notes: These dollar amounts are all in CPI indexed 2010 dollars, but the 2001 columns refer to the earnings of these people in that year. The occupations shown are the occupations held in 2010 (since ALL were working in trades occupations in 2001). Note that those working as Machinery and Transport Operators in 2010 have been omitted from the table because there were only 3 observations.

What does the earnings situation look like if we compare women who began in the traditional male trades compared with the traditional female trades? The numbers become quite small when the data are further subdivided in this manner, so the occupations held in 2010 are aggregated into three broad groups.

Table 4.5 suggests that among women who began in the traditional male trades, those who remained working here fared the worse than those who left. They saw a 41 per cent increase in their earnings over this period, but this fell behind the 63 per cent increase experienced by women who went into managerial or professional jobs, and a 51 per cent increase among those who went into occupations.

These women in the traditional male trades were, nevertheless, better off than those women who stayed working in the traditional female trades. This group of women only experienced a 17 per cent increase in median earnings over this 10 year period, much the same as the 18 per cent increase among those who went into other occupations and well below the 61 per cent increase experienced by women entering managerial or professional jobs.

In summary, from a financial point of view, working in the traditional male trades was a better option in 2001 than working in the traditional female trades. What's more, looking at their situation in 2010, whether they stayed in these trades, or moved elsewhere, these women were better off than their counterparts in the traditional female trades.

**Table 4.5 Earnings comparison 2001 to 2010: trade distinction**

	Median hourly rates of pay			n
	2001 (\$)	2010 (\$)	Change (%)	
<b>Traditional male trades</b>				
Trades	18.74	26.47	41	10
Managerial/professional	17.61	30.19	71	6
Other	15.07	22.50	49	7
<b>Traditional female trades</b>				
Trades	17.05	20.00	17	22
Managerial/professional	20.66	30.41	47	24
Other	17.03	19.91	17	36

Notes: These dollar amounts are all in CPI indexed 2010 dollars, but the 2001 columns refer to the earnings of these people in that year. The occupations shown are the occupations held in 2010 (since ALL were working in trades occupations in 2001). The 'Other category' includes: service workers, clerical workers, salesworkers and labourers.

## 5. Some wider comparisons

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In this chapter I offer some wider comparisons by looking at other workers, in particular, men who also worked in the trades occupations, and women who worked in other occupations. One needs to be careful with such comparisons because this study is a qualitative one. One cannot compare populations because this study is not extrapolating from this group of women in the trades to a larger population. So even though the sample sizes for these comparison groups are very large, a *population comparison* itself is not warranted. A useful way of thinking about this is to regard these comparison groups as benchmarks, and then ask how the women in our sample compare to the ‘typical patterns’ found in these benchmarks. The fact that these patterns are more robust than are the various aspects of our sample of female tradespeople is irrelevant; it does not make it more feasible to generalise about our sample of female tradespeople than is the case elsewhere in this report.

