



Curtin University

Quality of Work Research Project Report

Commissioned by the Australian Workforce and
Productivity Agency

October 2013

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*This work represents the views of the research team and not those of the
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Shortened Forms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions
AMECO	Annual Macro-Economic Database
AQWLS	Australian Quality of Work Life Survey
A@W	Australia at Work-2006-2009 Annual Survey
AWALI	Australian Work and Life Index
AWIRS	Australian Workplace Industrial Relations Survey
EES	European Employment Strategy
EOWC	European Observatory on Working Conditions
EU	European Union
EU-SILC	Statistics on Income and Living Conditions
EWCS	European Working Conditions Survey
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFC	Global Financial Crisis
HILDA	Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey
HREOC	Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
ICTWSS	Institutional Characteristics of Trade Unions, Wage Setting, State Intervention and Social Pacts
ILO	International Labour Organisation
JQ	Job Quality
JQI	Job Quality Index
LFS	Labour Force Survey
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SMEs	Small and Medium Sized Enterprises
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
USA	United States of America

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank all of the people who contributed to this report.

Dr Simon Colquhoun, Dr Christina Kirsch and Ms Jessica Topping assisted with the collation of literature, contributed to report writing in some sections and assisted the case study research, reference checking and more. Ms Helen Verhoeff and Ms Yu Hua Ling assisted with the contract management and Ms Helen Verhoeff also helped with report formatting. Professor Alan Nankervis, Dr Roslyn Cameron and Ms Pia Turcinov also assisted with the case study research. We would also like to acknowledge the support of the employers and employees who participated in the interviews and focus groups providing insights with regard to how aspects of job quality influence their work. Finally, we would also like to acknowledge the assistance of the Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency (AWPA) reference group who provided useful insights during the compilation of this report. All errors in the report are, of course, the authors' own.

Synopsis

This report represents a two phase study focusing on job quality in Australia. The two phases concern a review of the international and Australian literature, followed by case studies of Australian organisations. The literature review encompassed over 200 refereed journal articles, research reports and papers, and laid the foundation for the development of a job quality framework underpinning the case study methodology.

Key findings from the literature review

This report considers the ‘quality of work’ as the extent to which a set of job attributes contributes to, or detracts from, workers’ wellbeing in their work and non-work domains. This is a very broad definition which reflects the fact that the relationship between work and wellbeing can be viewed from many different perspectives and disciplines. While the definition is employee-centred, it is not intended to diminish the importance of non-employee perspectives in research or policy formulation, particularly the perspectives of employers and the unemployed. In common with wages, job quality accrues to the employee but is provided through employers and the workplace. As outlined in the report, employers must necessarily have regard to the cost of providing higher quality jobs and the implications for productivity. From an employer perspective, job quality can be perceived in terms of employee wellbeing, with a focus on how job quality impacts behaviours relevant to organisational performance, including factors such as motivation, recruitment and retention, and branding.

There remains a great deal to be resolved in relation to the quality of work. Distilling the literature on job quality is an extremely difficult task due to the many attributes of jobs; the multitude of factors shaping wellbeing and that hence constitute potential outcomes; the array of mechanisms through which the relationship may be transmitted or mediated; and the diversity in socio-political and institutional contexts in which research is nested. Added to this is a lack of uniformity or accepted standards relating to measurement in this field, accompanied by ongoing debate over the robustness of subjective measures. For the purposes of developing an evidence base to inform policy and practice, a noted deficiency in the literature is the lack of meta-analyses or review papers that present standardised effect sizes of variables, meaning a lack of comparability of results across different studies. The existing range of statistical facts and figures available on job quality (only a small subset of which are presented in this review) offer limited information without comparability across jurisdictions, over time or both.

However, a number of conclusions can be drawn with confidence from the review of existing literature and the case studies conducted for this project. Foremost among these is that

various attributes of jobs clearly impact upon workers' wellbeing, and these effects flow on to the workers' own quality of life outside of work and to the quality of life of their families. In the more extreme cases, low quality work can have substantial negative impacts upon workers' physical and mental health and generate work-family conflict. Among the key features of 'good jobs' it is clearly important that employees find their work interesting and have autonomy over their work and the pace of work. The case studies conducted for this study established that a good work environment and reasonable earnings were expected from our sample group. It was the other factors such as job prospects, recognition, the meaningfulness of their work, the quality of supervision and the ability to balance work and life at different stages of work and life cycles that emerged as the most important factors influencing employees' quality of work. Characteristics of jobs that commonly detract from the quality of work are employment insecurity and working schedules that conflict with family roles. An important caveat to any assessment of job quality is that individual workers have different preferences. A salient example is that being employed part-time is not in itself a feature of low quality work, but rather hours of work have to be assessed relative to workers' preferences.

The fact that there is considerable uncertainty surrounding the nature and magnitude of such relationships provides a strong case for continued research and monitoring of job quality by policy makers, firms and employee representatives. Attention needs to be paid to change likely to impact upon the quality of work. This includes structural change, technological change, and supply-side changes such as the ageing and feminisation of the workforce with associated increases in caring commitments that employees need to juggle alongside work commitments. Whether or not there are grounds for policy intervention is a separate issue, but certainly more and improved information should prove beneficial.

From a policy perspective, a key lesson from international comparisons is that maintaining a strong labour market at the macro-economic level is critical to maintaining and promoting job quality. The experience of the European Union during the recent Global Financial Crisis and associated labour market downturns indicate that even a very strong focus on a job quality agenda is unlikely to negate the economic realities of rising unemployment. Leaving aside responses to swings in aggregate labour market conditions, by and large there seems little evidence that overall job quality has been falling in the developed countries, with the possible exceptions being some decline in working time quality and job security. Even here trade-offs are apparent in that such changes in working arrangements can be partly attributed to growing worker preferences for more flexible arrangements, and not only to employer demands for more flexible utilisation of labour.

Job quality in Australia compares favourably by international standards, an outcome underpinned by a strong aggregate labour market and by legal safeguards to minimum terms, conditions and non-discrimination. As noted however, there remains a strong case for the ongoing monitoring of job quality overall and for monitoring identified sub-groups of employees who are vulnerable to labour market changes. While Australia has invested far less than the European Community in terms of coordinated efforts to measure and monitor job quality, there exists a range of one-off and ongoing studies that do provide a considerable amount of information on job quality. The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey, in particular, offers the basis for long-term monitoring of various aspects of job quality on a consistent basis, as well as in-depth analyses of the relationships between job attributes and the wellbeing of workers and their families. The European Union experience suggests that, even the extensive development of indicators of job quality, does not meet the needs of all parties with an interest in job quality. The maintenance of a bundle of basic and consistent indicators, supplemented by more in-depth studies of key research questions, may therefore be more fruitful than the creation of a wide range of indicators.

An area of considerable uncertainty in the empirical literature concerns how job quality impacts on productivity. This highlights a lack of matched employer and employee datasets as one data gap identified by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. There is however, compelling evidence of some positive association, and this is reflected in an alignment of subjective measures of job satisfaction with objective measures such as employee turnover, absenteeism and workplace injuries, plus evidence from the case studies conducted for this report.

Key findings from the Case Studies

Based on the literature review, a job quality (JQ) framework was developed covering four key areas concerning: job prospects; extrinsic work factors; intrinsic work factors and working time quality. In total 9 case studies were included in the project representing organisations drawn from 4 different states and they covered a range of industry sectors. Three were small to medium sized companies (20 – 199 employees) and the remainder were large organisations (200 and above employees). Key intentions of the firm-level case studies were to:

- Identify strategies to improve job quality;
- Examine associations between job quality, job satisfaction, innovation and productivity;

- Identify Australia-specific factors in the quality of work; and
- Establish indicators for the quality of work in Australia.

The case study analysis highlighted benefits to organisations of ensuring that various job quality factors are being recognized and addressed. These benefits included:

- Attracting and retaining employees;
- Retaining skilled and experienced employees;
- Capitalising on employees' skills and abilities;
- Improving employee engagement/passion for the job;
- Becoming a more innovative workplace;
- More effectively meeting core organisational goals related to product quality, servicing clients and meeting changing market conditions;
- Creating a pleasant and supportive work environment and
- Becoming more productive overall due to these factors.

Strategies to improve job quality

The quality of leadership and management is identified as a critical factor influencing job quality. The case study findings revealed that 'direct supervision' is important as an employee's direct supervisor has a daily influence on their work. Several senior managers in our sample discussed the importance of employees being able to communicate directly with their supervisor. Leadership and management are pivotal since they also impact upon other factors identified as shaping job quality. Notably, it is recommended that to improve job quality, leaders and managers are advised to aim towards developing employee engagement by encouraging open communication and the contribution of ideas, thus promoting a supportive workplace culture. They should also seek to discuss employees' expectations and aim to provide appropriate career paths, according to life cycles and other circumstances; and to assess job design and workplace systems in order to identify areas where flexibility may be offered. Nurturing ownership and autonomy within work teams also stood out from the case study analysis as an important strategy for the promotion of job quality. An example was the '*Just Do It*' program (see LocGov case study) which encourages employees to implement small changes without having to seek approval from higher up the organisation. This program was cited as a highly positive initiative that empowers employees and makes them proud of the organisation.

In all case study organisations it was found that there were generally high levels of job satisfaction, trust in management, a commitment to the organisation and a good working environment. Notably, some of the case study organisations with large numbers of fly-in-fly-

out workers (see MiningCo and ResourceCo) had endeavoured to improve their remote worksites as well as working towards improving worker health and wellbeing. There were issues related to job security in some cases, but they were also linked to changes and challenges facing the sector. There were also differences indicated by age group and occupation. No one factor stood out as being a challenge related to all cases but issues identified in the literature such as work life balance, working time (especially rosters), job security and career path development were prominent in many of the case studies. Skill use and training and development were also identified as important aspects of career development and contributed to job prospects. In some case study organisations there was a need for clearer succession planning and identification of talent pipelines. Specifically, a good work environment and reasonable earnings were expected by our sample group. It was the other factors such as job prospects, recognition, the meaningfulness of work, the quality of supervision and the ability to balance work and life at different stages of their work and life cycles that emerged from the case study participants as the most important factors influencing their quality of work.

Links between job quality, job satisfaction, innovation and productivity

It should be noted that the case studies relied on the self-reporting of participants, and consequently have the potential to be prone to bias arising from subjectivity. That said, the intrinsic features of the job quality framework were found to be a particularly important factor in consideration of organisational development and effectiveness. In common with ongoing research into human resource management, there are bundles or attributes of jobs that are associated with job quality that are important in attracting and retaining employees and facilitating commitment. Importantly, it is clear that many of the case study employers are acutely aware of the work-quality and commitment nexus. Some are consciously utilising aspects of job quality as a way of motivating workers and striving to match the requirements of jobs to worker preferences, a process that often commences with attraction, recruitment and corporate branding.

Australia-wide factors considered to influence the quality of work

The Australia-wide factors considered to influence the quality of work were identified in the literature review and largely confirmed by the case studies: the ageing of the population and the workforce; the growing feminisation of the workforce; reconciling work and non-work demands; providing access to disadvantaged groups in the workforce; monitoring the consequences of non-standard employment arrangements; ongoing structural adjustment in the national and international economy; and effectively accommodating and utilising the

skills of migrant labour. The rationale for the selection of these eight factors and their relationship with job quality is discussed in more detail in various sections of the report.

Quality of Work Framework

The final objective of this report was to identify indicators that influence the quality of work. Following an extensive review of the literature, a quality of work framework was constructed based on the Eurofound 2012 (p. 20) surveys and various Australian surveys. The framework was found to resonate with all participants (managers and non-managers) in identifying factors that influenced their quality of work, suggesting that it is a useful means for identifying job quality issues in specific workplaces. The three dimensions of the Eurofound survey were extended to four in order to expand the extrinsic and intrinsic job quality factors covering:

Dimension 1 - Job Prospects: job security, recognition, (credit for effective work etc) and career progression (potential for advancement).

Dimension 2 – Extrinsic job quality: comprised earnings (satisfaction with earnings), a good physical environment: safety aspects; pleasant work environment; level of physical and posture related hazards.

Dimension 3 – Intrinsic Job quality: work itself; meaningfulness of work; interesting work; skills and discretion; skills and autonomy (ability to influence decisions; use full range of skills; apply own ideas); training access (skill development and training can influence job prospects); work intensity; pace of work, work pressures; emotional/value conflict demands; dealing with angry clients/job requires 'emotional labour'; good social environment; relations at work; direct supervision; (manager helps and supports you); level of consultation, organisational support (positive work environment).

Dimension 4: Working time quality/work life balance/fit (impact of work on home/family life); duration/work scheduling discretion/flexibility; working hours; shift patterns; flexible work arrangements; impact of technology (blurring of work/life boundaries).

The evidence and arguments supporting these findings are presented in more detail in the body of the report. The review of existing literature is structured into four sections: (I) understanding job quality; (II) empirical evidence on job quality; (III) international approaches to job quality; and (IV) job quality the Australian Way. Section V sets out the case study methodology and provides a synthesis of the case study findings. Appendix 2 consists of abridged (3-page) analyses of each of the nine individual case studies.

SECTION I: UNDERSTANDING JOB QUALITY

1.1 What do we mean by Job Quality?

The 'quality of work' is a nebulous concept which can be viewed from many perspectives and disciplines, and with varying emphases. There are a number of terms associated with job quality that are commonly used interchangeably: the quality of working life, job quality, good jobs, decent work and decent jobs. Nonetheless, it is important and relatively straightforward to clarify what is meant by the 'quality of work' for the purposes of this report. Quality of work is the extent to which attributes of paid employment contribute to workers' wellbeing in both their work and non-work domains. Terms such as 'high quality' and 'low quality' work, or 'good jobs' and 'bad jobs', are therefore relative concepts referring to the extent to which a job or set of jobs is deemed to enhance or detract from workers' wellbeing.

The focus on employee wellbeing is consistent with the approach followed by most other researchers, such as Eurofound (2003) cited above and Green:

the quality of work life or job quality is constituted by the set of work features which foster the well-being of the worker. This definition is worker centred: it refers to what is good for the worker... (2006:9)

Green (2006) adopts this perspective since it is through work that the material and psychological benefits and costs of employment are allocated. In reviewing job quality in Europe, Holman (2012: 476) similarly defines job quality as the extent to which a job fosters beneficial outcomes for the employee, noting in particular the importance of psychological well-being, physical well-being and positive attitudes, such as job satisfaction.

This employee-centred definition does not deny the importance of employer perspectives on job quality. Just like wages, job quality accrues to the employee but is provided through employers and the workplace. As discussed below, employers must necessarily have regard to the cost of providing higher quality jobs and the implications for productivity. From the perspective of employers, job quality can equally be perceived in terms of employee wellbeing, but with a greater focus on how job quality impacts behaviours relevant to organisational performance, including areas such as motivation, recruitment and retention, and branding. Ultimately, the quality of jobs will be determined through bargaining in the labour market in which due regard must be paid to the requirements and capacity of both employers and employees.

The broad definition of work quality leaves open many other important issues, including a focus for assessing job attributes; wellbeing; the theoretical frameworks relating to wellbeing

and how different factors shape wellbeing; and the social and labour market trends that might lead to changes in these relationships over time. Importantly, there will also be differences across individuals in how different working arrangements and conditions affect their wellbeing. As Clark notes 'Job quality may usefully be thought of as depending upon both job values (how much workers care about different job outcomes) and the job outcomes themselves' (2005: 377). To inform policy and practice, the focus should be on those job attributes and trends that have the greatest impact on wellbeing. This is ultimately an empirical question, and empirical analysis necessarily raises further issues of measurement, methodology and the level of analysis. This section provides an overview of some of these key perspectives and issues.

1.2 Why is job quality important?

Broom et al. (2006, p. 575) found that unemployed people reported worse health when compared to all employed people. However, when they tried to distinguish differences in terms of employees' job quality, a more complex pattern was revealed. Specifically, poor quality jobs (characterised by the psychosocial stressors of insecurity, low marketability and job strain) were associated with worse health when compared to jobs with fewer or no stressors. Furthermore, people in jobs with 3 or more of these psychosocial stressors reported that their health was no better than that of unemployed persons. Thus, paid work confers health benefits, but poor quality work, which combines several psychosocial stressors, can be as bad for an employee's health as being unemployed.

In classical economics the utility experienced in people's work and non-work domains was seen as being completely separable. In the 19th Century, Jevons defined work as 'any painful exertion of the mind or body undergone partly or wholly with a view to a future good' (Jevons 1871, cited in Contensou & Vranceanu 2000: 8). Work was something 'bad' undertaken to gain income, for utility was derived only from leisure and consumption. This notion of separability has since been convincingly overturned. International research demonstrates that job quality affects not only an individual's own job satisfaction, but also their general life satisfaction and health (Broom et al. 2006; Burgess and Connell 2008; Butterworth et al. 2011; Commission on Social Determinants of Health 2008 [The Whitehall Study]; Eurofound 2012; Knox, Warhurst & Pocock 2011; Leach et al. 2010; Strazdins, Shipley & Broom 2007; Warr 2007). Studies across individuals and meta-analyses across countries have shown a strong correlation between job satisfaction and life satisfaction (Eurofound 2007; Tait, Padgett and Baldwin 1989).

Job quality also affects the quality of workers' relationships and the health and wellbeing of their children and others within their relationships and households (see, for example, Bardoel, De Cieri & Santos 2008; Barnett, Gareis & Carr 2005; Bartley, Judge & Judge 2007; Li et al 2013; Higgins et al. 2004; Lower-Basch 2007; Voydanoff 2005; Wadsworth et al 2010). Such associations, including evidence of negative consequences of low job quality, have been similarly observed for Australia (Knox, Warhurst and Pocock 2011; Pocock, Skinner & Williams 2008; Strazdins et al. 2010; Williams, Pocock & Skinner 2008). Citing the 2002 OECD report which focused on work-family reconciliation in Australia, Denmark and the Netherlands, Pocock, Williams and Skinner note that a good work-family balance is conducive to, among other things, resilience in the face of the stresses of modern life, better child development outcomes and lower public expenditure, notably significant savings in health costs (2007: 6).

Importantly, job quality in turn impacts upon worker performance and thus firm profitability, with evidence that the job quality-wellbeing relationships outlined above act as significant mediators in the job quality-productivity nexus. Sections 1.3 and 2.2 expand on this point.

1.2.1 Theoretical frameworks: linking job attributes to wellbeing

It appears that there are significant spill-overs from the status and nature of an individual's employment to their broader wellbeing, and to the wellbeing of their immediate family. Viewing job quality as being constituted by the features of jobs that meet workers' needs calls for a theory of what human needs are and the investigation of how far jobs go to meeting those needs. Such theoretical frameworks are important for understanding which characteristics of work may be the most influential and in guiding and interpreting empirical work. Maslow (1954) proposed a hierarchy of needs, in which he saw humans as needing to first satisfy basic physiological needs, such as food and water, before aspiring to satisfy the 'higher' needs of safety, belonging, esteem and, ultimately, self-actualisation. The Eurofound (2012: 10) project builds on these concepts developing a potential framework for relating a limited number of key job characteristics to wellbeing in the world of work. Later contributions in the psychological literature from the likes of Bandura (1982), Jahoda (1982) and Warr (1987) have proposed that one's work is an important source of the factors that promote psychological wellbeing, such as a sense of purpose, connectedness, self-identity, self-esteem and self-efficacy.

As noted in Eurofound (2012: 10), Green (2006) applies Amartya Sen's capability approach to the assessment of job quality. Sen develops a notion of wellbeing based upon '... a general approach that concentrates on the capabilities of people to do things – and the freedom to lead lives – that they have reason to value' (Sen 1999: 85). The focus on

capabilities and freedoms partly circumvents problems of differences in preferences, value judgements and interpersonal comparisons that beset attempts to measure wellbeing for different people. Work quality then relates to the extent to which a job offers workers a high capability to achieve the things they value. This may include the ability to exercise influence over their work and to pursue their personal and work-related goals, and the needs they choose to prioritise are likely to vary between workers (Eurofound 2012: 10). Self-determination theory offers a further approach that considers the psychological needs that promote an individual's inherent personal growth tendencies and motivation. Specifically, three basic needs relating to competence, relatedness and autonomy are identified that underlie positive personal and social development and, in turn, personal wellbeing (Ryan and Deci 2000: 68).

1.3 Job quality, policy and productivity

Job quality as a policy objective has become formalised within the past twenty years. At the international level, organisations such as the International Labor Organisation, the European Union and the OECD have been interested in not only promoting job growth, but also in promoting job quality. There has been growing recognition that certain jobs and job conditions are unacceptable, do not meet international treaty conventions on human rights and that a broader agenda of improving well-being requires the conditions associated with employment to be evaluated. This is evident in the recent ILO Decent Work Agenda and Global Jobs Pact.

Research into the quality of work is an issue for government, employers and workers. This would not be the case in the economists' abstract world of perfect labour markets, in which the wage adjusts perfectly to efficiently allocate resources. Following Sherwin Rosen's (1974, 1986) theory of compensating differentials, firms and employers bargain over wages and job attributes and workers receive higher (or lower) wages to compensate them for undertaking bad (good) jobs. For example, compensating wage premiums have been identified for dirtier, physically demanding and more hazardous work. Under restrictive perfect market assumptions, workers are exactly compensated for the quality of work through the respective wage, and consequently are left no worse off whether in good or bad jobs.

Nonetheless, there are important violations to the assumptions underpinning this conclusion. First, as identified, it assumes separable utility between the work and non-work domains. The fact that there are significant spill-overs from work to not only the workers' own wider

wellbeing and health, but also to the wellbeing of their family, means there are important externalities associated with the quality of work, both positive and negative, that are not factored into the wage. Second, when accepting a job, workers will typically have very limited knowledge of the nature and magnitude of these effects. The long term negative effects of working night shifts, for example, have only come to light relatively recently. Imperfect information may also mean that firms do not allocate resources and design jobs and remuneration packages optimally. Third, in addition to imperfections and asymmetry in information, there is likely to be asymmetry in bargaining power, potentially leading to discrimination and exploitation. Equity objectives and social values regarding fairness and minimum conditions also create potential grounds for policy intervention. Moreover, it has been argued that an economy that relies on the growth of “bad” jobs can expect major flow-on effects to a community’s well-being, government expenditure/taxation and competitiveness (ACTU, 2012). In Australia, such motives are reflected in employment law and institutions as reviewed in Section IV.

1.3.1 Job quality and productivity

The level of real labour productivity ultimately determines a country’s living standards. From an employer’s perspective, it is not the absolute level of productivity of workers *per se* that is important, but productivity relative to labour costs. Robert Solow (1956) demonstrated that firms have an incentive to increase workers’ wages so long as the increase in effort and productivity solicited from those higher wages more than offsets the cost. This ‘Solow condition’ forms the basis of efficiency wage theory, explaining why wages rise above their market clearing level and result in a persistent pool of involuntary unemployed. This same logic can be extended to the full pecuniary and non-pecuniary attributes of a job. Employers will be willing to invest in improving the quality of jobs provided the cost of doing so is more than offset by the increase in productivity solicited.

Having a good job is generally thought to result in higher productivity (Eurofound 2012; Green et al. 2012; Knox, Warhurst & Pocock 2011). This may materialise through a range of channels, including lower rates of employee turnover, absenteeism and tardiness (Clark 2001, 2005; Eurofound 2012; Warr 2007), performance (Bhatti & Qureshi 2007), stronger attachment (Alon & Haberfield 2007; Burgess 2005; Farber 2008) and fewer workplace injuries (Barling, Kelloway & Iverson 2003). Related to this is an extensive literature on what factors motivate employees. However, there is actually a great deal of uncertainty in the quantitative literature surrounding the magnitude, or even existence, of such positive associations between job quality and productivity (Royuela and Suriñach, 2013, p. 49-52). Given this imperfect information, productivity effects concern a further potential source of

externalities associated with work quality. It is highly likely that the market, through bargaining between employers and firms, does not generate a social optimum with respect to the quality of jobs. Indeed this insight was the basis of Freeman and Medoff's (1984) 'exit/voice model' which suggested unions had a positive influence on productivity by providing workers with a secure means to voice dissatisfaction with aspects of their jobs rather than leaving the firm. Knox, Warhurst and Pocock (2011: 8) also comment that:

Knowing more about what constitutes a good job, and expanding the volume of good jobs has the potential to create significant social and economic benefits.