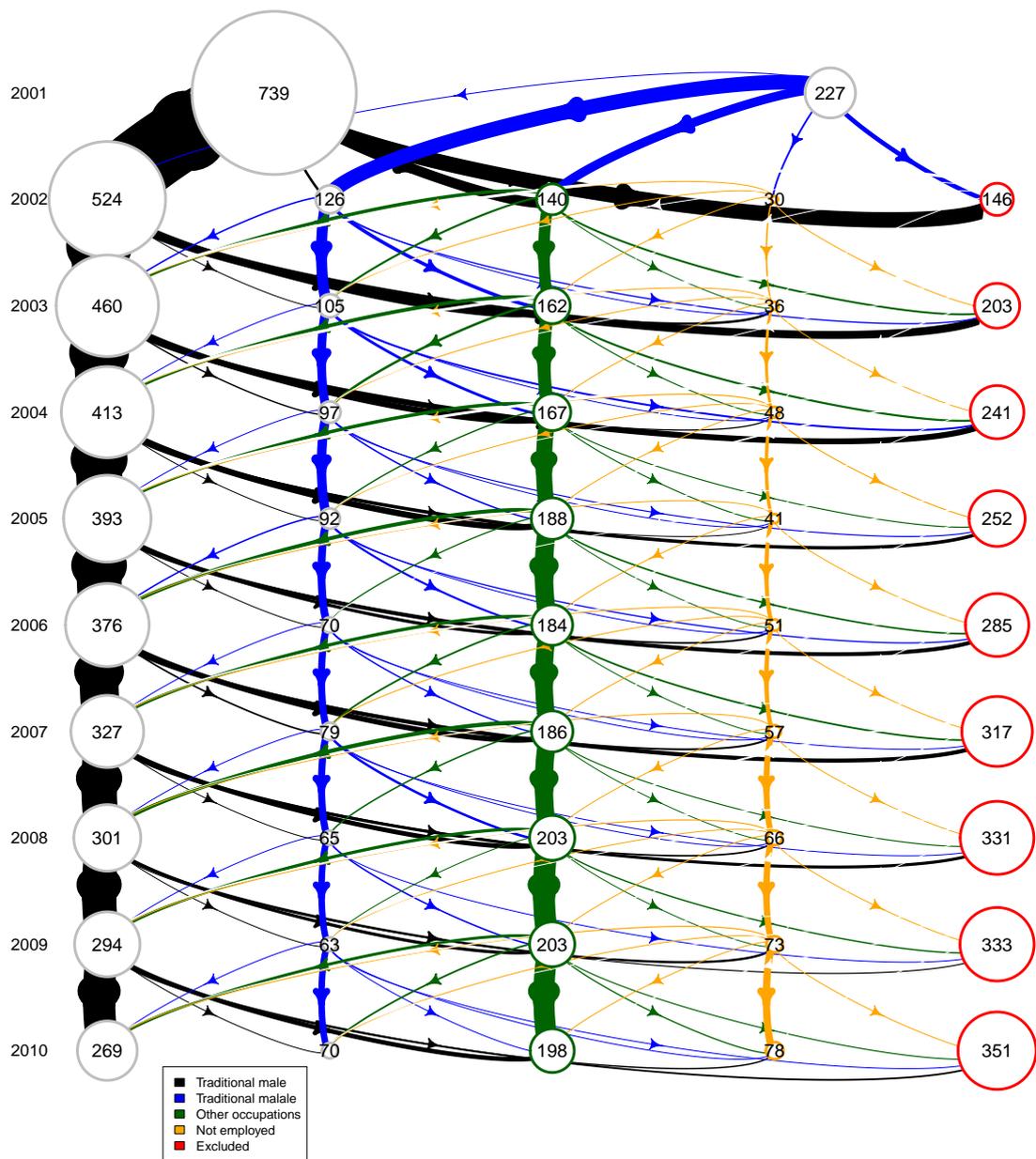
### 5.1 Men working in the trades

#### Labour market flows

As with the women working in the trades it’s possible to track the men working in the trades over the same ten year period. These labour market flows are shown in Figures 5.1 and 5.2 and employ the same conventions used earlier (black for traditional male trades, blue for traditional female trades, green for other occupations, yellow for not employed and red for leaving the sample).

In looking back at the equivalent figures (Figure 3.1 and 3.2), the most striking contrast is, of course, the numbers involved. Whereas only 197 women worked in the trades at the start of this period, some 966 men were in these occupations, a ratio of nearly 5 to 1. The gender imbalance between the types of trades was also notable: whereas 29 per cent of women were working in their non-traditional area, only 19 per cent of men were working in their non-traditional area.