In addition to potential gains accrued through *improving* job quality, there are also potential gains achieved through the improved matching of worker preferences to existing jobs. By effectively targeting the workers who most value the attributes of the jobs they offer (or who are least impacted by negative attributes) – such as irregular hours or part-time work – employers may also gain a competitive advantage, and overall social welfare may be increased by better labour market matching. Researchers have stressed the importance of 'vocational fit' between people and their jobs in promoting positive labour market outcomes, rather than independent consideration of the characteristics of jobs and individuals (Ng & Feldman 2007). Again, this highlights the need to consider the heterogeneity of workers' preferences in considering job quality as well as the implications for policy.

1.4 Measuring job quality

Although best located within a theoretical framework, identification of the attributes of work that are important for wellbeing is ultimately an empirical question. Empiricism unavoidably raises issues of measurement, and the most pertinent of these is how 'job quality' itself is measured. Issues concerning job quality are both subjective and multidimensional (Green, 2006). Eurofound (2012, pp.3-4) states that:

A distinction can be made between two quite different concepts of work and employment quality. On the one hand there is the subjective tradition, in which job quality is the 'utility' that a worker derives from his or her job. That utility depends on job features, such as the wage, hours, and type of work, but it is subjective in that each worker has preferences over the different job features. Whether the utility of a job is directly measurable is a matter of debate and disagreement within economics. Some argue that utility can only be revealed through actions and behaviours around work. Some studies have argued that

measures of well-being, including feelings and emotions, or job satisfaction, can be used as measures of subjective job quality.

What distinguishes objective measures from subjective measures is that objective measures are 'directly measurable', while subjective measures involve a judgement value that cannot be observed by the researcher. This distinction applies not only to job quality as an outcome variable. Many of the attributes of jobs thought to contribute to job quality are also subjective, such as flexibility or autonomy. Further, the distinction is not so clear cut in practice. Almost any item that is self-reported will involve a degree of subjectivity, even if in principle the underlying concept is measurable, such as hours of work, pay or absenteeism. Since most data is collected through survey methods, it is therefore of a subjective nature. Efforts have been made to objectify findings by developing a structured, impartial standard of measurement (Dahl, Nesheim, & Olsen, 2009). Objective job quality data can be standardised and measured universally across different groups without reliance on individual or group opinions.

Measures can also be classified as direct or indirect. Direct measures relate to responses or behaviours expected to be correlated to individuals' wellbeing in different jobs. Workers in 'good jobs', for example, can be expected to be more likely to report high job satisfaction and high subjective wellbeing, and turnover and absenteeism in 'good jobs' is likely to be lower. That is, for direct measures the direction of causality is seen to flow from job quality to the measure. Indirect measures relate to factors that have been identified, on either theoretical or empirical grounds, as attributes of employment likely to impact upon wellbeing, such as pay or autonomy. For indirect factors, the direction of causality is seen to flow from the measured attribute to job quality. If the assumption holds true, then measurement of such indirect factors can also be seen as measure of job quality. A further characteristic relates to how narrowly job quality is assessed, ranging from a concept concerned only with employees' job satisfaction to also encompassing subjective well-being, to dynamic, multi-dimensional constructs that incorporate any number of measures relating to employment quality (Hannif, Burgess & Connell 2008: 274).

Multi-dimensional constructs are often presented in the form of a composite index comprised of a number of measures of job quality, or of a range of attributes of jobs thought to impact upon job quality. Single and multidimensional measures of work quality can be produced at a range of levels, corresponding to the purpose of the analyst or the research question: at the level of individual jobs or workers, for organisations, occupations or industries, or at a regional, national or multinational level. Another approach is to develop a taxonomy of jobs by dividing them into classifications based on the values of indices of job quality, or on

combinations of attributes relating to job quality, such as ‘good’ and ‘bad’ jobs. Both indices and taxonomies are useful in analysing trends in job quality over time and across sectors or countries (see Holman 2012).

1.4.1 Job quality indices

The Global Policy Network proposes a Good Jobs Index that can be used to analyse the effects of five factors on job quality. This indicator is comprised of, and gives equal weight to, five dimensional indicators; the equal opportunity index, the salary index, the employment index, the social security index and the index of respect to labour rights (Crespo et al., 2013).

The measurement of job quality potentially entails identification and analysis of a vast number of indicators, involving direct and indirect causal relationships. Arguably, it is optimal to analyse job quality by assessing a number of subjective and objective indicators (Dahl, Nesheim & Olsen 2009). In any study of job quality it is important to select the particular dimensions of job quality that are to be included in the analysis, decide whether they are to be analysed individually or as part of a composite index and whether equal or varying weights will be assigned to each dimension (Crespo, Simões, & Pinto, 2013; Kluger, Townend, & Laidlaw, 2003).

Ideally the selection of components to include in an index would be guided by an explicit theoretical framework, and their weighting determined through empirical evidence, such as factor analysis. Weighting may also be distributed based on whether certain indicators are considered direct measures of job quality or whether they are contributory factors that, in total, may work to positively or negatively shape occupational well-being. In practice these choices are often more arbitrary and inevitably ignore the heterogeneity of workers’ preferences and other traits (Eurofound 2012: 18; Hannif et al 2008: 275-276).

Other key questions relate to the key focus of the indicators. For example, should they be focused at the workplace, organisation, employee or household level, or at the macro level of the economy? In association with this question is an issue regarding from whom should information be collected? How these decisions are made will depend largely upon the nature, scope and purpose of the proposed research.

One example of the composite approach is the Global Policy Network’s Good Jobs Index. This indicator is comprised of, and gives equal weight to, five dimensional indicators; the equal opportunity index, the salary index, the employment index, the social security index and the index concerning the respect of labour rights (Crespo et al., 2013). Crespo et al’s

(2013) purpose in creating this index was to develop a method for measuring job quality in and between countries at different levels of development.

1.4.2 Taxonomies of jobs by job quality

A common alternative to using continuous indices of job quality is to classify jobs into a set of distinct categories on the basis of their 'quality'. Many of the same challenges relating to the construction of indices apply to the development of taxonomies. They are often based upon indices or some combination of separate measures, and ideally should be based on a theoretical framework relating the constituent measures to wellbeing and supported by empirical evidence. As with indices, the analyst needs to decide what measures of job quality to include and the weightings to apply, with the added need to decide on the cut-off points for categories. Often these cut-off points are somewhat arbitrary, though they may also be based on statistical techniques that identify groups of jobs displaying common combinations of attributes, such as cluster analysis (Eurofound 2012: 48; Holman & McClelland 2011: 138).

The taxonomy most commonly used in discussions on job quality is the simple dichotomy of 'good jobs' and 'bad jobs'. For US workers, for example, Schmitt (2007) defines good and bad jobs according to the criteria set out in Table 1.1. Clearly analysis based on such a categorisation will be sensitive to the choice of a \$17 per hour wage rate as the cusp delineating good and bad jobs. In Australia, Butterworth et al (2011) classify jobs according to the number of adverse psychosocial measures (high demands and complexity, low job control, job insecurity and unfair pay), with the poorest jobs being those in which all four were observed.

The European foundation used cluster analysis of four separate indices derived from data from the European Working Conditions Survey - earnings, intrinsic job quality, working time quality and prospects - to identify distinct groupings of jobs on these dimensions. Four clusters emerge, described as: high paid, good jobs; well-balanced good jobs; poorly balanced jobs; and low quality jobs (Eurofound 2012: ch. 5). The clustering process does not mean that good jobs and bad jobs score the highest or lowest on all criteria. For example, the high paid good jobs are not necessarily the jobs that have good working time quality.

Table 1.1: Taxonomy of good and bad jobs in the US

Good Jobs	Bad jobs
(1) Pays at least \$17 per hour (in inflation-adjusted 2006 dollars); (2) Has employer provided health insurance for which the employer pays at least part of the premium; and (3) Has an employer-sponsored pension or retirement savings plan in which the worker currently participates.	(1) pays less than \$17 per hour in inflation-adjusted terms; (2) Has no employer-provided health insurance, or employer does not make a contribution toward health insurance benefits; and (3) Has no employer sponsored pension or retirement savings plan, or the employee is not participating in a plan.

Source: Schmitt (2007)

Demonstrating that even these quantitative approaches to categorising jobs are somewhat arbitrary and subjective, Holman (2012) finds that the same data is best characterised by a six-cluster solution. The categories are described as:

- Active jobs – high levels of job discretion and social support, but also with high job demands and complexity
- Saturated jobs – like active jobs with higher demands and working hours
- Team-based jobs – involve working in teams and with a high level of team autonomy
- Passive-independent jobs – with low demands and complexity, and jobs independent rather than requiring team work.
- Insecure jobs – featuring non-permanent contracts, low developmental opportunities and workers having a higher than average expectation of losing their jobs in the near future.
- High-strain jobs – combine high work-loads and job demands, with low levels of job discretion.

1.5 Summary

For the purposes of this report, the ‘quality of work’ is taken to mean the extent to which attributes of paid employment contribute to workers’ wellbeing in both their work and non-work domains. This section has provided an overview of issues that are important to understanding the current debates surrounding the quality of work, including conceptual frameworks linking job quality to wellbeing and to productivity, and measurement issues. While most analyses of the quality of work focus upon workplace and labour market

outcomes, for most people wellbeing in their working life and in other life domains are substantively interdependent. The fact that many governments now promote job quality as a policy objective demonstrates growing belief that the welfare of individuals, firm profitability and countries' overall economic performance may be enhanced through government regulation, intervention or other policy actions. The case for policy action and for ongoing evaluation arises from a range of potential sources, including the presence of externalities, imperfect information, asymmetric bargaining power and societal values and norms relating to equity and fairness. However, it is important to recognise that there are inevitable trade-offs between different elements of job quality, including possibly between job quality and employment opportunity, and that what constitutes a good or bad job will vary according to individual preferences and circumstances.

SECTION II: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE ON JOB QUALITY

A large and varied set of job-related factors have been identified as potentially influencing the quality of work. This can be seen from Table 2.1, which provides an aggregated list of factors identified as impacting upon job quality. These factors have been compartmentalised and categorised as being able to be subjectively or objectively measured (or both). As factors thought to impact on the wellbeing of workers' and their families, these can also be considered as indirect measures of job quality, as defined above. The macro dimensions of job quality analysis refer to the social, political and economic factors that may influence a population or group within a particular society and therefore influence job quality and satisfaction. The most obvious macro factor to influence work quality is the overall economic performance of a country, comprising of, but not limited to, economic growth and unemployment. These factors influence the ability of a person to find a good job that offers job security, good wages and various other work quality dimensions. Labour market policies regarding gender equality, diversity and discrimination also limit or promote access and achievement for certain groups in the labour market. Therefore, governments have an important role to play in shaping the job quality of individuals, groups and society at large through both macro- and microeconomic policy.

This section first provides a review of the empirical evidence on the relationship between such factors and workers' wellbeing with a view to identifying and summarising the most important contributors to - or detractors from - job quality. We then turn to the evidence on the links between job quality and productivity. Finally, Section 2.3 reviews the international evidence on trends in job quality over time and cross-national comparisons.

Table 2.1 Key factors contributing to the quality of work

Indicator Categories	Objective	Subjective
Macro dimensions	Gender equality Health & safety at work Flexicurity and security Inclusion and access to the labour market Work organisation and work-life balance Social dialogue and workers' involvement Diversity and non-discrimination Overall economic performance Productivity	Work-life balance Intrinsic rewards Interpersonal relations
Job (and pay) Security	Separation rates Redundancy rates Job tenure Impact of job loss on future pay Protection from unfair dismissal Protection from redundancy	Perceived job insecurity/uncertainty regarding: Job loss Wage cuts Missed promotions Future jobs
Pay and fringe benefits	Absolute wage level Employment benefits (annual leave, sick leave, public holidays, bereavement and long-service leave)	Relative wage level
Access to learning, training and career progression	Perceived access to training/promotion opportunities	Structure of training programs

	(whether due to company structure or personal attributes)	Number of hours worked (few -> less opportunity to learn new skills)
Intrinsic work characteristics	Meaningfulness of work Clear and identifiable piece of work Whether the task is recognisable Pace Opportunity for use of initiative Difficulty of work Autonomy and control over work Task variety Task complexity	Difficulty of work Task variety Task complexity Pace
Intensity of the job/workload	Number of hours worked Schedule (times of day, week, year) Schedule fixed or flexible (full-time/part-time etc.) Ability to move between part-time and full-time Amount of overtime worked Whether overtime is paid or unpaid	Rising pressure of pace Work overload Time pressure Tight deadlines
Workplace environment	The physical working conditions Prevalence of union Health, safety and support procedures/policies Workplace incidents Danger/risk associated with job	Professional support Team spirit Workplace culture Direct or indirect voice (unionised or not) Interpersonal relations

Sources: Kluger et al., (2003); Campbell, I. (2005); Chalmers, J., et al. (2005); Broom et al., (2006); Dahl, S.A., et al. (2009); Hoodless, M. and L. Bourke (2009); Decent Work Indicators: Concepts and Definitions, (2012a); Kifle, T. (2012); Crespo et al., (2013)

2.1 What is a 'good job'

In the extant literature there is regular reference to 'good' jobs and 'bad' jobs, especially in the context of structural change and reviews of the characteristics of new jobs that are generated (Kalleberg, 2000). Assimilating the summary literature, it appears that the key features of a good job are associated with pay; working conditions; employment benefits; employment security; developmental opportunities; social relations at work and the nature of the job.

A 'good' job is one that, in relative terms, has a positive impact on its holder's wellbeing. In turn, specific attributes of a job can be said to contribute positively to job quality if they are causally associated with workers' wellbeing. Putting aside moral or ethical judgements, the identification of good or bad jobs, or of the characteristics of good or bad jobs, is largely an empirical question of the magnitude of the association between job characteristics and direct measures of job quality, such as job satisfaction, life satisfaction, turnover and absenteeism. Characteristics which have been shown to contribute to job quality can then be used as indirect indicators or measures of job quality.

There is no clear agreement on what the most important attributes contributing to job quality are. An important gap in the literature to date is the absence of meta-analyses or review papers that present standardised effect sizes of variables, and thus a comparable way of assessing the relative importance of the various effects. However, a number of core features that dominate the literature on the topic can be identified. Given the extensive and multi-disciplinary dimensions of the relevant literature, the overview of that literature presented here is necessarily cursory. Table 2.2 summarises some key papers that have directly addressed the issue of what constitutes a 'good job'. In the most part, these factors have been identified on the basis of research connecting them to employee wellbeing.

In the psychological literature Ryan and Deci (2000) highlight the meeting of workers' needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness as predicting both workplace well-being and performance. Holman and McClelland (2011: 4) identify the prime indicators of job quality included in objectivist studies across different disciplines as falling into one or more of five main dimensions: work organisation; wages and payment system; security and flexibility; skills and development; and engagement and collective representation.

Table 2.2: Key Determinants of a Good Job identified from Relevant Literature

Authors/Date	Key Determinants of a Good Job
Constable, Coats, Bevan and Mahdon (2009, p.21)	Employment security Work that is not characterised by monotony and repetition Autonomy and control A balance between efforts and rewards Whether the workers have the skills they need to cope with periods of intense pressure Workplace procedures are seen to be fair Strong workplace relationships (social capital)
Eurofound (2012)	Earnings Intrinsic job qualities Working time quality Job prospects
McGovern, Smeaton & Hill (2004, pp.230)	Good pay Employment benefits (sick pay, pension) Career and promotion opportunities
Holman (2012, p.477)	Work organisation Wages and payment system Security and flexibility Skills and development Engagement
Kalleberg, Reskin, & Hudson (2000, pp.261-264)	Employment security Unionization Occupational complexity and suitable income Employment benefits
Leach, Butterworth, Rodgers & Strazdins (2010)	Job demands and complexity Job control Job security
Martin (2007, p.185)	High wages Good working conditions (notably health insurance) Employment security Promotion prospects A range of employment protections secured through legislation and unionization
Sengugupta, Edwards and Tsai (2009, p.2)	Pay and benefits Career development and training Absence of work intensification and stress Autonomy Active participation

Source: Created for the Job Quality Project

By relating domain satisfaction to employee turnover using longitudinal data on British workers, Clark (2005) finds satisfaction with job security and pay to be the most important

predictor of employee exit, followed by satisfaction with use of initiative, the work itself and hours of work. In the International Social Survey Program, workers from across a number of OECD countries were asked directly to rank the importance of a set of job characteristics. The factors ranked as most important were job security and interesting work, followed by independence. Pay and working hours were ranked as being less important, and there were few differences in rankings between males and females, or from 1989 to 1997 (Clark 2005: 381). Using data for a wider range of countries Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza (2000) also confirm having an interesting job as a key determinant of job satisfaction.

Another approach is discriminant analysis, in which procedures such as cluster or factor analysis are used to identify commonalities among sets of variables or observations. Analysing responses to 12 different questions exploring people's attitudes to their jobs from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey (HILDA), Leach et al (2010) identify three main factors that summarised workers' attitudes: Job demands and complexity; job security and job control. However, Dockery et al (2011) challenge the validity of the 'Job demands and complexity' factor, proposing two separate factors for job stress and job demands/complexity. Job security and job control are found to be strongly and positively associated with both job satisfaction and wider life satisfaction; job demands to have a mild and positive association with job satisfaction; and job stress to be strongly and negatively associated with job satisfaction and life satisfaction.

Assimilating the summary literature outlined above, it appears that key features that impact upon the quality of jobs are pay and other employment benefits; employment security; working hours; autonomy, including over the pace of work and over how work is organised; equity and fairness; physical working conditions; developmental opportunities and social relations at work. Some key findings from the literature relating to what are assessed as among the more important aspects of job quality - pay, working hours, employment security, autonomy, equity and working conditions are discussed below.

2.1.1 Pay and the quality of work

High pay is often seen as being one of the elements of a good job (Holman & McClelland 2011: 27). This can be interpreted under most frameworks linking work to wellbeing, as higher hourly wages increase the choices available to individuals and their capacity to pursue the things they value. However, it is well established that beyond a certain level, wealth has a very tenuous relationship with wellbeing, and that level is quite modest in the context of the standards of living experienced in advanced countries. Hence the contribution of high wages to job quality may be expected to occur through their role as a signal of

prestige or status, rather than to the actual impact on workers' ability to expand consumption.

The more recent empirical literature on the link between wages and job quality, as measured by job satisfaction or turnover, largely falls in line with Herzberg's theory of the 1950s that suggested wages were a hygiene factor rather than a motivating factor: that is, the absence of decent pay may cause dissatisfaction, but higher pay does not necessarily promote satisfaction (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman 1959). Rather than the absolute level of pay, by and large, it is pay *relative* to other workers that matters and has been associated with direct measures of job quality (eg. lower quits). Even here findings are ambiguous because a worker's lower relative pay may play an added role of signaling the potential for future advancements with the firm, hence reducing workers quitting (see Clark, Kristensen & Westergaard-Nielsen 2009, Pfeifer & Schneck 2012).

So while low pay may often be a feature of low quality and low status jobs, the importance of interpersonal wage comparisons means that high wages can play, at best, a minor role in distinguishing work quality. This is true also from a policy perspective – while a pay rise for one worker may positively contribute to their wellbeing, rising wages overall have limited relevance for the quality of work. Individual firms, however, may generate incentives by aligning the way payments are structured and the use of bonuses in line with workers' sense of fairness, desire for promotion ladders and to promote training and performance (see, for example, Lazear 2000).

2.1.2 Hours of work and work-life balance

It has been well established that the hours one works have a substantial impact on work quality. There are multiple aspects to this relationship, including debates relating to part-time work and underemployment, long work hours, non-standard schedules and the large literature on the balance between work and family. Reflecting this, Eurofound uses a more general term of working time quality, where the emphasis is on the "... extent to which the working time meets workers' needs for work-life balance" (2012: 15). Part-time work has traditionally been seen as 'inferior' work, associated in general with lower status, job security, wages, promotion prospects and fewer fringe benefits (Kalleberg 2000: 345-346, Wooden, Warren & Drago 2009: 149). This has implications for gender equity, as the vast majority of part-time workers are female. Strazdins, Shipley and Broom (2007) find that the job quality divide in Australia is more pronounced for fathers, with less of a difference in job quality between mothers working part-time and mothers working full-time. Moreover, Pocock, Skinner and Pisaniello (2010:5) found in the latest AWALI survey that a "third of full-

time women would like to reduce their working hours to part-time” and there was little difference between mothers of children under 18 and other women.

However, it is important to note that it is not the number of hours worked *per se* that makes part-time work inferior. Recent research demonstrates that many of the inferior outcomes for part-time workers can be accounted for by other characteristics of their jobs, and there is little evidence that part-time jobs are associated with lower subjective measures of job satisfaction (Wooden et al 2009: 149). Rather, the direct effect on job quality arises through mismatch between actual working hours and preferred working hours (Dockery 2003, Wooden et al 2009). Dockery (2003) found that while part-time workers are much less likely than full-time workers to be working more hours than they desired, they equally display lower wellbeing when they do so.

Working long hours and working outside of standard hours, such as night shifts or weekend shifts, is also hypothesised to contribute to low quality work. The empirical literature is clear with respect to the negative impacts of non-standard hours on the wellbeing of workers and their families (Li et al 2013, Pocock, Skinner & Williams 2008, Presser, 2003; Strazdins, Shipley & Broom 2007), but less so with respect to working long hours (Wooden et al 2009: 151). Although both these job characteristics might impact on wellbeing through adverse health effects, much of the debate has focussed on their impact on ‘work-life balance’ and whether or not working schedules are ‘family friendly’. These issues have been compounded by growth in the proportion of dual-income families and those with caring responsibilities for older family members (Swanberg & Simmons 2008). Eurofound (2012) find that the factors associated with a good work–life balance include part-time working, shorter or regular working hours, flexitime and having access to emergency leave at short notice. Swanberg & Simmons (2008) for the US and other studies have also found empirical evidence that flexible work options contribute to employee wellbeing.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) considers an important element of ‘decent working time’ to be providing workers with the time to fulfil family responsibilities (ILO, 2012). The trade-offs in work quality present a policy dilemma: part-time work, long working hours, and non-standard hours are all tools families and individuals use to free up time for family responsibilities, and these contribute to gendered polarisation in work schedules as it is typically mothers who work part-time and fathers who work long hours to accommodate family obligations (Messenger 2006: 423-427).

2.1.3 Employment Security

Employment security and job control are arguably the categories of job characteristics that impact most strongly upon employee wellbeing, and employment security is often cited among the factors contributing to job quality. Strazdins et al (2004: 297) argue that job insecurity affects wellbeing because it can be a stressor that affects mental and physical health. In addition to the range of empirical studies confirming negative effects of job insecurity, the issue has become more salient as a result of an increase in precarious employment following the Global Financial Crisis (Eurofound 2012: 4; see also section 2.3 below).

Empirical studies have identified negative associations between job insecurity and job satisfaction in the International Social Survey Program data for 21 countries (Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza's 2000); positive associations between job insecurity and mental and physical health problems and anxiety based for mid-aged Australian managers and professionals, and an apparent synergistic effect between job strain and job insecurity (Strazdins et al 2004); and negative associations between job insecurity and self-rated health in the US (Swanberg & Simmons 2008). Royuela & Surinach (2013) cite studies showing that contract type is one of the major determinants of job satisfaction in Spain, which they interpret as an indicator of perceived job security. Vandenbrande et al (2013: 140) find that precarious employment in Belgium tends to be coincident with other markers of low quality work, and significantly impacts upon job satisfaction, health outcomes and other indicators of wellbeing. Using Holman's taxonomy of jobs developed from the EWCS 2005 sample, insecure jobs and high-strain jobs are associated with the lowest psychological wellbeing (2012: 491).

One aim of the European Employment Strategy (EES) is 'flexicurity' – described as a combination of flexible labour markets while at the same time promoting high levels of job security. This policy seeks to strike a balance between the efficiency benefits of flexible labour markets while avoiding the negative impacts upon job quality often associated with insecurity (Eurofound 2012: 4; Holman and McClelland 2012: 29; Viebrock & Clasen 2009). In critically assessing the EES, Revaud (2007) notes an alternative to the 'quality view' that associates precarious employment with greater stress and higher risks of unemployment or early exit from the labour market. That is the 'stepping stone' view, that part-time or fixed-term employment contracts provide pathways into the labour market and facilitate higher overall employment (Reveaud 2007: 416).

2.1.4 Job control and autonomy

A lack of job control and autonomy constitutes another potential work-related stressor that can impact upon workers' wellbeing and that of their families. Related concepts that may contribute to feelings of low job control include work intensification, task discretion, work strain, work stress, deskilling and dehumanization and low autonomy. Evidence that psychological demands of jobs in combination with aspects such as autonomy and skill use impact upon employee performance and wellbeing led to the 'demand-control model' attributed to Karasek. The demand control model posits that the combination of high psychological demands and low decision making authority leads to psychological stress and negative health effects. Extensions to the model later incorporated a mediating role of employee support (Swanberg & Simmons 2008: 123). Like job security, job control and autonomy features prominently among models and analysis of the factors comprising 'good jobs' (see, for example, Constable et al 2009). Autonomy also features in Self-Determination Theory as one of the key factors underpinning well-being.

Again this proposition has widespread empirical support. Of the 'work input' variables included in Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza's (2000) cross national study having an exhausting job was the variable that produced the greatest fall in job satisfaction. Strazdins et al (2004) find job strain to impact on mental and physical health, with synergistic effects when combined with job insecurity, as noted above along with Holman's (2012) result. Swanberg & Simmons (2008: 123-124) review other studies relating the demand-control-support model to absenteeism, depression, anxiety and other symptoms of psychological distress. The important role that job control and autonomy has on job quality has significant implications given changes in technological and structural changes in the economy that may potentially reduce job control and autonomy and dehumanise work (Hannif, Burgess and Connell 2007).

2.2 Evidence on the job quality-productivity link

The imperative for the analysis of job quality lies in the belief that job quality affects productivity in ways that are not fully reflected in the decisions made by individuals, firms and the government, implying the scope for improved social and business outcomes through better information and policy intervention. Productivity impacts can be considered at various levels; most pertinently at the macro level (do improvements in the average job quality in a country lead to higher per capita productivity?) and the micro level (do improvements in the quality of a worker's job enhance their productivity?).

Empirical evidence on these questions is again inconclusive. As Royuela and Surinach note the direction of association at the macroeconomic level could be positive or negative, since it has been argued that some productivity advancements have been achieved through reforms that have reduced job quality: "... the dehumanization of labour relationships is the price to pay for having higher economic growth" (2013: 50). On the other hand, dissatisfied workers can impose large costs on firms. A complexity for empirical work is the likely endogeneity in the relationship, since higher productivity and real incomes facilitate better working standards and conditions. Royuela and Surinach's (2013) sectoral analysis for Spain find a conditional relationship. Work quality is associated with higher productivity in sectors where human capital and skills are important, but the opposite applies in low human capital sectors.

The basis for a positive impact of job quality upon productivity is sometimes framed as the 'happy/productive worker' hypothesis. Productivity effects of happier workers may arise through a range of channels, including less shirking, less counterproductive behaviours, greater organisational commitment, lower quit rates and absenteeism and fewer accidents (Bockerman & Ilmakunnas 2012; Clark 2005, p. 380). Similarly, family and work conflict has been found to have negative impacts on employee performance and job satisfaction (Voydanoff 2005: 707). Barling et al (2003), in a study based on data from the Australian Workplace Industrial Relations Survey, find that higher job quality is associated with fewer occupational injuries, and the effect is mediated through job satisfaction.

Generally, empirical studies have found positive associations between job satisfaction and worker performance measured on a range of different criteria, and this extends to firm level performance (Bockerman & Ilmakunnas 2012; Eurofound 2012: 12). Barling et al (2003) argue there is broad agreement in the literature on high performance work systems that such systems are founded upon employee involvement and empowerment, and that the causal link runs from practice to people to performance. Overall, however, the most recent Eurofound report finds that research in this area is not sufficiently advanced to establish the direction of causality between job quality and productivity (2012: 13).

2.3 International trends and cross-country comparisons

Studies that have assessed trends in job quality in the developed economies have been concerned both with the question of whether job quality has been improving or deteriorating, and whether or not there has been increasing inequality in the distribution of good jobs. This program of research has been punctuated by a new wave of studies assessing changes in job quality in the aftermath of Global Financial Crisis (GFC). Clark (2005: 394) makes the general observation that job outcomes are pro-cyclical – on average job quality can be

expected to be systematically poorer in times and regions of higher unemployment, and the experience in most countries following the GFC has borne this out.

The ILO (2013) recently released the “World of Work 2013” report, documenting ongoing weakness in international labour markets, noting in particular rises in youth and long-term unemployment, and the growing propensity for social unrest in some regions. The *World of Work 2012* report documented declines in job quality associated with the GFC, with the incidence of involuntary temporary and part-time work increasing in around 80% of countries analysed. Analysis of a job quality index based largely on the incidence of temporary work finds an association between aggregate labour market performance and changes in job quality between 2001 and 2011, with the correlation most pronounced for advanced economies (ILO 2013: 12-13).

2.3.1 Job quality in Europe

Within the OECD Europe has been the focus of most research into developments in the quality of work, and this has been facilitated by greater investment in the measurement of work quality and the generation of indices and taxonomies. Munoz de Bustillo et al (2009) provide an extensive overview of indicators of job quality in the European Union, covering some 18 different indicators.

One of the main sources of data on job quality is the European Working Conditions Survey. Every five years, Eurofound carries out the EWCS, interviewing both employees and self-employed people on key issues related to their work and employment¹. The first EWCS survey was carried out in 1990 and the fifth edition in 2010 when a total of 44,000 workers from 34 European countries were interviewed. The interviews cover a large number of topics and variables ranging from employment situation to physical factors, psychosocial risks, leadership and social relationships at work, the emotional dimensions of work, change at the work-place, work-life balance, flexibility and flexicurity and modern forms of work organisation.

One of the most recently published documents to emerge from the 5th European Working Conditions Survey is the ‘*Trends in Job Quality in Europe*’ report published by Eurofound (2012). The report measures job quality in the 27 countries of the European Union in addition to 7 additional countries that participated in the EWCS. As noted in section 1.4.2, Eurofound (2012) used the EWCS to generate indices of four different aspects of job quality (earnings, job prospects, intrinsic job quality, and working time quality). In turn these were used to develop a taxonomy comprising four types of jobs. Analyses of differences in the

¹ <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/qualityofwork/>

indices across the 34 countries indicate that industrial structure accounts for only a small proportion of cross-country variation. Job quality tended to be lower in the Eastern European countries and higher in Nordic countries, consistent with a more general positive relationship between job quality and living standards (or GDP per capita), though the relationship is far from strict. The diversity in country variation across the different indices should be taken as a warning that the use of a single index could result in potentially misleading conclusions (2012: 42-45). Holman's cross-country analysis of the EWCS data found that institutional differences are important in explaining job quality between countries, with the key elements of an institutional regime that promote work quality being employment policies and the capacity of organised labour (2012: 496).

Eurofound (2012) classified 14% of jobs in Europe as highly paid good jobs; 37% as well-balanced good jobs; 29% as poorly balanced jobs and 20% as poor quality jobs. Unsurprisingly the workers in poor quality jobs had, on average, the lowest levels of health and wellbeing and found less meaning in their work (Munoz de Bustillo, Fernandez-Macias, Aton, & Esteve, 2009). These were the jobs where workers were most at risk and were disproportionately found in workplaces with fewer than five employees in the private sector. Reportedly men on average tend to work longer hours, do more shift work and have higher monthly earnings. Women were found to work in better physical environments and have slightly better levels of intrinsic job quality. The results also showed that there were significant differences in health, well-being and the perceived meaningfulness of work (Munoz de Bustillo, et al, 2009).

Psychosocial risks that impact negatively on workers' health and well-being include: high demands and work intensity, emotional demands, lack of autonomy, ethical conflicts, and poor social relationships, as well as job and work insecurity. Exposure to these risks tends to go hand-in-hand with exposure to physical risks (Eurofound, 2012b)

In terms of trends over time, Eurofound (2012) constructed indices from 1995 to 2010 for working time quality, skills and discretion, good physical environment, and work intensity. Across 15 member states for which these were available on a consistent basis, the skills and discretion and physical environment indices remained stable, while there was a very small increase in work intensity. Reported levels of exposure to physical risks in the workplace have not diminished greatly since the first survey was conducted in 1991, but there was an improvement in working time quality resulting from both a fall in average working hours and in the use of shift-work. Eurofound cautiously summarise these findings as suggesting "... workplaces have become somewhat better at meeting employees' needs for a good work-life balance" (2012: 57).

Analysis of the EWCS data contained in the most recent European Jobs Monitor shows that the Global Financial Crisis resulted in a polarisation of the wage structure due to the destruction of mid-paid manufacturing and construction occupations, but little polarisation in terms of non-pecuniary job-quality attributes (Eurofound, 2013). Higher-paid jobs were found to be much more resilient during the GFC, and the recession actually aided gender equality in the labour market due to women benefiting from structural change and their higher levels of educational attainment which are increasingly required for access to better quality jobs (Eurofound, 2013).

In line with the Eurofound (2012) findings above, previous international studies have identified a general trend towards lower working hours, but greater diversification of weekly work schedules (Wooden et al 2009: 147). In contrast, survey data collected in Germany in 2011 suggest an intensification of work (DGB Index Gute Arbeit, 2012).

2.3.2 Job quality in the USA

In the wake of the GFC, labour statistics in the U.S. show that the labour market has become increasingly segmented into good and bad jobs. This has led to a proliferation of labour market segmentation theories and dual labour market hypotheses. Good and bad jobs have increasingly been found to differ by pay, conditions, security and access to benefits. Within the US context, there was clear racial and gendered division of labour across the two sectors (Schmitt and Jones, 2012). By their calculations, about 24% of U.S. workers were in a bad job in 2010 (the most recently available data) or 'dead-end' jobs (Osterman & Shulman, 2011).

Osterman & Shulman (2011) reported that 25% of jobs in the US are bad or 'dead-end' jobs and Schmitt and Jones (2012) that about 24% of workers were in a bad job in 2010. The arbitrariness of how such taxonomies are defined makes it difficult to interpret these figures. In common with other countries, Schmitt and Jones found an increase in the share of bad jobs in the economy associated with the GFC and subsequent recession. In contrast to the European experience, however, Schmitt and Jones (2012) suggest a longer term trend of declining job quality in the US, with the share of bad jobs in the US substantially higher than in 1979, when 18% of workers were in a bad job by the same definition (see discussion of Schmitt's 2007 taxonomy in section 1.4.2). Despite the economic crises the 2000s has seen an increase in the percentage of jobs that pay at least \$17 an hour. Of the three criteria used to determine job quality – pay, health insurance and employer sponsored pension and retirement-savings plans - workers benefitted most with respect to earnings (Schmitt, 2007).

Other evidence on long-term changes in work quality in the US based on the National Study of the Changing Workforce provides a mixed picture. In 2002, workers reported having greater schedule control, job autonomy and access to supervisor support for work and family issues than did workers in 1977. Over that same period, however, the proportion reporting work-family interference increased from 34% to 45% (Swanberg and Simmons 2008). However, Swanberg and Simmons also report a marked increase in the availability of flexible working hours for employees between 1985 and 2000, along with evidence that workers with flexible schedules have lower absenteeism, higher job satisfaction and are more productive (2008: 125). Kalleberg (2012) argues that there has been a polarization in job quality between the 1970s and 2000s in terms of wages, access to standard working arrangements and other fringe benefits; but the evidence is less clear on intrinsic rewards. In terms of precarious employment, however, Kalleberg identifies a general increase in job insecurity in the US over this time (2012: 434).

2.3.3 International comparisons of job quality in Australia

The OECD Better Life Initiative (2013) revealed that, in a cross-country comparison, Australia fares exceptionally well. The Better Life Index encompasses 11 indices focusing on housing, income, jobs, community, education, environment, civic engagement, health, life satisfaction, safety and work-life balance. The job sub-index takes into account the employment rate, long-term unemployment rate, average earnings and job security. Australia ranked 7 out of 36 for its employment rate, with relatively low youth long-term unemployment, but a higher rate of precarious employment compared to the OECD average (OECD 2011).

The Work-Life Balance sub-index is based on data regarding the number of employees working long hours and the average time devoted to leisure and personal care. Australia's ranking on work-life balance is low, at 31 out of 36 for the percentage of employees working long hours, limiting the time that remains to be devoted to leisure and personal care (ranked 27 out of 36). Almost 14% of employees work very long hours in Australia (21% of men and 5% of women) and consequently leisure time is 14.4 hours which is below the OECD average of 14.8 hours. Other concerns raised for Australia included the high level of joblessness in sole parent families contributing to above average poverty rates for those families and lower expenditure on childcare (0.4% of GDP as compared to the OECD average of 0.6% of GDP) (OECD 2011).

The ILO's (2012b) "World of Work 2012" report provides a focus on the recovery of the labour market after the GFC by comparing data from Eurostat and OECD employment databases for the years 2007 and 2011. Generally, Australia has weathered the economic

crisis better than many developed countries due to the stimulus plans that were implemented during the crisis and the mining boom (OECD, 2012). Yet, as with other advanced economies, labour market challenges remain. As discussed earlier there has also been an increase in ‘non-standard’ employment in Australia with a resulting increase in precarious employment, which refers to involuntary and part time employment (Figure 2.1).

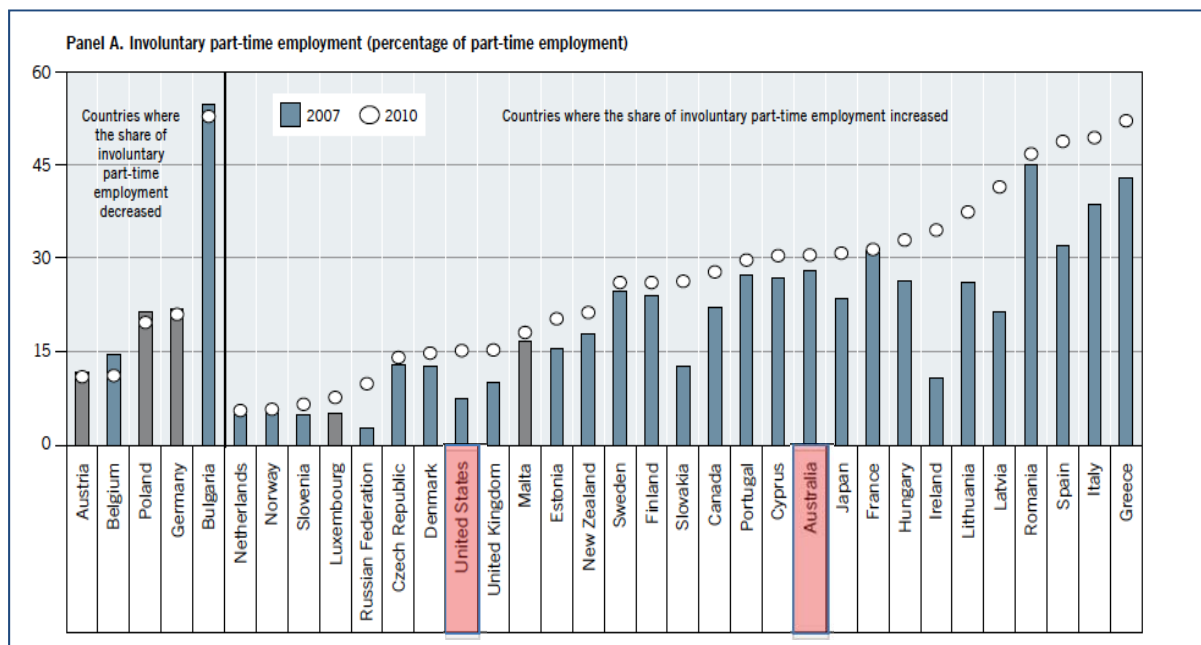


Figure 2.1: Incidence of involuntary part time work (precarious employment) in advanced economies (2007 and 2010); ILS estimates are based on Eurostat, OECD employment databases and national sources (ILO, 2012b: 26) Source: ILO, 2012, 31

SECTION III: INTERNATIONAL POLICY APPROACHES TO JOB QUALITY

The importance of the concept and analysis of job quality has placed it firmly on the agenda of international institutions such as the European Union (EU), the ILO, and the OECD. As a result, the ILO has developed a number of decent work criteria over time.

The quality of work is now seen in many countries as an important economic and social variable to be monitored and, at least towards the lower end of the job quality spectrum, to be regulated. This is because of the potential to improve productivity and social welfare and to limit inequality through public policy and an improved understanding of the effects of the quality of work for decision-making by individuals, families and firms. The monitoring, evolution and evaluation of job quality is considered important in order to provide a framework within which to assess the effects of economic policies and structural changes such as globalization and technological progress on working conditions (Crespo et al 2013; Green, 2006).

The quality of work features prominently on the policy agendas of the EU, ILO and OECD (Crespo et al 2013: 2). The ILO introduced its concept of ‘decent work’ in 1999 (Ghai, 2003) and the EU introduced the European Employment Strategy (EES), launched in 1997 and renewed in 2006 (Royuela & Surinach 2012: 37). In contrast, the Government in the US has been less proactive, largely leaving firms to develop their own approaches to issues such as family and work-life balance (Swanberg & Simmons 2008: 120) and it seems little effort has been made to produce job quality measures to facilitate comparative studies (Leschke, Watt & Finn 2008: 6-7). Studies relating to Asia and developing countries have largely focussed on minimum employment conditions and protections, such as the use of child labour, and on experiences of migrant labour, with limited relevance to the Australian context (see, for example, the various ILO *World of Work* reports).

This section initially reviews the policy approaches put forward by the ILO and the EU, and then the approaches to measuring and monitoring the quality of work in those jurisdictions.

3.1 International policy frameworks

The quality of work emerged in the European debate about labour market performance and labour market policy at the Lisbon Summit in 2000. The European Union has a deliberate goal under its ‘Lisbon Strategy’ to create ‘more and better jobs’ in Europe. Thus, since 2000 the concept of ‘more and better jobs’ has been at the forefront of European Union policy objectives.

3.1.1 The European Employment Strategy (EES)

The EES was introduced in 1997 through the Treaty of Amsterdam and improving the quality of work became an official goal in 2000 with the Lisbon Growth and Jobs Strategy which included the goals of full employment, employment quality, productivity, social inclusion and social cohesion as part of a resolve to become the world's most competitive knowledge-based economy (Eurofound 2012, Raveaud 2007, Royuela & Surinach 2103). Renewed in 2006, this 'more and better jobs' approach was based on a growing consensus that job quality and productivity go hand in hand (Brockerman & Ilmakunnas 2012: 244; Royuela & Surinach 2013: 37). The commitment to job quality as an objective has been reinforced as recently as 2010, with ratification of 'Europe 2020 – A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth' (Royuela & Surinach 2013: 38).

Trends in job quality in Europe would suggest that the EES has been relatively unsuccessful, with no improvement in most job quality indicators and weak indications of an improvement in working time quality. Revaeud (2007) argues that it is not necessarily the strategy that is wrong, but that the member states have not followed the strategy. The EES is not actually 'policy' as such, rather a set of recommendations for labour ministers to follow in the formulation of employment policy in their respective countries.

Further, according to Reveaud, the emphasis shifted to the endorsement of part-time and temporary work as flexibility under the guise of 'flexicurity' as a means of job creation, rather than focussing on a true job quality agenda that would perceive such jobs as low quality. Viebrock and Clasen suggest 'flexicurity' has an ambiguous and 'buzzword character' that pays little regard to existing traditions in labour market policies and is not easily distinguishable from "... an old agenda aimed at making labour markets more flexible and curtailing employee's rights" (2009:23). Munoz de Bustillo similarly observe "... although job quality was put on the table at Lisbon ..., and became a relevant dimension especially from the Laekan European Council in 2001 onwards, it has undergone no real development or enjoyed any practical operational application within the European Employment Strategy." (2009: 11).

3.1.2 The ILO decent work criteria

The concept of 'decent work' was launched in 1999 in the report of the Director-General to the ILO Conference (Ghai, 2003) and has been defined as "opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity" (ILO, 1999, p.3). The concept has six dimensions: (a) opportunities for work for every man/woman who would like to find work, that ensures sustainable development

and that provides a sustainable livelihood to workers and their families, (b) work should be voluntary and not forced, (c) workers should be free to join workers' organisations, (d) work should be free from discrimination, (f) the health of workers and their families should be protected with adequate safeguards in the case of illness, and (g) workers should be treated with respect (ILO, 2012a) .

The ILO's decent work agenda is based on four strategic objectives: (1) fundamental rights and protection at work, (2) the creation and provision of employment, (3) social protection, and (4) social dialogue (ILO. 2012a). As with the EES, however, the Decent Work Agenda cannot be seen to be a definitive policy approach, but rather only a set of guiding principles that signatories to the ILO may or may not follow when implementing policy. Subsequent assessments, such as the various ILO *World of Work* reports, have focussed as much on aggregate labour market outcomes as measures of the quality of jobs.

3.2 International approaches to measurement and monitoring

The growing prominence of work quality as a policy issue in Europe has seen the emergence of an extensive suite of measures and indicators of job quality emerge. Following the launch of the EES, indicators of the quality of work were defined at the Laeken Summit in December 2001 resulting in 18 indicators covering 4 dimensions of social inclusion (financial poverty, employment, health and education), which relate to four aggregate components – socio-economic security (e.g. decent wages and secure transitions), skills and training, working conditions, work-life balance and gender equality (Eurostat, 2005; Davoine, Erhel, & Guergoat-Lariviere, 2008).

Munoz de Bustillo et al (2009) provide a comprehensive and critical review of the indicators available in the European Union. Rather than replicate such an audit here the EWCS and the European Job Quality Index, two of the main instruments for assessing job quality, are briefly discussed as examples of measures developed in response to the EES.

The EWCS is conducted every five years, covering 34 countries and over 40,000 individuals. The extensive data base is used to explore the quality of work and employment, its impact on health and well-being at work, work organisation, the provision of sustainable work for an aging population, working conditions profiles for different sectors, employability and security, working hours and work-life balance, and gender differences (Eurofound, 2012). The EWCS forms part of the European Observatory on Working Conditions (EOWC). The Observatory aims to provide regular updates and information on the quality of work and working conditions in European member states.

The objectives of the EWCS are to:

1. Measure working conditions across European countries on a harmonised basis;
2. Analyse relationships between different aspects of working conditions;
3. Identify groups at risks and issues of concern, as well as areas of progress;
4. Monitor trends over time; and
5. Contribute to European policy development, in particular on quality of work and employment issues.

A drawback of the EWCS is that it is only collected every 5 years and there has been some change to the survey questions over time. In order to explore trends in European labour markets that go beyond unemployment rates whilst still employing a quantitative approach, the European Trade Union Institute for Research, Education and Health and Safety has developed a 'European Job Quality Index' (JQI) based on various Eurostat data bases and the EWCS (Leschke et al, 2008). The JQI enables comparison across different dimensions of job quality between countries and between men and women (Table 3.1), with some limitations arising due to the need to manage inconsistencies in definitions and in the availability of data.

Table 3.1: European Job Quality Index (JQI) – Sub-indices and data sources

Sub-indices	Variables	Data Source	Weighting
Wages	- compensation per employee	AMECO, Eurostat	70
	- in-work poverty	Eurostat	30
Non-standard forms / Precarious employment	- temporary employment	Eurostat, LFS	50
	- involuntary part-time work	Eurostat, LFS	50
Working hours and work-life balance	- extensive working hours	Eurostat, LFS	25
	- shift, weekend, night, evening work	Eurostat, LFS	25
	- voluntary part-time work	EU-SILC	25
	- work-life balance	EWCS	25
Working conditions and job security	- work intensity	EWCS	25
	- work autonomy	EWCS	25
	- physical work factors	EWCS	25
	- job (in) security	EWCS	25
Skills and career development	- % population participating in training	Eurostat, LFS	60
	- career advancement prospects	EWCS	40
Collective interest representation	- collective bargaining coverage	ICTWSS	40
	- trade union density	ICTWSS	30
	- consultation about changes	EWCS	30

Source: Leschke, Watt & Finn, 2008:13-14)

To repeat, these are just two examples of a multitude of indicators of job quality now available in the European Union. Despite this wealth of statistical sources, frustration continues to be expressed at the inability to capture the essence of 'job quality' from different

perspectives. Munoz de Bustillo et al (2009) argue that the problem is not availability of data about job quality, but the lack of agreement on what job quality is and the lack of a consistent source of data on this issue at the European Union level. Reveaud (2007: 420) discusses the inability of the European Commission to reach an agreement on the definition of the quality of work, expressing frustration at their refusal to accept the nature of employment contracts as an indicator.