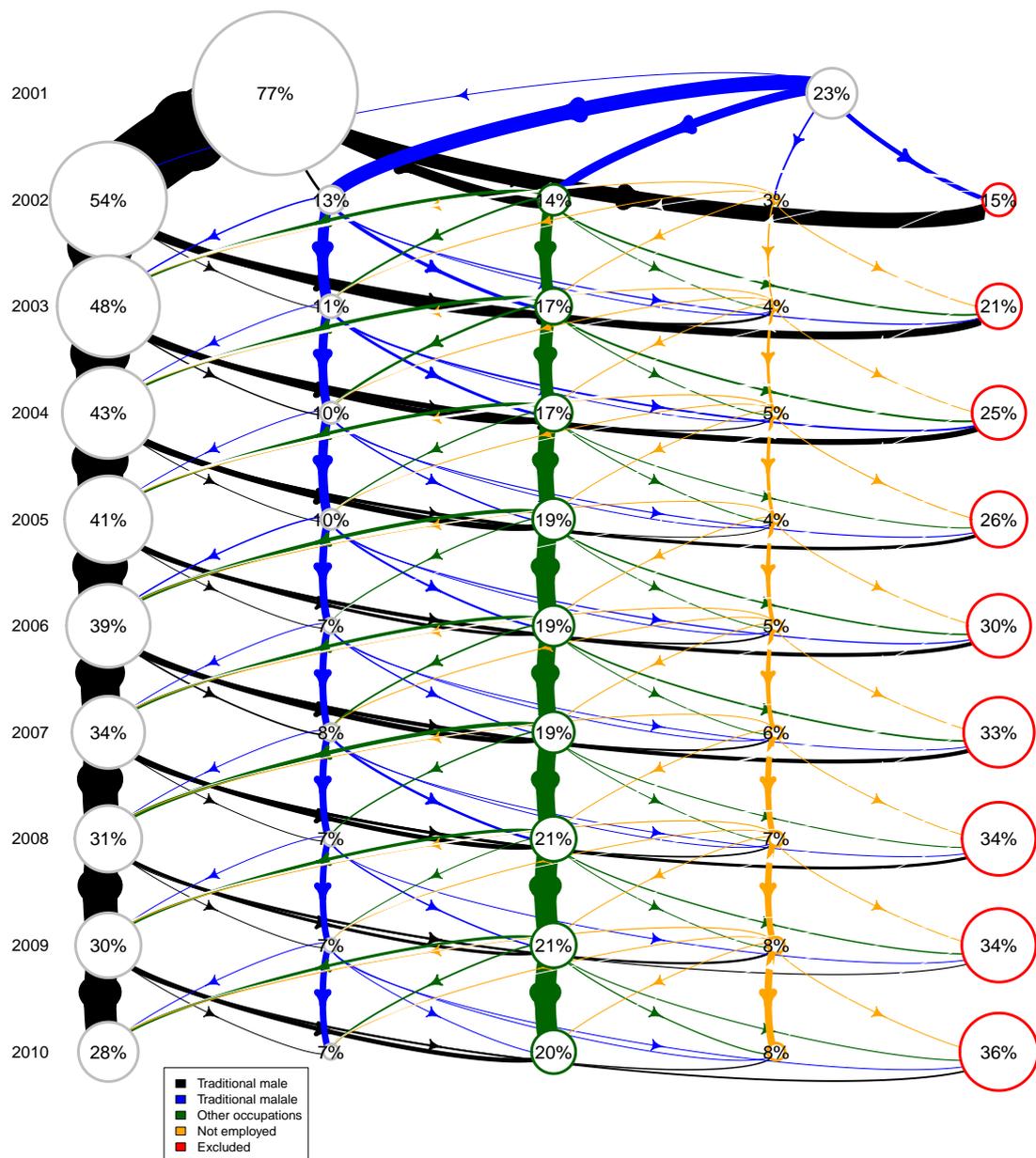
Figure 5.1 Labour market flows: all men working in the trades in 2001



Source: Table A.2.

Note: The size of each circle is proportional to the numbers in that situation. The actual numbers are also printed inside each circle. The thickness of each line is proportional to the numbers moving along that pathway.

Figure 5.2 Labour market flows: all men working in the trades in 2001 (%)



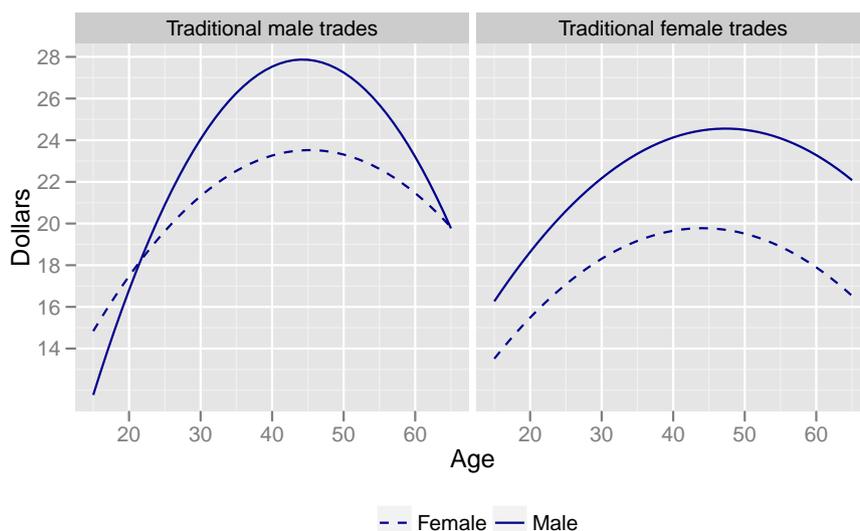
Perhaps the most important difference, however, is the ‘endurance’ of the male tradespersons: 35 per cent of this group were still employed in the trades some 10 years later, whereas the equivalent figure for the women was just 17 per cent. Understandably, given the gendered-nature of parenting, 16 per cent women were in the non-employment category in 2010, whereas only 8 per cent of men were in this category. However, whereas 37 per cent of women were found in other occupations outside the trades, among men only 20 per cent were found in other occupations.