Eurofound (2012) argues that existing indicators do not cover the aspects of employment quality adequately at an international level. Whilst employment indicators are generally robust and based on harmonised standards, indicators of job quality are mainly covered by small-scale surveys at the organisational rather than national level, with the EWCS being an exception. Eurofound notes that there are many reasons for still wanting to clarify the concept and measurement of the quality of paid work for the purposes of policy analyses, including the need to understand the social costs of poor job quality, which has led to more attention being paid to the physical and social workplace environments. The Eurofound 2012 report recommends the adoption of four indices: earnings, prospects, intrinsic job quality and working time quality.

The UNECE-ILO Eurostat Taskforce (2010) calls for additional measures to capture the level of precarious employment and/or under-employment, workplace injuries, unacceptable forms of labour (e.g. child labour, forced labour), workplace discrimination, earnings and benefits, job security and social protection, social dialogue and industrial relations, and workplace relationships and job characteristics (UNECE, 2010). In light of the wealth of job quality indicators now available in the European Union, this ongoing discourse suggests that no degree of measurement and reporting approach will satisfy all parties interested in job quality.

SECTION IV: JOB QUALITY THE AUSTRALIAN WAY

There is clear evidence that the quality of the jobs people hold affects their quality of life, with flow-on effects to those around them. Distinguishable aspects that characterise ‘bad jobs’ – low autonomy, uninteresting work, a lack of job security and working hours that clash with family obligations – have pronounced negative effects on wellbeing given the typical preferences of workers. Further, the possibility that overall welfare can be enhanced by actions to improve job quality cannot be dismissed, including the possibility that links between job quality and productivity are not fully exploited. This is well accepted and integrated into policy formulation processes in Europe, but less so in the US.

By international standards job quality in Australia appears to compare quite favourably (see Section 2.3.3), and in part this can be attributed to Australia’s strong aggregate labour market performance in recent decades and through the Global Financial Crisis. In this section we review the elements of the existing policy and institutional framework relating to job quality in Australia and review the available data sources and the evidence they offer. We then identify eight key influences on job quality in Australia.

4.1 Policy relating to job quality in Australia

Unlike Europe, there is an absence of any overarching job quality agenda in Australia that is supported by a coordinated set of programs or objectives. Moreover, Australia does not participate in any international job quality evaluation program. Nonetheless, Australia is a signatory to international conventions that support job quality. Perhaps the key institutional feature of the Australian labour market that shapes job quality is the protections in form of minimum employment standards and equity, notably through the award system. This has been a relatively long-standing, albeit continually evolving feature of the Australian labour market. In this sense Australia already has in place a number of important legislative and institutional mechanisms that directly and indirectly promote job quality. There have also been a number of more recent documents exploring the rationale for improving job quality at the workplace level and for developing measures to support this.

4.1.1 Existing legislative and institutional mechanisms

Dimensions detracting from the quality of work relate to the attributes of jobs themselves, along with discrimination or a sense of unfairness within the workplace and inequality in the distribution of good and bad jobs. Key legislative and institutional mechanisms which provide for minimum standards in job attributes and promote equality include:

1. The Fair Work Legislation and Fair Work Australia Act (2009) promotes fair and equitable conditions at work and in the workplace through the enforcement of a code of national minimum standards that includes guarantees related to pay, working hours and entitlements. The objective of the fair work legislation is to provide a cooperative approach for workforce relations while encouraging economic prosperity. It is intended that this be achieved through mechanisms including minimum terms and conditions (including minimum wages), promotion of work-life balance through work arrangements and employees' right to representation (see www.fwc.gov.au).

2. The National Occupational Health and Safety Framework seeks to promote and co-ordinate legislation that ensures that workplaces are safe and injury free (see www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au).

3. The Equal Opportunity Act (1984) comprises legislation that prohibits discriminatory behaviour in the workplace and supports equal opportunity across all Australian workplaces. For more information, see www.slp.wa.gov.au/legislation/statutes.nsf/main_mrtile_305_homepage.html

4. Affirmative Action (Equal Employment Opportunity for Women) Act (1986) aims to remove the discrimination of women and promote equal opportunity for women in the work place and was amended in 1999 and 2012. Recent legislative and tribunal decisions have also assisted in reducing the gender pay gap. In particular, recent equal pay decisions have addressed the systematic low wages paid in a number of female dominated occupations (Baird and Williamson, 2011).

5. The Age Discrimination Act (2004) was introduced with the aim of reducing discrimination based on age in areas of employment, education, the provision of goods and services and the administration of Commonwealth laws and programs. For further information refer to www.humanrights.gov.au.

4.1.2 International policies associated with job quality

International policies are enshrined in international conventions and treaties that are endorsed by national governments. The clearest manifestation of these standards is the core human rights and the labour standards of the ILO. These are expressed through the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work which includes freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, the effective abolition of child labour, and the elimination of discrimination (ILO, 2008).

Australia is a party to international conventions that support fundamental labour rights, including the Right of Freedom of Association and the Right to Organise (1957), The Abolition of Forced Labour (1960), and the Elimination of Child Labour (1957). Other conventions that have been ratified by Australia include Anti-Discrimination in Employment (1973), Equal Remuneration in Employment (1974), and the 40 Hour Week Convention (1935). There are many more conventions that are related to specific conditions or to specific sectors that have been ratified by Australia (ILO, 2013). These conventions prohibit certain practices (e.g. child labour), promote rights (e.g. freedom of association and anti-discrimination) and set out standards or conditions for certain actions (e.g. termination of employment). These rights are inviolable and it is the responsibility of signatory governments to promote and enhance them.

Another arm of international policy that has implications for employment conditions, and hence job quality, is bilateral and multi-lateral trade agreements. Incorporated into these agreements are rights and conditions linked to employment. There is a suggestion that bilateral trade and investment treaties are moving towards the recognition of labour rights and maintenance of employment conditions. For example, Boie (2012) in a survey of labour conditions in trade and investment treaties finds that there is a trend among some countries (USA, Canada, Belgium and Austria) to incorporate labour standards and employment conditions into bilateral investment treaties.

4.2 Measuring and monitoring work quality in Australia

A range of past and ongoing data collections facilitate the assessment of job quality in Australia, with efforts to further develop this capacity currently taking place. For example, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012) is developing a framework for assessment that incorporates elements that contribute to the quality of life and the Federal Treasury has developed a well-being framework for the purposes of advising government on the impact of policy (Gruen & Spender, 2012).

In the discussion concerning the quality of jobs in Australia two issues have dominated recent public debates. The first is that of employment insecurity. Specifically, there has been a focus on the rise of non-standard employment arrangements, such as casual and temporary agency employment. The potential adverse consequences for workers employed under such conditions have been highlighted in recent reports by the ACTU (2012) and from the longitudinal survey of Australia at Work (van Wanrooy et al, 2009).

The second issue is the balance between work and private life. The Australia at Work (2009) report reveals that contemporary Australian working life is not a clear case of 'good or bad'

developments, concluding that there is a need to think more carefully about the inequality of bargaining power in the labour market as it is not uniform among employees. While many employees report that they are generally satisfied with working life, it is clear that underlying frustrations remain, particularly with regard to issues concerning workload, work intensity and working hours.

This is also reflected in the findings of the latest Australian Work and Life Index (Pocock, Skinner & Ichii, 2009) report where the research team gathered three years of data regarding work-life interference in Australia. The AWALI (2009) report indicates that many employees experience frequent interference from work in their personal, home and community lives, feel overloaded at work and those feelings of time pressure are common and increasing. However, the report also illustrates that work-life interference does not fall evenly across the population. While two-thirds of working Australians state that they are broadly satisfied with their work-life balance, some groups, such as women working full-time, are particularly negatively affected by these issues.

The remainder of this section presents a review of key sources of information on job quality in Australia, including the methods used, the measures of job quality examined and the findings. The review is confined to national studies conducted over the past two decades and includes a number of one-off studies and three important longitudinal studies.

4.2.1 The Australian Workplace Industrial Relations Survey (1995)

The Australian Workplace Industrial Relations Survey (AWIRS) was conducted in 1995 and comprised a structured survey of 2000 workplaces that employed 20 or more persons. The surveys were distributed to senior managers, human resource/employee relations managers and union delegates. There were also supplementary surveys that covered employees and small businesses. A range of issues linked to both objective and subjective experiences at work were collected. Among some of the findings to arise from the survey (Morehead et al., 1998, p. 293-295) were that around two thirds of employees were satisfied with their jobs; flexibility and control over working time was largely determined by occupation; and there were substantial differences in insecurity, job satisfaction and work-life balance across sector, gender and by type of employment contract.

4.2.2 The Australian Quality of Work Life Survey (2001)

The Australian Quality of Work Life Survey (Considine and Callus, 2001) was conducted via a telephone survey of 1000 employees across Australia. The survey was stratified by location, age, gender and state and collected attitudinal data on a range of issues relevant to work quality, including fairness, insecurity, discrimination, control over work, whether work is

satisfying and interesting and work-life balance. The survey results generally suggested widespread employee satisfaction with their jobs, including with job security. Around one in five employees expressed dissatisfaction with their pay compared to others doing similar work, with their career prospects, with the balance between working time and time spent with family and friends and with the level of stress they experienced at work. A similar proportion reported that the work they did was not interesting and satisfying and distrust of senior management (Considine and Callus, 2001, p. 5).

The study also found differences across a number of employee characteristics. Older workers and union members were more likely to express dissatisfaction with management. Workers in small workplaces in general expressed higher levels of satisfaction than workers in large workplaces. Workers on higher incomes reported longer working hours and problems in reconciling work and family life. While the data were used to generate an overall 'Quality of Work Life Index', in the absence of comparable measures in other periods or jurisdictions, this presents no added information above what is already apparent in the raw data – namely that employees are generally positive about the quality of work life in Australia.

4.2.3 Australia at Work (2009)

'Australia at Work' is a national longitudinal survey that tracked the experiences of over 6000 respondents annually from 2006 to 2011. A telephone survey of respondents employed the concept of transitional labour markets to track movements between work, unemployment, retirement and those located outside the labour force. The other focus was on the conditions of employment; specifically the terms of engagement in employment (see www.australiaatwork.org.au).

Analyses of the data up to and including the 2009 collection have been reported (Van Wanrooy et al. 2009). Although the study does not explicitly examine job quality, it does allow analysis of labour market transitions and outcomes conditional on the form of the employment contract. For example, Van Wanrooy et al. (2009) report the transitions between jobs with and without entitlement to paid leave. Other relevant findings were that reported levels of job insecurity increased substantially following the GFC, albeit from a very low base (from 7 per cent in 2008 to 12 per cent in 2009); and casual employees are less likely to feel they have the opportunity to negotiate, and are more reliant on awards in determining their pay and conditions than are permanent employees.

4.2.4 Secure Jobs: A Better Future (2011)

The ACTU Report on “Secure Jobs: A Better Future” (ACTU, 2011) examined the issue of workforce casualisation. The report does not comprise a systematic review of job quality nor present any primary data on job quality, but does examine the growth in contingent employment arrangements referring to casual workers, labour hire and independent contractors. The report is motivated by what it claims is a:

... powerful and concerning trend in Australian society. This is the shift of the costs and risks associated with employment from employers onto workers. Workers have experienced this shift through a loss of job security and predictable incomes, attacks of entitlements such as sick leave, minimum engagements and penalty rates, and a loss of control and predictability over hours of work. (ACTU 2011: 1)

The report details various recommendations for offsetting some of the negative consequences of contingent employment arrangements. The recommendations (ACTU, 2011, p.29) are interesting since they include three levels of action:

... the workplace, the industry and national policy. Many of the suggestions are prescriptive and incorporate minimum conditions or standards recommended for application across all workplaces.

4.2.5 The Australian Work and Life Index (AWALI) 2012

The AWALI survey primarily examines work life balance. This has been shown to be a central issue that determines job quality and, in turn, a central component of the EU job quality agenda (Green, 2006). The AWALI survey was conducted annually from 2007 to 2010, and subsequently on a bi-annual basis. The survey brings together five indicators of work life balance:

- 1 how often work interferes with responsibilities or activities outside work,
- 2 how often it restricts time with family or friends,
- 3 how often it affects connections and friendships in the local community,
- 4 overall satisfaction with work-life ‘balance’, and
- 5 how often people feel rushed and pressed for time.

Some key findings are evidence of widespread ‘time pressure’; managerial and professional workers, notably professional women, service industry workers, and working parents have a high incidence of work life interference; one third of women and many fathers would prefer to work less hours; and part-time work provides some protection from work-life interference, but

self-employment and casual work do not. Overall men have worse work-life outcomes than women, and it is long hours of work that are associated with particularly detrimental effects (Pocock, Skinner & Pisaniello 2010).

The picture emerging from the survey is one of widespread dissatisfaction with work life balance. Many men are caught in a cycle of long hours; dual income earner families are under pressure to meet family care arrangements; holidays and leave are deferred and there is a desire to work fewer hours, especially by full time workers and those in professional and managerial positions. Pocock, Skinner & Pisaniello (2010: p .5) suggest that there are major challenges around working time:

Australia has a lower rate of labour force participation than many OECD countries. Our ageing population, and the consequent increases in the dependency ratio, make raising this a pressing policy issue, especially amongst older workers, mothers and women. However, successive AWALI surveys suggest that Australia's participation issues are not going to be easily addressed, and they may be exacerbated by a new challenge: retaining the sizeable group of workers who would like to work less, not more.

4.2.6 The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey (2001-2012)

HILDA comprises a longitudinal survey of individuals aged 15 and over from a representative sample of Australian households, and has been conducted annually since 2001. The HILDA survey covers a range of issues relevant to Australian households including health, education, expenditure, income, employment, household structure, attitudes and values. The survey is designed so that the same individuals are interviewed every year, thus a picture emerges as to how Australian lives are changing through time. The initial survey interviewed 13,969 individuals from 7,682 households. Approximately 13,000 individuals from 7,500 households continue to be interviewed each year and 9,002 of the original Wave 1 respondents were still being interviewed by Wave 10.

In addition to offering researchers the well-known advantages of longitudinal data, the HILDA survey collects an extensive set of objective items relating to individuals' employment arrangements; subjective assessments of job satisfaction, work-life balance and wider wellbeing. Subjective items include overall job satisfaction along with satisfaction with pay, job security, the work itself, hours worked, and the flexibility to balance work and non-work commitments. Data on wages and preferred and actual working hours are also collected.

An added advantage of the HILDA data is that the household based structure of the sample means that data is available for workers' partners and children aged 15 and over.

The HILDA data has been used extensively to assess various aspect of the quality of working life in Australia, and a complete listing can be accessed through the HILDA Survey bibliography maintained at <http://www.melbourneinstitute.com/hilda/biblio/>. As noted, Butterworth et al (2011) and Dockery et al (2011) have used HILDA data to generate indices and taxonomies of job quality. Some relevant findings from the HILDA 2012 Annual Report include confirmation that most Australians are quite satisfied with their jobs, and that average job satisfaction has changed very little between 2001 and 2009. People were most satisfied with job security and least satisfied with their pay and hours of work. It was reported as very unusual for low levels of overall job satisfaction to persist for more than one year, although low levels of satisfaction with total pay, working hours and flexibility to balance work and non-work commitments were an ongoing problem for some (Wilkins and Warren, 2012: 88).

Table 4.1: Job quality indicators/issues arising from Australian surveys (1995 – 2012)

Job quality indicators	Key issues arising from surveys	Surveys
Job Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Type of contract influence o Flexicurity debate o Increasing percentage of youth unemployment o International transfer of labour to low-wage countries; increasing unemployment in industrialised countries 	AQWLS (2001), AWIRS (1995), A@W (2009), ACTU (2011), HILDA (2012), AWALI (2012)
Rights and entitlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o inferior rights and entitlements for some o limited or no access to paid leave 	A@W (2009), ACTU (2011)
Non-standard employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Increasing levels of precarious employment 	A@W (2009), ACTU (2011)
Wages, remuneration, benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Dissatisfaction with pay o Fair and reasonable pay o Difference in wages 	AWIRS (1995), AQWLS (2001), ACTU (2011), HILDA (2012),
Working hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Australia has some of highest working hours internationally o Precarious employment/under-employment 	AWIRS (1995), A@W (2009), ACTU (2011), HILDA (2012),
Work-life balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Deteriorating work-life balance 	AWIRS (1995), AQWLS (2001), AWALI (2012)
Promotion and Career prospects	Lack of career progression	AWIRS (1995), AQWLS (2001)
OHS skills of direct supervisor; recognition; workload interesting work	Social relations with colleagues; sexual harassment.	AQWLS (2001)

Intensity of work		AWIRS (1995),
Autonomy; control over how work is done		AWIRS (1995), AQWLS (2001)
Participation; consultation; influence; industrial bargaining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Lack of consultation prevalent o Decreasing levels of bargaining power and representation 	AWIRS (1995), A@W (2009), ACTU (2011)
Level of stress at work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Level of stress high and increasing 	AQWLS (2001)
Job satisfaction		AWIRS (1995), HILDA (2012), AQWLS (2001)
Attitudes to management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Employees' satisfaction with management o Lack of trust in senior management 	AWIRS (1995), AQWLS (2001), A@W (2009)

Key:

AWIRS (1995)	Australian Workplace and Industrial Relations Survey
AQWLS (2001)	Australian Quality of Work Life Survey
A@W (2009)	Australia at Work - 2006-2009 annual survey
ACTU (2011)	Report 'Secure Jobs: A better Future'
AWALI (2012)	Australian Work Life Index AWALI 2007 – 2010
HILDA (2012)	Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (2001 – 2011)

4.2.7 Summary

The approaches taken in Australia regarding job quality evaluation are very different from the metrics and survey based EU program and the review of official workforce and social data in the US reviews. In Australia, there have been several one-off surveys that have examined components of job quality including job satisfaction, employment security and access to training and career progression. For example, the HILDA survey provides an excellent source for the ongoing monitoring of changes over time and for analysing factors contributing to job quality. A summary of the main job quality indicators and key issues arising from the relevant surveys spanning 1995 to 2012 that have been discussed in this section is provided in Table 4.1.

The studies set out in Table 4.1 are all nationally focused and are mainly based on household data that was collected via telephone surveys. Important job quality issues were covered concerning contracts of employment, negotiating work life balance, earnings and job satisfaction. The surveys are all ex-post, that is, they tell us what happened in the past, and are largely passive, in contrast to 'before and after' data collections established to evaluate a particular policy change.

4.3 Eight factors influencing job quality in Australia

Broadly speaking, the available evidence suggests that workers in Australia enjoy a high quality of working life, due in no small part to a protracted period of strength in the labour market at the aggregate level and the legislative and institutional support for job quality

outlined in Section 4.1.1 above. However, there are compelling reasons for governments and firms to remain vigilant of trends in average job quality and of the dispersion of the quality of jobs across sub-groups of the working population. Based on the preceding review and acknowledged developments in the Australian labour market, eight factors influencing job quality in Australia are identified.

1. An ageing population and an ageing workforce: The United Nations has identified global ageing as one of the top three socio-economic issues of the 21st century (together with global warming and global terrorism). The implications and challenges of an ageing workforce have been outlined in a number of policy documents including those produced by the Productivity Commission (2005) and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC, 2000). Over the next four decades in Australia, the number of people aged over 65 years of age will almost double and within 7 years, approximately 85 per cent of labour market growth will come from people over the age of 45 years of age (Queensland Government, 2012). Hence, the ageing population is a reality. Economic wellbeing, for both governments and individual businesses, depends on keeping older workers employed. Hence, it is important to understand how 'job quality' may be perceived differently by older workers and to respond to those different preferences. Companies that fail to address the ageing workforce issue risk future staff and skill shortages, and any competitive edge they now enjoy.

2. Work and family reconciliation challenges: that are associated with the changing structure of Australian families, particularly with the growth in sole parent and dual income families. In addition to an ageing population, family care responsibilities for children and ageing relatives also require supportive working arrangements and family care arrangements which are likely to become significant workplace challenges (Skinner, Hutchinson & Pocock, 2012; ACTU, 2013).

3. Non-standard employment arrangements: Linked to the above has been the growth in non-standard employment arrangements in Australia. Specifically, there has been a growing share of part time, casual and agency work in the economy (Burgess et al, 2008; ACTU, 2011). Section 2.1 documented the evidence of potential negative associations between employment insecurity and employee wellbeing where such arrangements are not consistent with employee preferences.

4. The feminisation of the workforce: The female workforce share and female labour force participation rate has gradually expanded since 1985. This creates challenges concerning reconciling work and care and for ensuring smooth transitions between different workforce

arrangements, such as accommodating parental leave and providing for options for flexible work arrangements (Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2008).

5. Accommodating immigration as a response to skill shortages: Australia has a long term program of supporting migration, especially to meet national skill shortages and labour supply needs. The permanent skilled migrant intake comprises over 100,000 persons per year. Junankar and Mahuteau (2005) examined the situation for migrants and the quality of work that they were able to obtain once they moved to Australia. They drew several conclusions from their longitudinal data drawn from two/three year surveys. Primarily, the indications are that visa status is important, as refugees and migrants who came to Australia under family reunion status were less likely to find a good job, compared with migrants who had achieved independent status through various means such as point systems and skill visas. The researchers defined 'good jobs' as those where migrants could employ their educational qualifications within a similar or better rank or situation than they had in their home country and 'bad jobs' were largely the opposite of this.

6. Quality of work in small and medium sized enterprises: Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) make important financial and employment contributions to the Australian economy. However, SMEs usually have fewer resources and expertise in human resource management. SMEs are found to be less formal and have greater adaptability and flexibility (OECD, 1996; Jenkins, 2009). SMEs tend to face unique human resource challenges and family businesses have additional challenges (Botero & Litchfield, 2013). It is critical that SME owners and managers understand the importance of the quality of work and the economic impact it can have, and one challenge is how to communicate and support interventions that may bring about improvements within SMEs.

7. Access to meaningful and equitably paid work: is an ongoing issue facing people with disabilities, youth, indigenous Australians, and parents and children from sole-parent families. Equity and efficiency considerations suggest social welfare can be improved by addressing these inequalities.

8. Structural change: Ongoing structural changes to the economy have resulted in challenges for policy makers across several dimensions including structural unemployment, skill provision and national productivity performance. Structural changes likely to impact upon job quality are changes in technology that will affect job content and control (Hannif, Burgess and Connell 2008) and employment changes across trade exposed sectors in response to shifting international competitiveness.

SECTION V: CASE STUDY EVIDENCE

5.1 Introduction

The foundation for the case study research methodology was drawn from the Eurofound surveys that were developed through the European Union Job Quality program. The program is based on a structured survey instrument and the application of an elaborate set of metrics for each component of job quality which, in turn, concerns the construction of a set of indices developed from sub-indicators. The purpose here was not to develop elaborate measures but to put in place the components of a JQ development program that can be modified in terms of its comprehensiveness according to the conditions and features that are present within organisations and workplaces. For example, it was expected that there would be differences according to the number and detail of the indicators applied with regard to each industry, occupation, sector and workplace size.

This stage of the research project concerned the examination of a number of workplaces in order to identify the JQ issues that were relevant at each and consider how specific JQ issues were being addressed. This was supported through case study analysis. Although case study research can be illustrative and purposeful it is not necessarily representative. However, it can assist in identifying issues and challenges that are likely to apply across workplaces in Australia. Case study research has a number of advantages that include: the reduced time and costs associated with research, the ability to target cases towards either representative or extreme examples, the multiple levels of data collection that can be employed and the depth of analysis it supports (Eisenhardt, 1989 & Yin, 1994).

In this instance the case studies have been used to inform and develop practice and policy recommendations. The key elements of the case study method applied included the following:

- a. Case study selection: the purpose was to select a number of cases that were different in terms of their underlying characteristics including the respective industries, sectors, location and size.
- b. Data collection: the cases embodied multiple sources of data collection such as document analysis, interviews with key informants and focus groups. Such multiple sources of information contributed to the depth and understanding generated by the cases and supported triangulation offered by the different sources of data.
- c. The assimilation, interpretation and analysis of the information was guided by prior research and this report has outlined an extensive body of prior research on job quality.

- d. The case study research process had the potential for feedback and further engagement with key stakeholders; that is, opportunities were provided for key case study informants to reflect on the findings and suggest adjustments to the case studies.

The case study research involved a number of stages and data collection processes. Figure 5.1 illustrates the various stages of the research and the details are provided below:

Stage 1: Contextualising the case study: identifying the key industry, sector, workforce and workplace characteristics of the case.

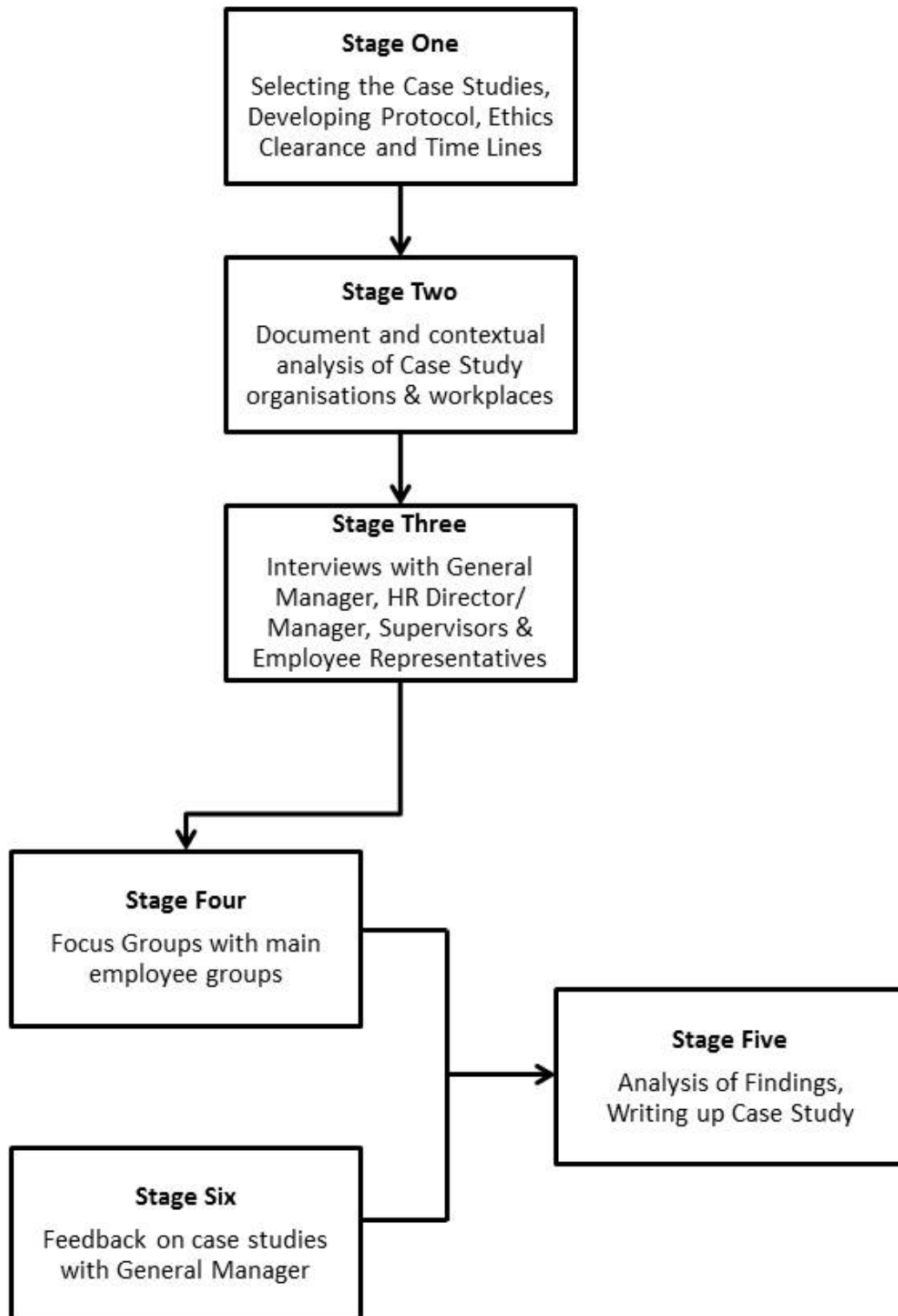
Stage 2: Documentary and organisational analysis: to gather evidence on the presence of JQ programs and the reporting of JQ issues. The research focus was on considering HR reports; OH&S reports; annual reports and similar.

Stage 3: Interviews with managers, HR directors and employee representatives: this phase identified the challenges facing the business; the programs and challenges related to JQ issues.

Stage 4: Focus groups comprised of the major employee groups at the workplace/organisation. This stage of the research was at the core of the research since it sought the views of employees concerning what aspects of JQ were considered important within the context of the respective workplaces.

The purpose of the case studies was not to focus solely on issues and challenges concerning job quality; but also to identify effective programs and/or initiatives that have assisted organisations in improving job quality and organizational performance.

Figure 5.1: Structure of the Case Study Research



The case study fieldwork involved the following steps:

- (i) Selecting 9 case study organisations drawn from across Australia. The selection of the case studies involved purposeful and convenience criteria. The purposeful criteria was to ensure that the cases included large and small businesses; were distributed across sectors, and in particular included sectors that have large employee numbers. The convenience criteria were determined by time and resources. This limited the number of case studies and the detail of the research undertaken for each case study.
- (ii) The researchers directly approached case study organisations regarding their participation. The initial contact was through the most senior workplace manager or the HRM manager. The research protocol had to satisfy Curtin University ethical requirements for conducting human research. The key principles are that all participants are informed of the nature and purpose of the research; that participation is voluntary and organisations and individuals are not directly or indirectly identified (Australian Government, 2007).
- (iii) The case studies were developed through organisational contacts but were workplace based. For the medium sized businesses the organisation and the workplace were the same. For large organisations with multiple workplaces the case studies were confined to one workplace. As such these were not necessarily representative of the organisation. The details for each organisation and workplace are set out in Table 5.1. Pseudonyms have been used to provide confidentiality for the organisations and participants.
- (iv) At each workplace direct interviews were conducted with key informants that included the workplace manager; the HRM manager and the trade union representative (where applicable).
- (v) Where focus groups took place they were arranged through a workplace representative (such as the HRM manager) and were conducted on site at the respective workplaces.

Table 5.1: Participating Case Study Organisations

Case Study Identifier	Workplace Location	Sector	Industry	No of Employees
ResourceCo	Western Australia	Private	Resources	12,000
MiningCo	Western Australia	Private	Mining	1,108
ConstructionSvsCo	Western Australia	Private	Construction services	35
ManufactureCo	Western Australia	Private	Manufacturing	100
LocGov	Sydney, New South Wales	Public	Local Government	1,000
TAFE	Melbourne, Victoria	Public	Vocational Education and Training	2,000
AgedCareCo	Melbourne, Victoria	Private	Health – Aged Care	100
EnergyCo	Gladstone, Queensland	Private	Energy	270
ConsultCo	Perth, Western Australia and Sydney, New South Wales	Private	Professional Services/Consulting	500

5.2 Case Study Analysis

The information collected from each case study was assimilated and analysed. For each case study the survey material, the interviews and the focus groups were considered to identify relevant key themes and issues. In the reporting of the case studies the material provided represents a summary of the key findings for each case study. First, the demographics of the case study participants are presented in Table 5.2. In total 42 interviews and 9 focus groups were conducted with a total of 69 participants. As can be determined, most of the participants were male, between the ages of 25 – 44 years and were qualified (whether they possessed vocational qualifications or a degree). The participant positions were divided between 48% managers and supervisors and 52% non-managers. Non-managers included: professional services, administrators; trades people; labourers and other similar positions. The majority of participants were full time permanent staff (90%) and (51%) had worked with the case study organization for more than 5 years. Most participants worked between 40 – 50 hours per week (32%) and 33% said that they usually work weekends and the same number that they work from home.

Table 5.2: Quality Work Case Study Participant Demographics (n = 69)

Gender	N and %	Tenure (organisation)	
Male	40 (58%)	1 – 5 years	34 (49%)
Female	29 (42%)	≥ 5 years	35 (51%)
Age (years)		Highest Education Level	
≤24	2 (1%)	Not Completed Year 12	10 (15%)
25-44	28 (42%)	Completed Year 12	13 (19%)
45-54	20 (29%)	Skilled Vocational	5 (7%)
≥55	19 (28%)	Qualifications	41 (59%)
		Diploma/Degree/Postgraduate	
Occupation Level		Hours Worked per Week	
Manager/Supervis	33 (48%)	20 – 35 hours	9 (13%)
or		35 – 40 hours	24 (33%)
Non-manager	36 (52%)	40 – 50 hours	23 (32%)
		≥ 55 hours	13 (22%)
Employment Status		Work Weekends/From Home	
Full Time	62 (90%)	Weekends Yes	23 (33%)
Permanent	4 (6%)	Weekends No	46 (69%)
Part Time	3 (4%)	Work from Home Yes	23 (33%)
Casual/Other		Work from Home No	46 (69%)

It should be noted that the participant sample comprises fewer younger and part-time workers and no casual workers. Also, management and supervisory staff are strongly represented, therefore the responses do not characterise the full profile of all workforces.

5.3 Determining factors that influence the quality of work

One of the criteria for this report was to identify a set of indicators that influence the Quality of Work. The first phase of the report involved an extensive literature review which resulted in the creation of a work quality framework. This framework was constructed based on the Eurofound 2012 (p. 20) surveys and various Australian surveys and, as discussed in this section was found to resonate with all participants in identifying factors that influenced their quality of work. The Eurofound survey's three dimensions were extended to four in order to expand the extrinsic and intrinsic job quality factors covering:

Dimension 1 - Job Prospects: job security, recognition, (credit for effective work etc) and career progression (potential for advancement)

Dimension 2 – Extrinsic job quality: comprised earnings (satisfaction with earnings), a good physical environment: safety aspects; pleasant work environment; level of physical and posture related hazards

Dimension 3 – Intrinsic Job quality: work itself; meaningfulness of work; interesting work; skills and discretion; skills and autonomy (ability to influence decisions; use full range of skills; apply own ideas); training access; work intensity; pace of work, work pressures; emotional/value conflict demands; dealing with angry clients/job requires ‘emotional labour’; good social environment; relations at work; direct supervision; (manager helps and supports you); level of consultation organisational support (positive work environment).

Dimension 4: Working time quality work life balance/fit (impact of work on home/family life); duration/work scheduling discretion/flexibility; working hours; shift patterns; flexible work arrangements; impact of technology (blurring of work/life boundaries).

5.4 Overall Findings

Generally, employees that participated in the case studies were satisfied with the attributes of job quality as identified within the applied framework. During many of the case study interviews and focus groups they expressed the passion they had for their work and their strong commitment to the organisation and its clients. This was especially the case for the Aged Care, TAFE, Local Government and Consulting case studies.

Job quality is important in developing commitment and reducing employee turnover. Through addressing JQ managers can improve employee commitment and retention. In several organisations there was reference to the pay being below what could be earned elsewhere in the industry or the region, but that the quality of work was an important factor in retaining employees – this was important for EnergyCo, LocGov, TAFE, ResourceCo and ConsultCo. Here, important issues for the employees included the rosters, the quality of the management, the levels of job satisfaction, the lifestyle and the social relations at work. There were differences across workplaces, industries and occupations. Job quality issues and challenges are contextually dependent. Another important context is the state of the business cycle, a period of strong GDP growth is usually associated with job security. The external market conditions and changes in the structure and funding were having an impact at ResourceCo, EnergyCo, TAFE and LocGov and making employees feel that their jobs may be insecure. Another mechanism where these external conditions manifest themselves is through increasing job intensity and extended working hours. Conversely, two senior managers at MiningCo stated that their responses to the case study questions would probably change according to the business life cycle and/or their particular career stage. For example, the business was healthy and they have a great order book so that influences their perceptions of job security. There are also differences that are generated by local labour conditions, the age of employees and the region in which the workplace is located.

In all cases there were generally high levels of job satisfaction, trust in management, a commitment to the organisation and a good working environment. Career development or a lack of a career path at TAFE and AgedCareCo emerged as an issue and for some positions at MiningCo. Within the same organisations there were differences across occupations; for example in TAFE the teachers were dissatisfied by the growing reporting and administrative burden, while the administrative staff were dissatisfied with the lack of career progression and skill development opportunities. At MiningCo a key challenge was developing the skills of line managers to carry through programs aimed at increasing employee commitment, job autonomy and employee skill development. Work life balance and working hours (schedules and shift patterns) emerged as issues in several case studies (LocGov, ConstructionSvsCo, TAFE and ManufactureCo). Within some cases, OH&S was an ongoing issue that was linked to the sector – mining, aged care, construction - but was generally paid a great deal of attention by each organisation. The main job quality issues identified in the specific case studies are summarized in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: The Main Job Quality Topics Identified in the Case Studies

Case Study	Job Quality Challenges
MiningCo	OH&S; the quality of workplace supervision and its impact on consultation, communication and workforce autonomy. MiningCo has been recognised and awarded due to specialist recruitment and training methodology developed specifically for the hiring of Indigenous employees, widespread health program aimed at preventative care and Family Support program in place for carers.
ResourceCo	Leadership and communication was identified as the single most important factor influencing the quality of work and the biggest lever for employee engagement combined. Direct employee engagement is advocated and practiced, for example shift co-ordinators enable supervisors to spend time out in the field with the staff on site rather than sitting behind a desk. The ability for employees to develop at ResourceCo, change jobs and sites were considered key for employee retention. Largest private employer of indigenous people in the country.
EnergyCo	The ageing workforce will begin to impact over the next 5 years. The approach to attracting, recruiting and retaining apprentices/trainees and engineering graduates is a stand-out activity, as is the 9 day fortnight due to desire to have a work life balance. All participants said earnings were adequate but when compared to those offered in competing industries they were not as high. However, satisfaction was expressed with other employment conditions, leadership and the workplace culture.
AgedCareCo	Most participants felt that their salary and benefits were inadequate for the work undertaken; they were equally balanced with respect to its importance for job quality. Almost all considered that their work is meaningful and interesting, their skills are crucial, and that they have adequate job autonomy. One main concern is the 'intensity of the work', primarily with respect to the projected future workload consequent on the transition towards more high care places.

TAFE	The main challenges are linked to the structural and funding changes in the sector impacting on job security and career opportunities. Another challenge was seen as the increased work intensity and growing administrative burden. While earnings were regarded as low compared to comparable jobs elsewhere there was recognition of the high job satisfaction, good social environment and opportunities for skills development and job autonomy. There were differences between teaching and administrative staff in terms of satisfaction with careers, training access and rosters.
LocGov	The main challenges concerned the scheduling of work and shift patterns, and resolving different demands (from the organisation and clients). A perceived lack of job security was also an issue. Some respondents mentioned the lack of work flexibility and work-life balance, the pace of work/work pressures, lack of autonomy and opportunities to use their skills as other challenges.
ConstructionSv sCo	Shop floor employees identified earnings and recognition as key issues. Managers recognised the importance of leadership and communication and that the latter required greater attention. Work life balance was also recognised as important concerning the manner in which the company allows individuals to balance work with family commitments.
ConsultCo	Low pay, relative to what could be earned elsewhere, was offset by high job satisfaction through challenging work, levels of autonomy, career advancement, teamwork and being associated with a prestigious organisation. These aspects of JQ provided employees with high levels of intrinsic job quality which clearly contributed to the encouragement of innovation and productivity.
ManufactureCo	Job prospects, the work itself, meaningfulness of work, organisational support, skills/autonomy and good relations with colleagues were key issues identified as being important to retention and employee commitment. Some employees regarded work-life balance as an important factor.

Each dimension and factor of the Job Quality (JQ) framework was considered important by some participants although the intrinsic JQ dimensions were consistently ranked as more important overall. Here, there appears to be some resonance with Herzberg's two factor motivational theory, whereby hygiene factors such as job security, earnings and work conditions do not give positive satisfaction but dissatisfaction results from their absence. Conversely, the 'motivators' (the intrinsic work factors) were considered to motivate employees in the respondent group and lead to higher performance. Specifically, a good work environment and reasonable earnings were expected by our sample group, it was the other factors such as job prospects, recognition, the meaningfulness of their work, the quality of supervision and the ability to balance their work and life at different stages of employees' life cycles that were considered important.

Examples of where each of the job quality dimensions were considered important are outlined below. Although these factors may not be relevant to all organizations they do provide an indication of what was regarded as important for employees within the case study organisations.

Job Prospects – job insecurity was identified as a key issue in many of the workplaces, largely due to pressures from external factors. Job prospects were particularly enhanced at ResourceCo where they have a large internal labour market so that staff can develop a career, change roles and locations and in ConsultCo where ongoing learning and development were critical for employees.

Extrinsic Job Quality – at EnergyCo having a safe and clean working environment was regarded by many of the respondents as an important factor contributing to job quality in the workplace.

Intrinsic Job Quality – at ConstructionSvsCo the development of training programs related to multi-skilling was considered important in developing multi-tasking, teams and increasing productivity.

Work Life Balance – the flexible employment arrangements that were available at LocGov were perceived as important in supporting employee retention and satisfaction. The 9 day rosters at EnergyCo and the rosters and family friendly arrangements for FIFO workers at ResourceCo were regarded as key positive factors in balancing work and life and in fact were mentioned by several case study participants as factors that ensured their retention with their respective organisations even though they could earn more money elsewhere.

In consideration of the surveys of job quality in Australia, the findings presented here have some resonance. The majority of case study participants enjoyed their job and were committed to their work and their organisation (Considine and Callus, 2001). There are bundles or attributes of jobs linked to JQ that are important in attracting and retaining employees, and facilitating commitment. While JQ is important it is also apparent that the quality of management is an important factor that can influence that. Moreover, intrinsic job features are an important factor in terms of organisational development and success. However, context does count in terms of location, interactions with clients, the industry, the business cycle, and the age of the employee (Considine and Callus, 2001; Morehead et al, 1997).

5.5 Implications of the Findings

The researchers were asked to address four key areas in this report and each is addressed in turn:

1. Identify strategies to improve job quality;
2. Examine the links between job quality, job satisfaction, innovation and productivity;
3. Identify Australia-specific factors in the quality of work and
4. Establishing a set of indicators for quality of work in Australia.

From the case study findings it appears that there are a number of organisational benefits that are likely to result from the provision of quality jobs which are outlined next.

5.5.1 Organisational Benefits related to Job Quality

The benefits to organisations of ensuring that the various job quality factors are recognized and addressed include:

- Attracting and retaining employees (also becoming known as an ‘employer of choice’)
- Retaining skilled and experienced employees
- Capitalising on employees’ skills and abilities
- Improving employee engagement/passion for the job
- Becoming a more innovative workplace
- More effectively meeting core organisational goals related to product quality, servicing clients and meeting changing market conditions
- Creating a pleasant and supportive work environment and
- Becoming more productive overall due to these factors.

5.5.2 Strategies to improve job quality in the Workplace

The JQ framework was able to capture all the elements that were identified by managers and employees within the case study organisations as being important in terms of their contribution to job quality. Thus, if managers address the factors included in the JQ framework they will be addressing many of the broader workforce challenges identified as well as the aspirations of employees. In turn, success in improving JQ has potential organisational returns especially with regard to productivity and potentially innovation. To operationalize the JQ framework it is suggested that organisations address the 7 points listed below as a minimum.

5.5.3 Operationalising the Job Quality Framework

To operationalize aspects of the job quality framework it is proposed that a number of factors need to be considered at the organizational level which include:

1. Leadership and Management: as exemplified in the case studies 'direct supervision' is important when supervisors have the skills and abilities to be effective. Several senior managers in our participant sample discussed the importance of employees having the opportunity to directly communicate with their supervisor. The quality of leadership and management is a critical factor related job quality as it also influences all of the other factors included here, thus it is recommended that to improve job quality, leaders and managers would be advised to:
2. Provide appropriate career paths according to life cycles/discuss expectations;
3. Develop employee engagement;
4. Promote a supportive workplace culture;
5. Encourage open communication/contribution of ideas;
6. Check job design/workplace systems to identify areas where flexibility may be offered and
7. Nurture ownership and autonomy in the workplace.

As pointed out leadership and management were identified as key factors influencing work quality either directly or indirectly in the case studies included here. At ResourceCo several managers stated that they had to fast track promotions to supervisor level on a number of occasions, indicating there could be a need for more attention to succession planning within the organisation. The Australian Institute of Management (AIM) have conducted surveys with Australian business leaders and managers for the past three years (2010-2012). The (AIM, 2012) survey comprised 1,700 respondents 77% of whom reported that their organisations have a gap in their workforce skills. In common with the previous surveys many AIM respondents reported that their greatest skills gap was in 'middle management' (40%) with the main problem area being 'leadership' (45%). Some organisations managed to avoid these gaps attributing this to their 'strong commitment to training and development' (69%), 'promoting internal job candidates' (58%) and 'using internal resources to boost training' (52%) indicating a commitment to talent management. Others reported that they do not have succession planning in place (43%), had poorly defined job roles and unclear employee expectations (32%) and only 14% were retaining older workers indicating an urgent need for talent management strategies.

5.5.4 Links between job quality, job satisfaction, innovation and productivity

The associations between job quality, job satisfaction, innovation and productivity were specifically scrutinised with regard to the 9 case studies and, as a result, some of the key case study findings are summarised in Table 5.3.

Table 5.4: JQ Findings, Job Satisfaction, Innovation and Productivity

Dimension 1 Job Prospects	Potential Influence on employee job satisfaction	Potential Influence on innovation/productivity
Job security Recognition Career progression	Belief in a future with the company Pride in work and willingness to do more	Retention/commitment Succession plan/provide career paths and create talent pipelines Recognition can drive innovation
Dimension 2 Extrinsic Job Quality Earnings Good physical environment Safety aspects Pleasant work environment Level of physical hazards	Belief that company cares about employee wellbeing Willingness to stay with company even if earnings are not as good as elsewhere due to other factors - conditions/hours/supportive workplace and supervisors	No time lost due to injuries – higher productivity Pleasant workplace culture – creates attraction for new recruits Higher levels of job satisfaction
Dimension 3 Intrinsic Job Quality Work Itself Meaningfulness of work Interesting work Skills and Discretion Skills and Autonomy Training Access Work Intensity Pace of work, work pressures Emotional/value conflict demands Good Social Environment Relations at work Direct Supervision Consultation Organisational support Work Life Balance/Fit	Expectations set when starting a job in terms of prospects important as, if incongruent between mngt-employee can lead to problems (psychological contract) Undertaking training and developing skills also has a positive impact and can influence job prospects. Enthusiasm and passion for work can be related to the job itself and the belief that it is making a difference Leadership and effective communication identified as 'one of the biggest levers' for employee engagement (see ResourceCo)	Retention, employee relations and productivity Boredom can impact on work quality. Understanding how one's job contributes to output can help instil pride Enthusiasm/passion for the job can have a 'spillover effect' - help create a highly positive and supportive culture and good 'branding' for the company. Also important when employees are interacting with the public. Lack of discretion and autonomy can result in reduced quality of work and output whereas empowerment can result in the opposite effect (see LocGov Just Do It program) Leadership and communication provide insight into where company is going and help employees to assist in goal achievement.
Dimension 4 Working Time Quality Duration/Work Scheduling Discretion/flexibility Working hours Shift patterns Flexible work arrangements	Flexibility appeared to be 'earned' in some workplaces i.e. employee works hard, is trusted and therefore can come in later sometimes if necessary or occasionally work from home.	Retention (9 day fortnight – When FIFO workers have 'good rosters' able to have healthier/satisfied employees Others expect to work unsociable hours and stay in job for other reasons.