## Earnings and job satisfaction

What is the gender comparison like when we look at earnings and various aspects of jobs satisfaction? A comparison of age earnings profiles for 2001 (using hourly rates of pay) is shown in Figure 5.3 and highlights how much gender matters in the traditional male trades. While men and women earned similar amounts in their early twenties, by their late twenties their profiles begin to diverge considerably, and for the rest of their life-cycle men earned considerably more. Moreover, the slope of the women's profile was considerably more shallow than was the case for the men. By way of contrast, in the traditional female trades the two profiles were much closer in slope, but a male premium was still evident right through the life cycle.

Interestingly, men in the traditional female trades fared much worse than men in the traditional male trades, both in terms of the level of their earnings and the shallowness of their profile. Needless to say, women in the traditional female trades fared worst of all.

Figure 5.3 Age earnings profiles of women and men in the trades, 2001 (%)



Note: Dollar amounts are (CPI indexed) 2010 dollars, but the period to which they refer is 2001. Hourly rates of pay are shown.

What about satisfaction with the job, were there gender differences amongst these tradespersons in 2001? As Table 5.1 shows, when it came to overall satisfaction, the gender differences between the trades was less pronounced than the differences within each gender between traditional and non-traditional occupations. For both women and men, there were slightly higher levels of satisfaction for those workers employed in traditional female trades. In other words, even men in these trades were more satisfied than their counterparts working in traditional male trades.

There was, however, some diversity on individual items of satisfaction. Men were more satisfied than women with regard to their pay,

irrespective of whether they were in traditional male trades or traditional female trades. But it was notable that pay satisfaction scored the lowest of all the items.

Women in traditional female trades were the most satisfied with regards to job security, the work itself and the work-life balance. Men in traditional female trades almost matched them when it came to job security and work-life balance.

Women in traditional male trades were much less satisfied with their job security compared with women in traditional female trades. This was not the case among men. As noted in an earlier chapter, women in traditional male trades were less satisfied with their hours of work and with the work-life balance, compared with women in the traditional female trades. Such a comparison was not the case for men, in terms of hours of work, but it was for work-life balance.

In summary, the lowest scores overall were for pay satisfaction and the highest scores were for the work itself. While gender mattered, the differences between traditional female trades and traditional male trades seemed to matter slightly more.

**Table 5.1 Satisfaction with aspects of the job, women and men, 2001**

Satisfaction with:	Women		Men	
	Traditional male trades	Traditional female trades	Traditional male trades	Traditional female trades
Total pay	6.3	6.2	6.6	6.7
Job security	7.0	8.1	7.4	7.3
Work itself	7.6	8.1	7.7	7.8
Hours of work	6.7	7.4	7.2	7.0
Work-life balance	7.1	7.8	7.1	7.3
Overall	7.6	7.9	7.5	7.7

Notes: The original scale is scored from 0 (negative) to 10 (positive).

## 5.2 Women working in other occupations

Clearly, when making a comparison with women working in other occupations, it makes a considerable differences what occupations are chosen. An obvious distinction needs to be drawn between women working in managerial-professional jobs for example. Consequently, in what follows I use a three-part distinction:

- women in the trades (the subject of this study);
- women working as managers and professionals (Major Groups 1 and 2 in the ANZSCO framework); and
- women working in all other occupations.