Innovation - A stand-out strategy in terms of innovation was the LocGov business excellence framework where a recently implemented continuous improvement initiative, the '*Just Do It*' program encourages employees to implement small changes without having to seek approval from higher up the organisation. Most interviewees mentioned the '*Just Do It*' program as a highly positive initiative that empowers them and makes them proud of the organisation. Moreover, work life balance and job satisfaction was highlighted as an important factor contributing to employee retention, satisfaction and a positive work environment.

Job Satisfaction and Productivity - In the case studies there are several examples of where job quality issues were seen as important in attracting and retaining employees and enhancing commitment, and indirectly lifting productivity. For example, at ConsultCo there was a strategy directed at developing an environment that is conducive to employing highly motivated professionals. This involved developing a supportive framework for networking and feedback, articulated career paths and regular social events. In a similar vein, the care workforce at AgedCareCo commented on the role and importance of a supportive work environment in what is a potentially stressful and demanding workplace context. Most participants felt that they had harmonious relationships with their colleagues, with other teams and especially with their supervisors. Having a variety of formal recognition initiatives including an Employee of the Quarter Award, retail vouchers, supervisory and public acknowledgement events were also seen as contributing to retention and commitment. At ResourceCo, heavy investment in OH&S programs, especially at remote sites was seen as being important in not only attracting but retaining FIFO workers for whom site safety was regarded as being crucial. At EnergyCo, having autonomy and discretion over one's work was seen as crucial for employee's satisfaction and work quality. As mentioned elsewhere in this report the family friendly rosters at ConstructionSvsCo, EnergyCo and ResourceCo were also regarded as important sources of work satisfaction, attraction and retention.

5.6 Australia-specific factors influencing the quality of work

Another aim of this report was to identify Australia-specific factors influencing the quality of work. Eight factors that had the potential to influence job quality in Australia were identified in phase one of the project. These factors were confirmed to varying degrees by the case study evidence but it is not claimed that they are purely Australia specific as many of the factors have been identified as issues in other countries also.

The eight factors included: the ageing of the population and the workforce; the growing feminisation of the workforce; reconciling work and non-work demands; providing access to disadvantaged groups in the workforce; monitoring the consequences of non-standard

employment arrangements; ongoing structural adjustment in the national and international economy; and effectively accommodating and utilising the skills of migrant labour. The case studies included here provide examples of where these issues are important for specific organisations and are being addressed through workplace programs.

Ageing Workforce: The challenge of an ageing workforce was being addressed in some of the case study organisations (e.g. ResourceCo) by offering part-time FIFO (fly-in-fly-out) contracts as a retention strategy. In one workplace (EnergyCo) almost half the workforce was aged 50–59 years but the 9-day fortnight was also considered a key to employee retention there. LocGov were also going to be facing issues with their ageing workforce as 30% are due to retire over the next ten years – thus in some cases strategies will need to be in place to provide quality work that will encourage older workers to remain in work even if it is on a part time basis.

Feminisation of the Workforce: In some of the case study organisations where the occupational groups were predominantly male, management had made concerted efforts to recruit more female staff and/or provide development opportunities for female staff (for example in MiningCo and ResourceCo) and were continuing to do so.

Reconciling work and non-work demands: Here, an important issue for the case study participants included ‘family friendly’ rosters and a level of flexibility where possible in work arrangements. The potential for flexible work arrangements or for family friendly rostering arrangements were identified as being important for employees at ResourceCo, LocGov and in ManufactureCo.

Providing access to disadvantaged groups: In two workplaces (ResourceCo and MiningCo) they employed large numbers of indigenous workers. In fact both organisations had strategies in place to recruit, train and retain indigenous employees.

Non-standard employment contracts: the tightening labour market may have influenced the impact of non-standard employment contracts. For example, MiningCo stated that they had reduced the number of casual contracts offered from over 300 to just 12.

Ongoing structural adjustment in the national and international economy: The main challenges here were associated with the structural and funding changes in sectors (such as TAFE) impacting on job security and career opportunities. Another challenge resulting from this was the increased work intensity and growing administrative burdens. These challenges were present in the public sector organisations of TAFE and LocGov. Also having foreign ownership was seen as a source of job insecurity in EnergyCo as decisions concerning

workforce development could potentially be determined by conditions beyond the workplace and Australia.

Accommodating and utilising migrant labour: Although a medium-sized business ConstructionSvsCo had employed fifteen 457 visa holders who had converted to full-time, permanent employees and now is also employing many of the wives of the same workers.

5.7 Job Quality Indicators and Job Quality Measures used in the Case Studies

The job quality framework identified in this study served to identify the range of issues that were relevant to each of the case study organisations. Not all factors were relevant to all organisations; however, there were no factors that did not fit within the framework. Not surprisingly there were no systematic and operational job quality frameworks evident within any of the case study organisations. Many of the identified job quality measures were reactive, that is addressing workforce problems, whereas others were strategic and linked to issues concerning recruitment, retention, and commitment. The case studies highlight the potential for the dissemination of a job quality framework and providing case study examples of programs that have been considered successful in order to address particular job quality issues. Further, benchmarking and learning across organisations indicates a role for key industry and occupational groups in facilitating such exchange and learning processes.

Having addressed the four key criteria for this report: identifying strategies to improve job quality; examining the links between job quality, job satisfaction, innovation and productivity; identifying Australia-specific factors in quality of work and providing a potential set of quality work indicators for Australian workplaces, it is important to note that the findings are limited by the number of case studies, the potential bias present in the sample of employees who participated and limits to the information that was collected (due to time constraints). However, the template created and the key issues identified do afford an opportunity to identify “exemplary” cases of successful JQ programs or recurring JQ issues within specific workplaces that could be replicated elsewhere.

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Appendix 1: Case Study Research Instruments

Participant Information Sheet: Quality of Work Project

Background to the Project: The Australian Workplace Productivity Agency, a Department within the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education, has commissioned a team of researchers from Curtin University to undertake research on the quality of jobs in Australian workplaces.

The Aims of the Project are to:

- i) explore issues surrounding the quality of working life for individuals and employers, including what factors contribute to, or detract from, 'good quality' work and the balance between work and home life and;
- ii) To understand how trends such as changes in technology, working arrangements and the demographic profile of the workforce impact upon the quality of working life.

What is required of interviewees/focus group participants: As part of this research, the project team is undertaking case studies of a selection of companies, which will include interviews with human resource managers, supervisors, and focus groups with employees. In the focus groups, a Curtin researcher will facilitate a discussion with a group of employees on issues concerning work quality and any programmes your company may have implemented that have impacted upon the quality of your working life and life outside of work. You have been asked to participate in this focus group because your organisation has agreed to be one of the case study organisations that will contribute to the research.

It is estimated that interviews and focus groups will take approximately 45 minutes to one hour of your time. We would like to record the interviews and subsequently will send you a copy of the interview and/or the transcript if you wish. Please note that your participation is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from involvement in the study at any time. If you choose to participate, please be assured that you/your organisation will not be identified in any report or publication ensuing from this study unless you agree and note that all results will be reported in aggregate only. If you have any questions about the research project, please feel free to contact one of the Project Team Managers listed below. If you have any concerns about ethical issues, please contact the Human Research Ethics Committee (Secretary) Sinead Darley: S.Darley@curtin.edu.au on +61 8 9266 2784.

Project Team Managers:

Professor John Burgess: john.burgess@curtin.edu.au

Professor Julia Connell: julia.connell@curtin.edu.au

A/Professor Mike Dockery: m.dockery@curtin.edu.au or by phone on 08 9266 3468.

NB: This study has been approved under Curtin University's process for lower-risk Studies (E&F-05-1). This process complies with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (Chapter 5.1.7 and Chapters 5.1.18-5.1.21). For further information on this study contact the researchers named above or the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee. c/- Office of Research and Development, Curtin University, GPO Box U1987, Perth 6845 or by telephoning 9266 9223 or by emailing hrec@curtin.edu.au.

All employees completed this information

QUALITY OF WORK DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Your name is not required on this form this data will be used only to build a demographic profile of survey participants. Using a **black** or **blue** pen, please mark or tick the relevant squares.

1. Age

☐ 24 or less ☐ 25-44 ☐ 45-54 ☐ 55>

2. Gender

☐ Male ☐ Female

3. Highest educational level obtained:

☐ Not completed year 12

☐ completed year 12

☐ skilled vocational qualifications

☐ Associate Diploma/Advanced Certificate

☐ Degree or diploma (3 years full time)

☐ Postgraduate degree or diploma

4. Occupation:

☐ Manager

☐ Supervisor

☐ Professional services

☐ Administrative officer

☐ Clerical

☐ Trades person

☐ Trades assistant

☐ Other (describe below)

5. Length of time in current organization/job:

☐ < 1 year ☐ 3-4 years

☐ 1-2 years ☐ 4-5 years

☐ 2-3 years ☐ 5 years +

6. Employment status:

☐ full-time permanent ☐ labour hire

☐ part-time permanent ☐ seasonal

☐ full-time casual ☐ contractor

☐ part-time casual

7. Do you usually work weekends? ☐ Yes ☐ No

8. If Yes, how many weekends do you usually work?

_____ Weekends per month

9. Do you ever work from home ☐ Yes ☐ No

10. If Yes, how often do you work from home (note below):

11. Total hours normally worked per week in main paid job at your workplace and, if applicable, at home:

☐ 10 to 20 hours ☐ 40 to 45 hours

☐ 20 to 25 hours ☐ 45 to 50 hours

☐ 25 to 30 hours ☐ 50 to 55 hours

☐ 30 to 35 hours ☐ More than 55 hours

☐ 35 to 40 hours

Framework for the Investigation of Job Quality in the Workplace

Instructions: With regard to the framework below please indicate the top three factors that you think impact both positively and negatively on your quality of work.

Dimension 1 Job Prospects	Dimension 3 Intrinsic Job Quality	Dimension 4 Working Time Quality
Job security <i>(possibility of job loss)</i> Recognition <i>(credit for effective work etc)</i> Career progression <i>(potential for advancement)</i>	Work Itself Meaningfulness of work <i>(Job provides feeling of useful work)</i> Interesting work Skills and Discretion Skills and Autonomy <i>(Ability to influence decisions; use full range of skills; apply own ideas)</i> Training Access <i>(training paid for by employer in past 12 months)</i> Work Intensity Pace of work, work pressures <i>(Capacity to cope with pace of work/deadlines)</i> Emotional/value conflict demands <i>Dealing with angry clients/job requires 'emotional labour'</i> Good Social Environment Relations at work <i>(Good relations with colleagues)</i> Direct Supervision <i>(Manager helps and supports you)</i> Consultation <i>(Encouraged to participate in decision making)</i> Organisational support <i>(Positive work environment; effective grievance management)</i>	Work Life Balance/Fit <i>(impact of work on home/family life)</i> Duration/Work Scheduling Discretion/flexibility <i>(Choice over schedules/possible flexibility)</i> Working hours <i>(Enough time to get job done during regular working hours?)</i> Shift patterns <i>(Regular hours or shifts)</i> Flexible work arrangements <i>(Possibility of flexible work arrangements?)</i> <i>(Impact of technology on blurring the work/life boundaries)</i>
Dimension 2 Extrinsic Job Quality		
Earnings <i>(satisfaction with earnings)</i> Good physical environment Safety aspects Pleasant work environment Level of physical and posture related hazards <i>(do you come into contact with harmful products/other and/or do you have to lift or move heavy objects or people)</i>		



Output - Influence at the Employee, Workplace and Organisational Level to be determined

Source: Created from Eurofound 2012, p. 20 and various Australian surveys

NB: The comments in italics are intended as prompts.

Protocol for Interviews (held with HR Managers; line managers/supervisors/union representatives where applicable).

1. **Culture and Management Approach:** How important would you say the quality of work is for employees with regard to your organisation's culture and management approach?
2. **Measures and Assessment:** Is work quality measured/assessed for employees here? What measures are used/or planned for use in the future? Does the company benchmark against other organisations?
3. **Attraction and Retention:** Compared to other companies where employees might work, do you consider this to be a good place to work? Why/why not? Does this company have trouble attracting or retaining staff?
4. **Aspects of Quality Work:** What are the main things that you believe contribute to or detract from a job being a 'good job'. Are there any particular aspects that are particularly important for this organisation? What do you think are the most important aspects of the work from employees' perspective? Do you think this varies across employees – say by gender, age, occupation or seniority? Are there particular jobs that are seen as being inferior and why?
5. **Offshore Operations:** Do you/others in the organisation manage any offshore operations? If so, do you think these operations impact on the quality of work and productivity?
6. **Usage of ICT:** Do you think ICT impacts on the quality of work and productivity here? For example does it contribute to flexible work practices and/or assist in blurring the boundaries between work and home life?
7. **Programs or Initiatives influencing the Quality of Work:** Has the organisation undertaken any specific programs, measures or changes to processes to enhance the quality of work for employees? Please provide details. Have you evaluated these?
8. **Benefits of quality work:** What do you see as the main benefits to this organisation of providing good quality jobs/main costs of low quality jobs? Do you think job quality impacts upon workers' productivity and/or ability to be innovative?
9. **Challenges:** Are there challenges involved in improving the quality of work for employees here?
10. **Employee Autonomy:** How much input do employees here have in determining their working conditions or how their work is organised? What are the main processes through which bargaining over such matters takes place? Would you say employees generally have a lot of autonomy in decisions on how their work is done?
11. **Resources:** Do you think this organisation would be likely to use a resource kit designed to help companies improve the quality of work for their employees which helps to monitor the quality of work here? If so, can you think of any resources you would like to be made available to you?

Do you have any other comments with regard to the quality of work and how it influences output or productivity in your workplace?

Thank you for your time

Focus Groups (groups of employees)

General:

- 1 **Think about a really great job** - perhaps one you have now, had in the past or dream of having. What are the some of the factors that characterise such a job?
Refer to JQ Framework then ask participants to identify how they think these factors impact on the quality of their work, their output and why.
- 2 **Now think about a poor/bad job ...** (repeat as for good job)
Refer to JQ Framework then ask participants to identify how they think these factors impact on the quality of their work, their output and why.
- 3 **Generally, would you say this is a good company to work for?** What are the best things about your jobs here? In terms of the characteristics of the jobs, are there aspects of work that could be improved here? Are there any particular jobs or positions here that are seen as 'good' or 'bad' jobs? What characterises these?
- 4 **Do you think your job here provides an adequate balance** between your work and your family life? Why or why not? Do you ever find your work so stressful that it impacts on your mood at home or on your health? What changes would you like to make?
- 5 **Are there positive aspects of your job that you would be willing to trade-off** to get higher wages – perhaps work longer hours? Are there changes to your working arrangements that you would be willing to take a pay cut for?
- 6 **How important do you think your organisation's culture and management** is to the quality of your jobs?
- 7 **Does management measure or assess** the quality of work here? If so, how?
- 8 **Do you think the quality of your job affects how well you do your job?** In what way – productivity/output/ability to be innovative? Do you feel motivated to perform at your best here? Why or why not?
- 9 **Can you think of any initiatives/programs that have been implemented to enhance the quality of your job?** What was the nature of these? Did they affect your performance in your job or commitment to the job?
- 10 **How much say do you feel you have in determining your working conditions** or how your work is organised. What are the main processes through which bargaining over such matters takes place? Are there any particular groups who have lower bargaining power or autonomy? Does this also mean their jobs are worse? Would you say you have a lot of autonomy in deciding how you do your work?

Do you have any other comments with regard to the quality of work and how it influences output and productivity in your workplace?

Thank you for your time

Appendix 2: The Case Studies

Presentation of the case studies: Each case study comprises some background information, an HR profile, information regarding the workplace culture and management style before reporting on the quality work interview and focus group findings resulting from the questions posed (see Appendix 1). The case studies are presented in the order set out in table 5.1.

Case Study 1: ResourceCo

Background: ResourceCo's strategy is to maximise shareholder return by sustainably finding and developing, mining and processing natural resources (website). Major products are aluminium, copper, diamonds, coal, uranium, gold, industrial minerals (borates, titanium dioxide, salt) and iron ore. Activities span the world but are strongly represented in Australia and North America (ResourceCo website, 2013). Over 100 years old, ResourceCo has been listed on the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI) since 2002. For this case study 6 people were interviewed and all were on full time, permanent contracts. Three were managers and 3 were in professional services (non-managers), all had degree qualifications and 3 (managers) worked between 51 and 55 hours per week. 2 had been with ResourceCo for between 2 – 4 years, 4 over 5 years, 5 were between 25 - 44 years of age, 1 over 55, 2 had operated as FIFO workers for over 2 years and all staff worked closely with FIFO workers and travelled to the various sites on a regular basis.

HR Profile

Employees and contracts: ResourceCo has 12,500 employees in W.A. with the majority employed in the Pilbara and 2,500 in Perth. Iron ore is the key revenue for business and 48 per cent of the workforce comprises FIFO workers. The company uses contractors to provide relief - they are brought in to provide skills that are not needed on a full time basis and comprise approximately 10% of the workforce. Mine and equipment operations are the most common job classifications, followed by fixed plant operators, mobile equipment maintainers, fixed plant tradespeople, professional and operational roles. The majority of staff are on full-time, permanent contracts but there are also some on part-time and job share contracts although they comprise less than 3 per cent of the workforce. This type of contract is generally offered to attract and retain a diverse workforce – such as those who might otherwise retire and to attract new mothers back into the workplace. **Turnover** is approximately 8 per cent currently and with the softening of the local labour market there are no significant issues attracting and retaining employees at present. The ResourceCo workforce comprises 22 per cent females and the company is the largest private employer of indigenous people in the country. Performance management/development systems involve twice yearly reviews for the operations workforce and once or twice a year for professional staff. Maternity leave and sick leave are generous, base salaries may not be as high as some resources companies but the total remuneration package with allowances is generally very competitive in comparison to the external market.

Training and development/job rotation and promotion: is offered at every level. An integrated strategy operates throughout the business, from operational workers to experienced professionals to graduates. This strategy has been designed in order to attract, develop, engage and retain talented individuals and includes a three-year learning roadmap to support the development needs of employees at all levels, in all roles across all operations. The roadmap is integrated with learning schemes that are available locally, to ensure that everyone has access to development for their current and future roles (ResourceCo website, 2013).

Employees can learn to do other jobs if they are interested, for example mobile equipment maintainers can learn how to operate water trucks. If employees show aptitude they can train to be a supervisor as there are a lot of options to move around and try new roles. There are also different lifestyle options on offer that employees can choose according to the different sites and rosters across all operations or residential options at various coastal and inland towns. The rosters vary between sites with some requiring 9 days on, then 5 days off or 8 days on then 6 days off which are referred to as 'family friendly' rosters, whereas others with longer 'days on' offer higher pay but may not be as family friendly. Rosters are fixed as consistency is needed for operational effectiveness. There is a lot of movement between sites (and hence roster changes) but offering a range of different roster options/changes is reportedly an effective way to retain people.

Workplace culture/leadership and management

Interviewees indicated that the workplace culture would be perceived differently on site compared with those in professional roles in the office. Many on site "work to get paid then go home" although the sites were described as "...communities that evolve, very tight and supported. A bit like a large family". For professional employees the culture was considered very important and the management approach/relationship between employees and their direct supervisor critical to their ability to work productively. "The way we work" is ResourceCo's global code of conduct referred to by one interviewee as:

"a policy or doctrine comprising a standard set of expectations relevant to everyone from operator to leaders. It relates to how employees are expected to behave and is essentially about reinforcing standards such as mutual respect and the other company values".

Challenges for HR mostly concern the physical challenges for FIFO workers on site. They are "in the middle of nowhere" and living in camps, working 12 hour shifts. "The fact is that it is tough work to work in the mines and ports so we need to make it as high quality as possible".

Framework for the Investigation of Job Quality in the Workplace

Dimension 1: Job Prospects

Recognition was cited as important "*if I am not getting recognition I will start flagging, I need career progression or I will get bored*" **and** "*at ResourceCo if you work hard and prove yourself, trust does come and you can be recognized by your leader*".

Dimension 2: Extrinsic Job Quality

Earnings: Several interviewees noted that a high number of staff on site are working just for the money and are happy just to stay in their roles as job security is important for them. Also some staff have moved from high pressure environments as previously FIFO workers were "*... teachers lots of them, farmers, tradies – they earn good money now - they FIFO from country towns*". Another interviewee noted that earnings are "*not as important as job security and a pleasant environment for me now but previously I would have been focused on career progression and recognition*". In the professional space, the quality of work was considered important "*I would not enjoy it if it was not of high quality*".

Good physical environment: ResourceCo's remote sites are being rejuvenated, the company is building homes and providing new facilities in order to help keep and retain staff. Prior to these upgrades the site facilities had not been touched for 40 years. Currently, there is a dramatic housing shortage and they cannot build quickly enough in the Pilbarra.

Health and safety: Focusing on OHS, ResourceCo's *The Way We Work* 'doctrine' was reported as being as much about social wellbeing as other factors. As one interviewee pointed out: *"people are social creatures and need a balance between the workplace and home. People spend more time with us than at home. So we need to take a holistic approach. It is not just about their time here (at work) it is about how they look after themselves. We have holistic strategies targeted at that – they don't stop when they walk out the door" and "FIFO workers need different resources and support than those people who are going home every night"*.

Dimension 3: Intrinsic Job Quality

Direct Supervision: This factor was considered to have the greatest impact on the quality of work by all interviewees. *"I have been in jobs that I have not liked but have stuck them because the leader is fantastic..."* However, a senior manager noted that *"we have had to 'over promote' people - frontline supervisors don't grow on trees, if a role needs to be filled and a good operator has potential you skill them up quickly"*. Leadership is integrated with ResourceCo's employee engagement model which advocates dealing directly with employees. This concerns supervisors/leaders having a direct and open relationship with no third parties involved. The company prides itself on how well those direct relationships are developed and, as a result, offers different levels of leadership training and support. Span of supervisor control ranges from 10 – 40 plus team members and several interviewees noted that it was questionable as to whether supervisors can communicate effectively in the larger teams

Meaningfulness of work – A senior manager stated that *"this involves communicating clear goals for the organization, where they are going, mechanisms to get there and each employees role in the process"* and was considered *"a key factor in terms of engaging staff, so they feel part of the operations, it helps job quality, provides context to their work and makes them feel part of something bigger"*.

Dimension 4: Working Time Quality

Work scheduling and shift patterns: Managers have had feedback that employees join ResourceCo because of the 'good rosters'. *"This company is better than other companies, particularly the smaller operations where they have longer rosters on and have shorter periods off."*

Summary:

ResourceCo	Key findings	Influence on productivity/innovation
Dimension 1 Job Prospects	Job Prospects was identified as significant with respect to recognition leading to career progression. Opportunities throughout the company for progression.	The ability for staff to develop a career, change roles and locations was considered a major factor towards retention.
Dimension 2 Extrinsic Job Quality	Good physical environment very important, given 48% of workforce are FIFO workers. Safety/wellbeing is 'front of mind' especially for remote workers.	Company has invested heavily in improving work sites – a retention factor. Base salary is not as high as some but overall package is very competitive.
Dimension 3 Intrinsic Job Quality	Direct supervision/relationship with supervisor very important. Meaningfulness of work also	Using skills/having autonomy identified as key along with being able to grow in the job. Together

	important - how employees see their role fits with the goals of the company.	with good leaders very important for the organisation.
Dimension 4 Working Time Quality	Work life balance not identified as a key factor influencing the quality of work. Given the workforce comprises almost half FIFO employees they know the roster situation when they start work.	ResourceCo organise flights directly from regional centres allowing FIFO workers/their families to stay in country towns, providing income for rural areas and less travel time.

Summary

Leadership and communication was identified as the single most important factor by several interviewees influencing the quality of work and the biggest lever for employee engagement combined. The challenge to improve leadership was recognized though and ResourceCo is currently engaged in a leadership capability exercise to support this. Direct supervisor/employee engagement is advocated and practiced, for example shift co-ordinators enable supervisors to spend time out 'in the field' with the staff on site rather than sitting behind a desk. The ability for employees to develop at ResourceCo, change jobs and sites were considered key for employee retention. ResourceCo have had a number of campaigns focused on attracting more female engineers and have employment targets for females which differ by area. In the future ResourceCo would like to focus more on diversity improvement and increasing indigenous employment, as well as identifying roles for indigenous and female employees in leadership. Several programs are currently focused on cost reduction – how staff can work efficiently and effectively as a company they are “working smarter now” according to one senior manager. The current economic environment is a challenge as another senior manager said “we are coming off a high – repositioning is better than ten years ago but we are coming back from a heyday and there is a need to manage expectations”.