While the last group is quite diverse, any further attempts to subdivide the group become somewhat arbitrary. There are skilled clerical jobs included here alongside shop-assistants, for example. However, creating a separate clerical category could be misleading because it would also include many of the lowest skilled jobs that women fill.

The three-part division chosen here is at least consistent with traditional occupational skills hierarchies as embodied in Australian Bureau of Statistics taxonomies. Thus, groups 1 and 2 (professionals and managers) are highest, group 3 (the trades) are next, and the remaining groups 4 to 8 are lowest.

Looking first at earnings in 2001, women in the trades fared worst (Table 5.4). Their age earnings profiles were the lowest, and also the most shallow, of the three groups. Not surprisingly, women in managerial and professional jobs accelerated from the beginning of the life cycle and stayed well ahead from then on. Their earnings peaked in their fifties before declining. The earnings differences between the trades and other occupations was much weaker, both in terms of the dollar gap and in terms of the slope. The earnings for both groups peaked somewhat earlier—in their early to mid forties—and there was some convergence in their earnings towards the end of the life cycle.

**Figure 5.4** Age earnings profiles of women in different occupations, 2001 (%)



*Note:* Dollar amounts are (CPI indexed) 2010 dollars, but the period to which they refer is 2001. Hourly rates of pay are shown.

When it came to job satisfaction the differences between these three groups of women were very slight. In terms of overall satisfaction, there were essentially no differences. On some of the individual items, there were minor differences. In the case of pay satisfaction, for example, women in the trades were the least satisfied. Job security showed few differences. Both women in the trades, and women in

managerial-professional jobs were more satisfied with the work itself than women in other occupations. This latter group, though, was slightly more satisfied with their hours of work and their work-life balance. Not surprisingly, women in the managerial-professional occupations were the least satisfied with their work-life balance.

**Table 5.2 Satisfaction with aspects of the job, all women 2001**

Satisfaction with:	Trades	Managerial-professional	Other
Total pay	6.3	6.6	6.7
Job security	7.8	8.0	7.8
Work itself	8.0	7.9	7.5
Hours of work	7.2	7.0	7.5
Work-life balance	7.6	7.2	7.8
Overall	7.8	7.7	7.8

*Notes:* The original scale is scored from 0 (negative) to 10 (positive).

## Notes

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1. It is not possible to be definitive about some of the 4 digit categories in the HILDA data because the occupations are not directly available at this level of detail. The disaggregations used here come from recoding the occupational status scores—which are based on 4 digit data—and this is not always conclusive. Consequently, some slightly strange combinations, such as ‘clothing trades worker, jeweller’ appear in some tables.

## A. Labour market flows details

Table A.1 Transition matrices, women

Destinations 2002–2010	Origin (or prior situations) 2001–2009					Total
	Traditional male	Traditional female	Other occupations	Not employed	Excluded	
Traditional male	18	3	0	0	0	21
Traditional female	3	66	0	0	0	69
Other occupation	22	34	0	0	0	56
Not employed	6	10	0	0	0	16
Excluded	8	27	0	0	0	35
Total	57	140	0	0	0	197
Traditional male	10	3	5	1	1	20
Traditional female	2	46	5	0	1	54
Other occupation	4	13	39	2	2	60
Not employed	1	5	2	12	2	22
Excluded	4	2	5	1	29	41
Total	21	69	56	16	35	197
Traditional male	9	2	3	0	0	14
Traditional female	0	34	2	3	1	40
Other occupation	6	8	45	6	1	66
Not employed	2	4	6	13	0	25
Excluded	3	6	4	0	39	52
Total	20	54	60	22	41	197
Traditional male	8	0	0	0	1	9
Traditional female	0	31	4	1	3	39
Other occupation	3	6	49	9	4	71
Not employed	1	1	5	12	1	20
Excluded	2	2	8	3	43	58
Total	14	40	66	25	52	197