Case Study 2: MiningCo

Background: MiningCo has been delivering contract mining and civil earthmoving services to a number of global clients for at least 90 years. Now one of Australia's leading mining contractors, it employs over 14,000 people across Australia and New Zealand and is one of the largest providers of engineering services for critical infrastructure in both countries. Although the Company has three divisions this case study focuses on a Mining division that is based in Western Australia. MiningCo's website states *"while we pride ourselves on the excellence of our work, we recognise that it is also our industry-leading approach to sustainable development that gives us a competitive edge. For us, sustainable development means having an unwavering focus on Zero Harm and a commitment to environmental sustainability, as well as being a valued member of the minerals industry of the communities in which we operate"*.

HR profile

The gender demographic of the workforce is 11% female and 89% male. For this study, 11 people were interviewed comprising 10 males and 1 female, 5 managers, 2 supervisors and 4 site workers. Their ages ranged from 25 years upwards with 5 people over the age of 55 years. 4 people had been with MiningCo for less than 1 year and 5 over 5 years with the remainder in between. 10 interviewees were on full-time, permanent contracts and 1 was on a casual contract. All said they worked over 46 hours per week, with 7 working over 55 hours per week. The MiningCo website states *"we know that our people aspire to work for more than just a career and financial security and we strive to provide a challenging environment, in which they feel safe, valued, rewarded and empowered. This requires us to focus on our attitudes, behaviours, relationships and our approach to work"*. During 2011 and 2012 the Human Resources (HR) team maintained a focus on improving recruitment and retention processes, developing a plan to increase the diversity of the workforce, improving leadership skills and succession planning processes, enhancing the benefits available while increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of HR systems and processes. Work quality is not assessed as such although there is a yearly staff satisfaction survey that is undertaken and managers and supervisors participate in 360 degree feedback processes. The outcomes of the satisfaction survey are followed up so as to address any issues.

MiningCo have taken a proactive role with regard to employee health and run health checks, including diabetes checks, which have already helped to avert potentially serious health problems for some staff. MiningCo has received several awards that recognise their commitment towards workplace diversity in particular. For example, the company was a joint winner of the Indigenous Employment Award (Australian Human Resources Institute - AHRI) which acknowledged the specialist recruitment and training methodology developed specifically for the hiring of Indigenous employees. Two additional women were also appointed to the Board recently so that now 3 of the 7 Non-executive Directors are women. Amongst other programs introduced by the organisation, the Corporate Family Program supports employees with caring responsibilities whether they have children or ageing family members, allowing for the provision of practical support and services such as online booking arrangements for carers.

Workplace culture/leadership/management style: MiningCo focuses on visible and active leadership, the development of the organisation's culture, capability and management systems. According to their website, MiningCo operates under 5 guiding principles related to: *"Leadership – we will listen, set clear expectations, involve our people and act with integrity; Culture – we will develop a culture aligned with our values, and built on increasing trust, engagement and accountability; Systems; Talent – we will identify, support and develop world-class talent to continually build our organisational capability; and Behaviours – we will do what we say we will do, translating our "Empower Our People" strategies and intentions*

into safe, efficient and effective work practices and senior living topics". These principles are integrated with a set of values that focus on: working collaboratively; striving for improvement and innovation; demonstrating integrity and responsibility; striving for excellence through strong leadership; being responsible and accountable for the care and protection of peers, the business, the communities in which they operate, and the environment.

Framework for the Investigation of Job Quality in the Workplace

Findings from the job quality framework (see appendix) are mostly captured in quotes from interviews as follows:

Dimension 1: Job Prospects

Job Security - Sense of stability

We are a big contracting organisation so for us at the management level there are opportunities because there is growth. For the employees, because you have got a bigger size you have bigger critical mass, there is less likelihood of fluctuation of jobs up and down and there will be somewhere we can rehouse staff when the contract finishes.

Recognition - Awarding staff for their efforts

...we have an innovation awards program and so we encourage innovation on site with work practices or if people have invented tools and things that make the workplace safer. With that we recognise them with innovation awards....the healthy heart program (for example) has been rolled out across other sites, and has been nominated for an internal innovation award.

Career progression - Training for career progression lacking

Typically people who show initiative will get opportunities - they might become the safety rep for their crew (for example)... we don't have a training pathway to superintendent... it is something we have should have and something we are working on... so they can see their pathway. We are not really good at that.

Dimension 2: Job Quality

Physical Environment: Physical environment has a big impact on retention of staff.

MiningCo's goal of 'zero harm' resulted in no safety related fines or prosecutions being recorded during 2011 to 2012. Improving conditions for workers on site has been a key goal:

One of the sites was set up in 2010 and initially workers tolerated very poor conditions, however this has changed now "all those factors meant that the atmosphere on site was quite depressed and turnover got to 70 or 80 %...but the opposite is the now the case. The camp is as good as it could be, the flights in and out operate well. The management of the accommodation is good, the facilities are good, supervision is improving. All those factors have meant a significant drop in turnover.

Work Itself/Meaningfulness of work - Quality of work influenced by the meaningfulness of the work.

People need to have meaningful work and the quality of work relates to that particular job so we don't have people just sitting around. That naturally falls into the culture and management approach ... people know what needs to be done then they attain high quality of work.

Work Intensity/Work Pressure - Work pressure is dependent on the job and the person.

There is lots of work pressure (Participant 1) but it depends on what job you are doing really (Participant 2)...Sometimes people put their own pressure on themselves... increased pressure to get to where they want to be (Participant 3).

Dimension 3: Extrinsic Job Quality

Skills and Autonomy: Autonomy limited for some operators but some avenues available for others

Not a whole lot for an operator...they will go to their pre-shift meetings and their supervisor will allocate their tasks and allocate their trucks... if you are a grader operator or dozer operator you really set the standard.

Direct Supervision – Depends on supervisor whether they support new ideas or not

Employee who speaks up about changing things may be labelled a challenging person (by their manager) for bringing up all these ideas.

Dimension 4: Work Time Quality

Work life Balance/Fit - Technology impacting on work/life balance

...now that we have got phones with email and you have your phones with you all the time or your iPad, I think it's one of those work/life balance things...I do work from home answering phones or checking emails. I think it's good actually because it keeps me up to speed with what's going on - when I come in on Monday I already know what's occurred on the weekend - it actually prepares me.

Duration/Work Scheduling - At supervisor level, there is flexibility as long as hours are met.

My people come and go as they need. So long as they are doing the hours that we need do, we are flexible at either end..... (For example), I have a dental appointment and I won't see you till 11:00am, no problems. But then I will then get the time off them in other ways. They might go to a project where they can't fly out till late, they are not getting home till 10:00pm.

Consultation - Level of consultation is determined by the supervisor.

We have pre-shift meetings and tool box meetings in which they can express their concerns and any improvements they want to make. Whether the supervisor wants to take them on board it is up to them.

Table 1: Summary of the Main Findings in relation to the quality work framework

Dimensions	Key findings	Influence on productivity/innovation
Dimension 1 Job Prospects	This dimension was significant for managers but less so for workers on site.	Awards encourage innovation but it was felt that more local acknowledgement may be needed
Dimension 2 Extrinsic Job Quality	For site workers, this was a significant dimension.	Earnings and a good physical environment impact on productivity for workers on-site
Dimension 3	Autonomy considered an important issue	Productivity and innovation can

Intrinsic Job Quality	for majority of workers. Degree of autonomy affected by level within the organisation. Consultation also important and dependent on supervisor.	be affected by supervisor.
Dimension 4 Working Time Quality	Work –life balance impacted by rosters for site workers. Majority of managers on call over the weekends, particularly in relation to safety issues.	Ability for managers and office staff to have some flexibility encouraged greater productivity.

Summary: Two senior managers noted that their responses to the case study questions would very likely change depending on the business cycle and/or their particular career stage. For example, they said they would have answered differently 4 years ago, but now the business is healthy and they have a great order book so that influences their perceptions of job security. Due to business fluctuations, the external labour market has also changed – for example the number of contractors has reduced from over 300 to 12 as need has decreased. MiningCo management has expended considerable time and effort to encourage diversity in their workforce and been recognised externally as a result. They have taken a holistic approach to employee wellbeing with health checks covering the whole workforce. With regard to the quality of work, supervision was identified as a key issue concerning the level of consultation, autonomy and whether new ideas/innovation is taken on board. A sense that suggesting new ideas would not always be welcome suggests there may be a need for supervisor awareness development in places. A good and safe workplace environment was identified as very important for site workers and MiningCo have invested in improvements over several years to successfully provide this.

Case Study 3: ManufactureCo

Background:

ManufactureCo is a medium size enterprise, offering comprehensive experience and manufacturing capabilities in vibration technology. Its HQ is located in Perth, Western Australia and it supplies machines and systems for a wide range of industrial sectors, including mining and quarrying, recycling and environmental, foundry and steel, fine grinding and mixing. The company has been operating as a private company in Australia for the past 13 years. Its parent company is based in Germany where it has been in operation for over 50 years, it has many overseas subsidiaries and over 750 staff globally. Four people were interviewed for this case study 75 % had over 5 years of tenure, 3 were male and 1 female, 3 managers and 1 tradesperson.

HR Profile:

35 staff are employed at ManufactureCo on a full-time, permanent basis. All staff apart from two (who are in administrative roles) are male and the management team is relatively small, consisting of 6 managers. There is no formal HR Manager position - this function is supported by the Administration/Finance Manager. The main occupational groups in the manufacturing/production team are Engineering (20%) and general Trades (80%) in addition to a team of 15 who deliver the administrative functions for the business, offering a mix of general administration/finance skills, as well as engineering backgrounds (e.g. Engineering Draftspersons). Turnover is fairly stable with the longest serving employee having been there for 11 years.

ManufactureCo prides itself on its safety record and is committed to the objective of conducting its operations safely. It does not offer any formal programs or initiatives aimed at improving the quality of work/productivity or innovation within the business. However, senior management recognise the importance of supporting ongoing training and education for all staff. This is reinforced by the Company spending in excess of AUD\$100,000 on training over the past 12 months.

Workplace Culture/Leadership and Management Style:

ManufactureCo's (MC) mission is to offer *"unrivalled products and services to customers by utilising MC's expertise and promoting the commitment of our people"*. The mission is supported by 4 key values:

1. **People** - *"MC aims to develop its people's skills both technically and personally to allow continuous performance improvement"*.
2. **Team Conduct** – *"MC seeks to provide a working environment that promotes honesty, integrity and growth opportunities"*.
3. **Customers and Suppliers** – *"MC activity seeks to encourage mutually beneficial outcomes to develop long-term relationships"* and
4. **Technology** – *"MC promotes leading edge technologies to provide innovative solutions for customers"*.

An interviewee commented that ManufactureCo *"is one of the best companies I have ever worked for...as any support required is available"* **and another** *"generally if people are prepared to work a reasonable rate, they don't get micromanaged"*. (Senior Staff Member)

Effective leadership was considered vital as a determinant of the ethos and atmosphere of the company. There is an evident workplace culture of continuous improvement with evident recognition of the importance of effectiveness, efficiency and quality as key to business success with a (Senior Staff Member) observing:

*Certainly the better that we can do anything, the more successful and profitable the business can be. This can reduce the workload as well; if you do something right the first time, you don't need to do it twice **and another** I think the culture of a business is vital to its success. We try very hard to promote our culture. It just needs constant effort to remind people that we need to 'walk the talk' at all times.*

Influences on the Quality of Work/Productivity: When summarising the key findings relating to the quality work framework, job prospects were identified as important by all interviewees and the work itself, the meaningfulness of work, organisational support, skills/autonomy and good relations with colleagues were ranked as more important than every other factor. Earnings were not mentioned by any interviewees as a quality of work factor, but work life balance was acknowledged as a key driver for retention and satisfaction and also considered to impact on productivity and enable a positive work culture/environment as shown in table 1.

Negative impacts on quality of work/productivity: were related to a perceived lack of effective systems and consistency across some operating areas of the business. This problem was considered to create emotional /value conflict demands and was identified by interviewees as the most common negative factor. Improvement to the internal systems, enabling greater cohesion, consistency and clear communication across departments would reportedly enable greater productivity overall. As a manager commented:

It's about getting people to cooperate with each other to get the big picture. But the departments don't necessarily communicate as well as you would like to. People are being driven by their own needs and wants. (Manager)

It was also recognised that better cooperation and communication require change and ManufactureCo used consultants to assist with this, putting in measures to track change while also realising that they needed to work to achieve everything they had set out to do.

Quotes from Interviewees related to the Key Themes

Dimension 1: Recognition:

Some people look for it [recognition] on an almost daily or weekly basis, whilst others don't seem to care too much about it. It is my job to figure out who wants what (Manager). A lot of what you are looking for (in a job) depends on where you are at in life. (Employee)

Job Security:

*Job security can be an issue for some. I have some staff that every time they see me they ask "How are things going? Do we have some work coming through?" (Senior Staff Member) **and another** From a management point of view we sit and discuss the future. The business will always be like this; it goes in cycles. There is a chance to diversify. Next year will be daunting, but it is an opportunity. (Manager)*

Dimension 2: Extrinsic Job Quality

Good physical environment:

A good physical environment is one of the most important dimensions. We offer a lifestyle choice. People do have the opportunity to go home each evening and we are quite flexible in terms of providing an employment situation. (Senior Staff Member)

Dimension 3: Intrinsic Job Qualities

Work itself:

Meaningfulness of work is very important. I find the best result you get from people is when they actually enjoy what they are doing. (Senior Staff Member)

Skills and Discretion:

There is a new challenge each day for the people, so it can be relatively interesting work. (Senior Staff Member). I like autonomy. Everyone at every time, is given the opportunity to self-improve. (Manager)

Dimension 4: Working Time Quality:

The job itself is extremely demanding, but I know 100% that if I need time, it's mine. (Manager)

Working Hours/Shift Patterns:

This is a good company to work for. It offers opportunity, flexibility and salary. If you are willing to take it, you actually feel like you are actually participating in the progress, the development and the representation of this company. You are allowed to have that ownership. (Manager)

Summary of the Main Findings in relation to the quality work framework

Manufacture Co	Key findings	Influence on productivity
Dimension 1 Job Prospects	Identified by all as important. None identified job security, career progression or contract quality as one of the top 3 influencing the quality of work within their workplace.	Informal recognition as highly regarded as formal recognition, and perceived as having a positive impact on productivity within the company.
Dimension 2 Extrinsic Job Quality	A good physical environment, consistent safety aspects and a low level of physical hazards rated by 50% as having a key positive impact on the extrinsic job quality dimension.	Any satisfaction/dissatisfaction with earnings not mentioned. Good physical environment appears to positively impact on productivity in the company.
Dimension 3 Intrinsic Job Quality	Work itself, meaningfulness of work, organisational support, skills/autonomy and good relations with colleagues, all seen to be extremely relevant in positively impacting the quality of work.	These factors significantly outweighed all of the others themes/dimensions with regard to job quality also.
Dimension 4 Working Time Quality	Work/life balance and the impact which work has on the family life, was perceived as playing an important role in positively impacting on the quality of work.	The company allows employees to balance work with family commitments - a key driver for retention impacting on productivity and enabling a positive culture/environment.

Summary: Effective leadership was considered vital as a determinant of the ethos and culture of the company. Senior management recognised that to achieve their mission of *unrivalled products and services to customers by utilising MC's expertise and promoting the*

commitment of our people they needed to make the most of each employee's skills, provide autonomy, workplace support and training. This also included recognition that job prospects, the work itself, meaningfulness of work, organisational support, skills/autonomy and good relations with colleagues were of the utmost importance to ManufactureCo employees. Also important was work-life balance with earnings considered less important. However, it is critical to recognise that this reportedly depended on career/life-stage as recognised by several:

If I was chasing the money, like I was a few years ago, you kind of put your life on hold. Now I want to be able to go home every night (Employee).

Case Study 4: ConstructionSvsCo

ConstructionSvsCo is a medium sized WA company based on two sites that has been trading for over 75 years and is one of the leading suppliers of glazing and glasswork. The facilities include a large array of high technology machinery allowing it to offer the best quality products right across Australia.

ConstructionSvsCo operates on the basis of the following key values:

- *Offering quality, service and expert knowledge.*
- *Providing customer satisfaction in a competitive world, where the major contribution to this satisfaction is made by the supply of products to an assured level of quality.*

ConstructionSvsCo are committed to *“A philosophy of continuous improvement - meeting the needs of an innovative and exciting market, setting a new benchmark...to an assured level of excellence.”* To achieve this goal the Managing Director states that he *“spends 90 days away a year to see where the markets are heading and communicating with people.”*

HR Profile:

ConstructionSvsCo employs 100 staff in the WA offices. There are no 457 Visa holders currently employed by ConstructionSvsCo, although previously they were 15 who are now Australian residents and remain employed with ConstructionSvsCo. 95% of staff are employed on a full-time permanent basis (95%), with 5 holding part-time positions. The management team is relatively small, comprising 5 senior managers, including the Managing Director. There is an HR Manager, a Finance Manager, a Marketing Manager and a Sales Manager. Staff represent a range of occupational groups, including administration, general skills, trades (10) and glaziers (10). The gender balance is mixed, with the team working within the factory being approximately 10% female, whereas in the office area, there is a female workforce of approximately 50%.

There is a mixed age group, with the youngest employees being 18 years old and the oldest 55 years of age. There are no formal workplace agreements in place and no union representation. Manufacturing occurs over the course of 3 shifts per day, over a 24-hour period 5 days per week, Monday to Friday. The turnover/absenteeism rates are not consistently measured, but they have been fairly stable and steady over the past few years. For this study 4 male staff were interviewed. They comprised 3 managers and 1 tradesperson, all full time, permanent staff who had been employed for more than 4 years. One interviewee had completed year 12 at high school. It is worth noting that the Managing Director (MD) was engaged in developing a new Cert III Training Program in Glass Processing at the time of this study.

Workplace Culture/Leadership and Management Style:

The workplace is considered to be multicultural *“we are very multi-cultural. We now have some of the wives of the previous 457 Visa holders working with us in the laminating area”*. (Manager). Clearly safety is a priority where training for *OH&S courses and safety courses is undertaken and some of the younger managers undertake small business courses to build on their skill sets*. The emphasis on training appears to be paying off as a senior manager commented: *“Our insurance company gave us a 25% bonus on our workers compensation insurance fees, due to our excellent safety record...”*

ConstructionSvsCo recently undertook a staff satisfaction survey, they hold tool box meetings, management meetings and have staff BBQs. The MD gives people a chance to bring things up and into the open stating *“It’s all about communication. Communication was also recognised by a manager as critical to business success “We started a quarterly newsletter for our factory staff to show them what we are doing. But it’s still not enough”*. The

MD operates an open door policy stating *“Tell me what your problems are – that is the fastest way, rather than going through a third party.....There is no appointment. Just knock on the door otherwise it will only fester...get worse and spread”*.

Dimension 1: Job Prospects

Job security Job insecurity (from outside forces) was considered a problem. The MD stated:

“we constantly talk about China, where we can’t compete on price... When we become standard and treat customers like everyone else, we become part of the pack. So it is important that we get the quality right.” And “for us job security is number one. The second one is a training issue....that then lines up into career progression..... A lot of blue-collar workers work to live. They work for the weekend and are not interested in tomorrow. Then as they get married and have kids, they become more focused, committed workers.” (MD)

Recognition An employee commented that:

“a simple thank you can go a long way. Just at the end of the day, if you really have exceeded and gone above what you have been asked to do, a boss coming down and saying thank you, I appreciate it, I have seen what you have done today, it was good, it makes you feel that much better. Someone is actually noticing.”

Dimension 2: Extrinsic Job Quality

Earnings The MD commented that employees were:

“happy with what we do, but unhappy with what they are getting paid. But when you are competing in a tighter market, it’s tough. We are aiming to look at this from a productivity basis and are in the process of introducing a barcoding system so we can track and measure productivity.”

An employee stated:

“The recognition and earnings keep driving productivity” and “I believe in an annual pay review. If you can’t get a pay rise then you need to sit down and ask why and how can I get it.”

Dimension 3: Intrinsic Job Quality

Skills and Discretion: Employees are trained to be multi-skilled this means that they have 3 – 4 people who can operate one machine at a time.

Training Access ConstructionSvsCo has signed up to do Lean Six Sigma in one section of the factory. *“Everyone will be trained the same way and everyone will operate the machine the same way. Even experienced staff have commented, that they wish they had access to this years ago. It is invaluable.” (Manager)*

Dimension 4: Working Time Quality

Work Intensity A manager commented *“once a worker gets upset about something (changed working hours, not signed a holiday form etc) they retaliate with absenteeism.”*

Summary of the Main Findings in relation to the quality work framework

Dimensions	Key findings	Influence on productivity/innovation
Dimension 1 Job Prospects	Recognition and credit for effective work was the 2 nd highest-ranking dimension perceived as positively affecting the quality of work undertaken within the business.	Informal recognition and credit appears to be as highly regarded as formal recognition and credit, and perceived as having a positive impact on productivity.
Dimension 2 Extrinsic Job Quality	No interviewees rated the Extrinsic Job Quality Dimension as a key positive impact on their quality of work.	There is a difference in the way employees on the factory floor focus on earnings compared with job security. A performance review was expected to equate to a salary review.
Dimension 3 Intrinsic Job Quality	Job qualities such as work intensity, skills and discretion and access to training were all seen as relevant in positively impacting on the quality of work . This was the most frequently rated positive dimension, with all interviewees rating this dimension as important.	The extent to which training is being approached including the adoption of lean work practices and the creation of “redundancy focused” training manuals for operating individual machinery, are all seen to be positively influencing job quality.
Dimension 4 Working Time Quality	Work life balance was identified as important in positively impacting on the quality of work ranking above shift patterns/flexible work.	A key driver in employee retention and satisfaction, it helps to enable a positive work environment.

Summary: At ConstructionSvsCo most employees work in the factory and both management and employees identified earnings and recognition as key drivers for this group. Communication was identified as an area requiring greater attention with a manager commenting “*there are issues around communication between management and the factory floor*”. It also appears to be associated with differences in expectations with, for example, employees expecting annual pay reviews to be associated with pay rises. If the factory based employees were able to see the ‘big picture’ for example, the level of competition and restrictions on offering pay rises, this may in conjunction with the skill development and training on offer (such as the Cert III in glass processing), help them to identify more with intrinsic job quality factors other than recognition. Work life balance was also identified as important concerning the manner in which the company allows individuals to balance work with family commitments. A manager commented “*the guys on the factory floor generally all have families and are looking for work/life balance*” indicating it is a factor associated with career life-stage also”. Management seem to recognise the factors that influence work quality. For example, the MD commented “*if people get bored it will reflect in the quality of their work. One of the things we are working on is to show our finished product to our workers*” **and** “*The day we will go forward as an organisation is when they [factory workers] go to their mates and say “this is what we do”. That means they are proud of where they work and they own where they work*”. All these factors relate to the intrinsic job quality dimension - meaningfulness of work.

Case Study 5: LocGov

Background:

LocGov is a local government organization in NSW looking after a community of over 140,000 residents in a coastal environment with beaches, large estuaries and thousands of hectares of natural bushland and open space. The organisation comprises 2 main divisions - Community and Environment - operating under the guidance of the General Manager. LocGov provides 16 key services, ranging from certification services, to childcare, safety and compliance services —, cultural events, development assessment, theatre —, libraries, management of parks, reserves and foreshores, roads, traffic and waste management, an aquatic centre and dozens of sports fields, and the administration and corporate support that ensures that all these services are performed well. LocGov is structured in 23 business areas and has adopted the Business Excellence framework to create a culture that contributes to success by integrating Business Excellence principles into every day operations. There is a strong focus on improving Customer Service, with all members of staff required to undergo Customer Service Training and learn the Customer Service Charter.