*continued ...*

**Table A.1 Transition matrices, women (continued)**

Destinations 2002–2010	Origin (or prior situations) 2001–2009					Total
	Traditional male	Traditional female	Other occupations	Not employed	Excluded	
Traditional male	7	0	3	0	2	12
Traditional female	0	28	6	0	1	35
Other occupation	1	7	51	4	6	69
Not employed	0	2	6	14	0	22
Excluded	1	2	5	2	49	59
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>197</b>
Traditional male	7	1	4	0	0	12
Traditional female	0	26	4	2	0	32
Other occupation	5	5	58	6	2	76
Not employed	0	1	3	12	0	16
Excluded	0	2	0	2	57	61
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>197</b>
Traditional male	10	1	3	0	0	14
Traditional female	0	22	6	0	2	30
Other occupation	1	4	62	4	3	74
Not employed	1	3	4	11	2	21
Excluded	0	2	1	1	54	58
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>197</b>
Traditional male	12	0	0	1	1	14
Traditional female	0	24	5	1	2	32
Other occupation	2	4	60	2	1	69
Not employed	0	1	7	15	1	24
Excluded	0	1	2	2	53	58
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>197</b>
Traditional male	10	0	2	0	0	12
Traditional female	0	17	3	1	0	21
Other occupation	3	12	56	1	0	72
Not employed	0	2	6	22	1	31
Excluded	1	1	2	0	57	61
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>197</b>

Notes: The first matrix shows the origin (or prior situation) for women who were working in the trades during 2001 cross-tabulated against their destinations in 2002. The second matrix shows the origin in 2002, cross-tabulated against the destinations in 2003, and so on. Trades are defined as all those working as in the ANZSCO category of Technicians and Tradespersons.

**Table A.2 Transition matrices,men**

Destinations 2002–2010	Origin (or prior situations) 2001–2009					Total
	Traditional male	Traditional female	Other occupations	Not employed	Excluded	
Traditional male	544	4	0	0	0	548
Traditional female	10	92	0	0	0	102
Other occupation	87	53	0	0	0	140
Not employed	18	12	0	0	0	30
Excluded	120	26	0	0	0	146
Total	779	187	0	0	0	966
Traditional male	415	7	28	5	21	476
Traditional female	6	66	12	4	1	89
Other occupation	47	22	83	6	4	162
Not employed	18	2	3	11	2	36
Excluded	62	5	14	4	118	203
Total	548	102	140	30	146	966
Traditional male	364	3	30	5	24	426
Traditional female	7	59	15	1	2	84
Other occupation	52	12	94	5	4	167
Not employed	9	2	8	21	8	48
Excluded	44	13	15	4	165	241
Total	476	89	162	36	203	966
Traditional male	349	5	26	8	20	408
Traditional female	3	58	9	3	4	77
Other occupation	46	10	116	4	12	188
Not employed	3	3	8	25	2	41
Excluded	25	8	8	8	203	252
Total	426	84	167	48	241	966
Traditional male	332	7	31	5	8	383
Traditional female	3	53	6	0	1	63
Other occupation	29	9	133	4	9	184
Not employed	13	1	6	30	1	51
Excluded	31	7	12	2	233	285
Total	408	77	188	41	252	966
Traditional male	288	1	30	7	11	337
Traditional female	11	48	7	3	0	69
Other occupation	39	10	128	3	6	186
Not employed	14	3	6	32	2	57
Excluded	31	1	13	6	266	317
Total	383	63	184	51	285	966
Traditional male	262	4	31	5	6	308
Traditional female	1	47	10	0	0	58
Other occupation	40	12	131	6	14	203
Not employed	12	3	6	43	2	66
Excluded	22	3	8	3	295	331
Total	337	69	186	57	317	966

*continued ...*

**Table A.2 Transition matrices, men (continued)**

Destinations 2002–2010	Origin (or prior situations) 2001–2009					Total
	Traditional male	Traditional female	Other occupations	Not employed	Excluded	
Traditional male	252	3	25	8	12	300
Traditional female	5	43	5	2	2	57
Other occupation	25	9	158	6	5	203
Not employed	17	0	5	46	5	73
Excluded	9	3	10	4	307	333
<b>Total</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>966</b>
Traditional male	240	2	24	8	5	279
Traditional female	3	42	10	3	2	60
Other occupation	34	5	152	5	2	198
Not employed	10	4	9	53	2	78
Excluded	13	4	8	4	322	351
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>966</b>

Notes: The first matrix shows the origin (or prior situation) for men who were working in the trades during 2001 cross-tabulated against their destinations in 2002. The second matrix shows the origin in 2002, cross-tabulated against the destinations in 2003, and so on. Trades are defined as all those working as in the ANZSCO category of Technicians and Tradespersons.