HR Profile:

LocGov employs 634 (excluding casuals) employees, of which 545 are full-time employees. There are also 406 casual employees. The main areas where casuals are employed are vacation care (32%), the aquatic centre (17.5%), community services (15%), and children's services (12%). Over 70% of employees live locally. The area has a high socio-economic status and the level of education in the population is above average, making it easy to attract talent in the local area. The turnover rate has dropped from 11% in 2010-11 to 9.94% in 2011-12. Absenteeism is low with an average of 5.7 days of sick leave per annum and an average of 6.97 days of combined sick and carers leave. The organisation has very high tenure with 54% of the workforce having been with the organisation for five years or more. The average length of service is 6.82 years. 644 of the total workforce are female (62%) and 396 are male (38%). The average age of employees is 44.72 years. One of the main challenges that the organization is facing in the future is the fact that 30% of the workforce will retire over the next 10 years.

Management Approach and Workplace Culture

LocGov is using a Business Excellence framework and has recently implemented a new continuous improvement initiative; the '*Just Do It*' program allows employees to implement small changes without having to seek approval from higher up. Most interviewees mentioned the 'just-do-it' program as a very positive initiative that empowers employees and makes people proud of the organisation. Some interviewees mentioned experiences from prior workplaces, where they had submitted ideas for improvement that, despite widespread sign-off from several levels of management, got squashed, or refused only to be submitted by the manager, who then claimed and received all the credit. In LocGov on the other hand, respondents reported very positive experiences and said that they feel engaged, listened to and highly motivated. *"The business excellence approach and just do it approach – it makes me proud."* Team Member

There have been several events that have alerted the General Manager and HR Manager to problems in regards to job quality, mainly around issues of lack of leadership skills, bullying in the workplace, the need to adapt to an aging workforce, the scope and intensity of organisational change initiatives, career progression and the reward system.

Summary of the Main Findings in relation to the Quality of Work framework

LocGov	Key findings	Influence on productivity/innovation
Dimension 1 Job Prospects	<i>Job Prospects</i> , in terms of Job security, Recognition and Career progression, was identified as significant at LocGov. Repeated service reviews and related restructuring have resulted in reduced job security, fear and anguish in affected areas. A new HR program has been implemented that allows employees to track their own performance, based on ongoing training/regular performance reviews. Career progression is limited - it is difficult in a lean organisation to provide significant career progression.	Recognition is driving innovation – the ‘just do it’ program/new bonus system encourage employees to creatively think about better ways for doing their job and encourage initiative. Lack of career opportunities can force employees to change organisations to further their careers, increasing attrition especially of highly skilled and motivate employees.
Dimension 2 Extrinsic Job	OH&S and location in ‘outposts’ - were mentioned by several interviewees. OH&S is an important quality of work aspect mentioned by employees in the bi-annual survey. Local dispersion and location of outposts can have a negative impact on quality of work, because employees cannot attend social functions and feel neglected by HQ. Several interviewees mention office design. Cubicle style offices are seen as inadequate due to the exposure to noise and the lack of privacy when dealing with difficult issues.	OH&S under the Corporations Act is a very important factor. Aging workforce means older employees in the field won’t be able to do the hard physical work & LocGov needs to find ways it can continue to provide employment. Inadequate office layouts/design, exposure to noise and lack of ‘quiet space’ can make work difficult. Interviewees share a preference for flexible workspaces with ‘quiet rooms’ for those who need to concentrate.
Dimension 3 Intrinsic Job Quality	Intrinsic job qualities such as meaningful work, autonomy and discretion at work, the ability to apply ones skills and access to training were all seen to be extremely relevant in positively impacting on the quality of work . Also ‘flexible working arrangements’ and ‘work life balance’ was the most frequently rated positive dimension, rated by all interviewees. The importance of ‘meaningful work’ where people know where they fit in the organisation, and know how they are contributing, are able to make a difference and effect change was seen as very important to employees. The organisation prides itself on being the No 1 organisation in training in NSW, and provides access to a wide variety of	Intrinsic job qualities, especially organisational culture, anti-bullying programs, and adequate leadership skills and training are seen as driving employee engagement and satisfaction. Interviewees stated that employee engagement and satisfaction impact on productivity and performance. Interesting work and a meaningful job are also important for employee attraction and retention and increase the organisation’s value proposition to employees. The lack of discretion and autonomy for front-line employees can result in reduced

	training. A good social environment, in terms of a positive organisational culture and active action to prevent bullying (including adequate processes and training, effective grievance management) were seen as very important by all interviewees. Autonomy and discretion are also seen as very important and the organisation has gone to great length in order to delegate decisions and authority as much as possible.	quality of work and output. For example the scheduling of cleaning is driven by the managers' performance criteria, instead of being based on the requirements. Delegating or involving the teams in the scheduling of cleaning could result in improved outcomes.
Dimension 4 Working Time Quality	Work life balance and flexibility was perceived as playing an important role in positively impacting on the perceived quality of work. This Dimension was one of significant relevance and impact in positively influencing job quality in LocGov.	Employees consider the manner in which the company allows individuals to balance work with family commitments, to be a key driver in employee retention and satisfaction. This culture enables a positive work environment within LocGov.
Other factors/ issues	Being trusted by ones supervisor and being able to trust management - was seen as an important factor impacting on the quality of work life. Also consistency between policies and processes and the avoidance or elimination of 'mixed messages' was considered an important factor influencing the quality of work.	

Summary: Having a meaningful job was most considered to be one of the most important aspects of quality work (mentioned by 63% of respondents), followed by work-life balance (58%), skills and autonomy (52%), interesting work, access to training and recognition (47%). Contract quality and work intensity were the least mentioned, but all aspects of quality work framework were considered as important by some participants. The most frequently mentioned negative impact on quality of work was the lack of discretion and flexibility in scheduling of work, inadequate or inconvenient shift patterns, and emotional value or conflict demands (mentioned by 21% of participants). This is followed by lack of job security – especially in the light of service revisions. Despite significant efforts to ensure flexibility in work arrangements, some interviewees also mentioned lack of work flexibility and work-life balance, besides other potentially negative impacts related to work intensity, such as the pace of work and work pressures and the lack of autonomy and opportunities to use ones' skills as impacting on job quality.

“You get the best out of people, you get people that are relaxed, when they are at work, you get people who understand that they are valued as a whole person, not just as a person who is filling the job.” Team member

“If they (employees) are not happy and they are not working well our productivity is affected.” Manager

Case Study 6: TAFE

Background

TAFE is one of the largest vocational education and training (VET) service providers in Victoria, with several campuses in Melbourne together with overseas campuses in Asia and the Middle East. Its mission is expressed as *Bold Vision, Clear Focus* – ‘a collaborative and creative approach to education in Australia and overseas’, based upon its core values – community involvement, relevance, innovation, responsiveness, equity and a commitment to quality (TAFE website). With more than 70,000 students, three quarters of whom are local and the remainder international (on- and off-shore), it offers apprenticeships, certificates, diplomas, associate degrees and short business and applied consulting programs. Currently, TAFE employs nearly 2000 teaching, administrative and support staff, and is funded equally by the state government, and its own student and consulting income.

Human Resource Management Vision & Strategy

The HR vision of TAFE is ‘to engage with its people in a dynamic culture that promotes and recognises achievement, enhances organisational capacity to deliver on strategic promises, and provides an excellent workplace’ (TAFE website). It has an associated commitment to ‘provide a working environment that attracts staff, nurtures leaders, and encourages excellence and a global outlook’. In pursuit of these aims it has developed a number of HR strategies designed to enhance the employee value proposition. These include: a *Change-Management Program*; a *Wellness Program*; and a *People & Organisational Development Advisory Group* which has developed a senior executive toolkit and a community outreach project entitled *Workplace Giving*. There is also an annual *Staff Achievement & Recognition Program* (TAFE website). In the last few years the VET sector in Australia has been under significant pressure from several directions which have led to a climate of uncertainty and security across all institutions. This has created a ‘level of anxiety for the future’ (Senior Manager) at all levels, as there could be significant restructuring and potential redundancies.

Qualitative Job Quality Themes & Issues

Given the size and complexity of TAFE, the themes are divided into senior managers and Centre Managers (middle managers), administration and teaching staff. The sample group comprised 19 people in total. Interviews were held with three senior managers and 3 focus groups were conducted comprising, in turn, 5 middle-managers (IT, properties, library, international, teaching); 7 administrative staff (academic support, projects, students, HR) and 4 teachers (2 full-time, part-time, sessional). Nine participants were between 25 and 54 years of age and 10 were over 55 years. 8 had a degree or diploma and 11 had a postgraduate degree or diploma. 8 were referred to as managers, 3 professional services, 5 administrative officers and 3 as ‘other’. 2 participants had worked with TAFE for less than one year; 8 between 3 and 5 years and nine for over 5 years. 12 were on full time permanent contracts, 3 part time permanent, 2 part time casual and 1 was a contractor.

Framework for the Investigation of Job Quality in the Workplace - *Managers*

Dimension 1: Job Prospects - Security, Recognition & Career Progression

All the senior managers interviewed are on contracts with salaries and benefits with which they are quite satisfied. They feel that *job security* has declined significantly and staff are quite concerned about this, fearing significant future redundancies in teaching and administrative functions – ‘we value our staff, we’ve heavily invested in our staff...we’ll do anything to keep our staff, but we can’t turn a cookery teacher into an engineer’(Manager).

They further suggest that there will be considerable difficulties in attracting and retaining suitable future teaching staff, due both to the relative salary inequities across the VET sector, and the need to employ experienced trades-people who earn far more in their chosen vocation.

With respect to *employee recognition*, all senior managers cited their own *career progression* as exemplifying the available opportunities at TAFE. All suggest that there are formal recognition programs, and that there is 'credit for effective work' (Manager), mainly between the Centre Managers, staff and their supervisors, on a largely informal basis. They acknowledge that the current organisational changes have impacted on them – 'staff manage change up to a point, but ongoing change has the ability to paralyse people...change fatigue' (Manager). Career progression for non-management staff has also been adversely affected within this context – 'opportunities for people to have the opportunities to step up' (Manager).

Dimension 2: Extrinsic Job Quality - Earnings & Good Physical Environment

All the managers interviewed were content with their own *earnings* but suggest that many teaching staff may question why their salaries are less than either their private sector teaching or industry colleagues. In contrast, they feel that, with the exception of one older campus, the buildings and *physical facilities* of TAFE are generally acceptable, with 'strong and vigorous' workplace health and safety (WHS) systems and an excellent risk management track record.

Dimension 3: Intrinsic Job Quality - Skills & Discretion, Training, Work Intensity/Environment

This dimension received the most support from all three senior managers with respect to perceived job quality, in common with all other staff (see below). Passion for their *work*, and recognition of their social value is paramount. All describe their work as 'a meaningful vocation', with teachers having 'a passion for their jobs' (Manager).

The intrinsic aspects of their jobs are clearly the most attractive components also for Centre Managers – 'that's why I do the job...keeps me coming to work...we play an incredibly important role in educating people for the workforce...challenge and problem-solving, delivering services...a real opportunity for creativity here'. However, the adverse external pressures and perceived lack of support from senior managers are detracting from their job quality and satisfaction. With respect to their own *skills and autonomy*, the managers are generally satisfied and they also feel comfortable with their *access to training*, and the quality of the *social environment*.

Dimension 4: Work-Life Balance & Work Schedules

Given their positions, the senior managers and the Centre Managers have considerable flexibility and control over their work schedules – 'I can schedule my own work' and have Executive Assistant support to manage their activities. They also experience effective work-life balance – '...you put more time into this or less time'.

Teaching & Administrative Staff

Dimension 1: Job Security, Recognition & Career Progression

All interviewees were concerned about the impact of funding cuts and organisational restructuring on their workplaces. However, few of the younger teachers, whether permanent part-time or sessional, were concerned about their personal *job security* – 'not really

important, I'm offered more work than I want...' whereas an older teacher acknowledged that 'job security is very important to me...a certain situation that allows you to prepare, plan and manage everything...not secure any more'. Most of the administrative staff echoed these concerns, suggesting that all positions are now vulnerable – 'I don't feel any security in the job at all...very erratic, perhaps because of my age'.

With respect to *recognition*, most of the teaching staff feel that they are appreciated by their students rather than by their managers or the organisation – 'doesn't happen, we're given a brief but it's not as rigorously checked as I feel it should be' (sessional); 'don't get recognition if the job is well done, but if it doesn't go well, it becomes a big problem' (full-time teacher); 'I don't expect any recognition from the institution and none has been forthcoming' (part-time teacher). However, all participants feel that their managers should provide them with personalised feedback and recognition.

With regard to the focus groups comprising administrative staff, participants agreed that there are only limited *career progression* opportunities for them. Several also complained that their qualifications are not adequately recognised ('I've got qualifications too'). Explanations of their low turnover levels included their life stages and the current instability in the labour market.

Dimension 2: Earnings & Good Physical Environment

Both groups felt that their *earnings* are inequitable when compared with positions outside TAFE, and fail to recompense them for the hours worked or their work quality – 'I'm not paid for all the hours I work, evenings and weekends...education in Australia doesn't command the respect from the electorate that other trades do' (teachers). However, both groups agreed that intrinsic job factors are more important – '...not for the money...if I didn't love it, I'd leave...it is making a contribution that the community values'. Both groups were satisfied with the *physical environment* and workplace health and safety policies and systems, despite minor concerns about building maintenance.

Dimension 3: Skills & Discretion, Work Intensity & Good Social Environment

The teachers interviewed were generally satisfied with the importance and challenges of their *work* and *skills*, citing the interaction with students, the creativity associated with course design, supportive *training*, the *social* environment, and their high degree of *discretion* ('maybe too much autonomy') as the key features. Matters of concern were related to increases in class sizes, *work intensity* and the declining quality of students — together with a perceived lack of trust ('the whole TAFE sector is being performance-managed...set up to fail').

Dimension 4: Work-Life Balance & Work Scheduling

Flexibility in *work schedules* appears to be more available to teachers than administrators. Part-time/sessional teachers have less formal expectations, but all teachers report that they work on preparation for classes, marking and other duties at night and on weekends. Most are content with these conditions, and believe that they provide opportunities for *work-life balance*.

Summary: The main challenges were linked to the structural and funding changes in the sector impacting on job security and career opportunities. Another challenge was seen as the increased work intensity and growing administrative burden. While earnings were regarded as low when contrasted with jobs elsewhere, there was recognition of the high job satisfaction, good social environment and opportunities for skill development and discretion.

Case Study 7: AgedCareCo

Background:

ACC is located in a Melbourne suburb and offers both high care (70 rooms) and low care (30 rooms) services to its 88 current residents. It is an extra care multi-level facility, with single rooms and 'super-suites' for couples, providing state of the art amenities including a café, bar, private dining room, business centre and cinema, alongside its medical, nursing, and complementary care services. The latter includes speech therapy, physiotherapy, podiatry, massage and aromatherapy, music and beauty therapy. As a family-owned and operated for-profit institution with more than 50 years' experience, ACC prides itself on its 'first class individually-focused care, based on an intimate knowledge of each resident's personal requirements', for which it has won several national aged care awards including Employer of the Year, nominated by its staff. Its vision is to provide a benchmark facility 'as close as you can possibly get to providing five-star hotel services' within an aged care environment, according to its general manager. ACC has a significantly higher staff: resident ratio (1:7 cv. industry average 1:9) than many of its competitors and, in recent years has transitioned from a low care to high care service provider, challenging the capabilities and skills of staff.

Human resource management vision and strategies

With more than 100 'highly skilled and experienced' employees to care for 88 current residents, the executive nursing professionals are on call 24/7. The Personal Care Assistants (PCAs) are hired across a range of employment conditions including permanent part-time (90%) and casual (10%) workers from multiple nationalities (60 % non-English speaking). Staff range in age from 19 to 75 years in age and the average PCA hours are 20-30 hours per week. Employee turnover levels are reported to be relatively low for the industry, between 5-10% annually (HR/Quality Manager). ACC also has a number of volunteers who coordinate leisure/diversionary programs. There is no union representative at ACC. ACC management believes that its employees are '*empowered people with knowledge, skills, empathy, and a great understanding of ageing issues*' (ACC website), qualities which form the basis of its staff attraction and selection processes. It uses staggered annual performance reviews, regular staff and resident satisfaction surveys and an employee reward and recognition program which provides vouchers for helicopter tours and champagne lunches for high performers, complemented by a selective program which provides the best 6 staff annually with the opportunity to have lunch with the CEO.

Framework for the Investigation of Job Quality in the Workplace

Dimension 1: Job Prospects - Theme: Job Security

90% of its employees work on a permanent part-time basis, with the remainder as casuals. They intend to decrease the number of the latter, considering casuals to be less reliable (Manager). Due to the national shortage of PCAs, job security is not considered a big issue (Manager).

Recognition

A variety of formal recognition initiatives are utilised by ACC, including an Employee of the Quarter Award, retail vouchers, supervisory and public acknowledgement events. These are based on feedback from annual residential and staff survey data, together with the individual performance reviews, and occasional team leader or peer recommendations.

Career Progression

Typical of its sector, ACC has a relatively flat organisational structure, comprising functional managers, a few qualified nurses and administrative support staff, many PCAs, and a small

group of employees working in the kitchen and laundry. Accordingly, there are very limited opportunities for career progression at any level. Despite this, few participants appeared dissatisfied, and even fewer have attempted to complete higher qualifications which might provide career transitions to nursing or managerial positions.

Dimension 2: Extrinsic Job Quality

Earnings (Wages & Benefits)

Earnings in the aged care sector are generally quite low compared with other industries, especially given the high proportion of part-time positions that do not require qualifications above TAFE Certificate 111 or 1V. This is also the case at ACC – ‘food services assistants “don’t get paid much unfortunately” (Manager), with only a few PCAs receiving above-award wages if they are working longer hours or undertaking a nursing qualification (Director of Care).

Good Physical Environment

As an extra care service, ACC is a purpose-built facility with many more features than its competitors, including modern buildings, attractive resident rooms, two dining rooms, and a cinema, supported by all appropriate medical and nursing equipment and services – offering “silver service, fine dining” (Manager) and “lots of details that might not happen in other places” (Focus Group). All participants felt that it is a good place to work, for these reasons, and the majority were also satisfied with the level of workplace health and safety training and employee protection provided.

Dimension 3: Intrinsic Job Quality

Work Itself & Work Intensity

The two key issues raised here by almost all participants were the passion that they feel for resident care, and the increasing intensity of their workloads – “a very rewarding job, but very hard, hard hours, hard work” (Manager); “tough work...emotionally draining” (Manager) and “we are to the residents what the families wish they could be but are not able to be, and that’s the full-time carers” (Focus Group). Apart from the complex blend of physical (medical, hygiene) and emotional ‘some degree of compassion but also some degree of detachment’ – Manager) the skills and responsibilities demanded of staff there are also concerns about the likely impact of changing ratios of high care residents at ACC, and the increasing demands from both residents and their families

Skills, Autonomy & Training Access

One manager proposed that the level of PCA skills may need to be enhanced in the future, given the demands associated with a projected increase in the proportion of high-care residents at ACC and, as the TAFE Certificate 111 only comprises 180 hours of formal tuition supplemented by a one-day ‘buddy’ orientation. With respect to employee autonomy, most participants agreed that they had sufficient authority and decision-making to do their jobs, although this is dependent on job levels. Training access was not raised by any participants as a significant priority, as there is a comprehensive development schedule covering government-required regulations on a regular basis.

Good Social Environment

Almost all participants agreed that ACC has a good social environment, citing its positive family-based culture and teamwork as evidence – ‘good networks at all levels, and support for staff from team leaders’, ‘camaraderie at all levels’ (Focus Group). Most participants felt that they had harmonious relationships with their colleagues, with other teams, and especially with their supervisors.

Dimension 4: Working Time Quality

Work-Life Balance & Work Scheduling

Given the nature of aged care employment, few participants at ACC appear concerned about their working hours, shift patterns or flexible arrangements. There seems to be a broad acceptance that variability is an inherent feature of employment in this sector.

Summary of responses to Job Quality Framework

With respect to *Dimension 1: Job Prospects*, the majority of participants felt that their career progression and recognition of their performance was important to them, and that both are adequate in their workplace. Job security was also a key component of their job quality, but there was little concern about its assurance in the aged care sector as a whole, or in their workplace.

Whilst most of the participants felt that their salary and benefits (*Dimension 2: Extrinsic Job Quality*) are inadequate for the work undertaken, they were equally balanced with respect to its importance for job quality. The physical environment, including safety aspects, a pleasant work environment, and potential hazards, was recognised as important, but the majority were satisfied with these aspects at ACC.

Dimension 3: Intrinsic Job Quality was the key component discussed by all participants. Almost all considered that their work is meaningful and interesting, that their skills are crucial, and that they have adequate job autonomy. Their direct supervisors are generally regarded highly, they feel that ACC provides appropriate support in order to create a positive work environment, and that their social relationships are usually harmonious. There was less concern regarding the importance of ongoing training or consultation on policy or process issues. The main apprehension that participants had was with regard to the 'intensity of the work', primarily with respect to the projected future workload consequent on the transition towards more high care places at ACC.

Dimension 4: Working Time Quality. Whilst employee discretion and flexibility over scheduling, working hours, shift patterns and flexible work arrangements were raised by a minority of participants, they were seen as the norm in the aged care sector, and were not discussed as an area of significant concern.

Case Study 8: EnergyCo

Background

EnergyCo is a power generating company based in Queensland. It has 270 employees and is foreign owned. The plant operates over a 24-hour period 7 days per week, 365 days per year. Staff are employed under individual contracts (managerial and professional staff) and an enterprise agreement. EnergyCo is currently experiencing a difficult time due to a cyclical downturn and associated financial constraints being imposed on the company by the company's joint venture owners. This is impacting the company and many of the decisions the company needs to make in the face of these constraints. All interviewees were cognisant of this and mentioned how this was impacting morale and how this may also impact the quality of work into the future. There was a general unease and uncertainty about this and for those who had been with the company many years

HR Profile:

All 270 staff are located in Queensland. The employee policy statement is as follows: *We at EnergyCo seek to attract, develop, engage and retain the right people to support this business.* In addition to a nine day fortnight and attractive salary packages, staff are offered a *Medical Assistance Scheme; strong work and family balance; workforce and Tertiary Education Schemes and Attractive location and lifestyle options* (EnergyCo website). The site is unionised. The turnover rate as of July 2013 was 7% with a forecast for end 2013 of 6%. Around 90 per cent of the staff are male. Staff are represented across a range of occupational groups, including administrative, general skills, trades, non-trades and professionals. The age of the EnergyCo workforce ranges from 21 years to 68 years excluding apprentices/trainees. Many are in the 50-59 age group (n=122), and the second highest age group is the 40-49 year olds (n=71). The average age of full time and part time employees is 49 years. EnergyCo's approach to attracting, recruiting and retaining apprentices/trainees and engineering graduates is a stand out activity within the company, as is the significance of the 9 day fortnight for employees and their stated desire to have work life balance.

EnergyCo undertakes an Engagement Survey which they compare with previous surveys, making sure their weaknesses have strengthened and strengths remained the same. They also have high-involvement business planning process and key measures at the work group, department, and station level, that are communicated and continually talked about on a monthly basis. Every focus group member indicated that the remuneration was adequate but when compared to wages being offered in competing industries they were not as high. Nonetheless, none of the employees said they would trade the 9 day fortnight (every second Friday off) for any other conditions or increased pay. The majority indicated that all the other benefits, conditions, flexibility, levels of autonomy and the culture (community feel, friendly, being supportive) made up for any perceived pay deficits.

...this probably isn't the most high-paid organisation, but it's the quality of their work life I suppose makes the place, you know, and I think management's approach is we have our Strive Values we call it, that we look after our people, and that's very important because they can't afford big dollars to get people so they've got to make sure that the place is very, very good, have a good culture a very good management team [Manager].

Workplace Leadership, Management Style and Workforce Challenges

One of the managers indicated that EnergyCo is not an authoritarian dictatorial workplace but operate with a *"consultative high-involvement style of management" ... "that's another thing that the employees really enjoy, that there's that open and honest relationship between leaders and employees, and also the quality of the job I think, that's the other part is, you*

know, what we try to offer people is an opportunity to come to [EnergyCo] and increase their knowledge and their learning through work, so we try to give them some variety and some involvement in projects". A common sentiment from interviewees was the acknowledgement that the current General Manager had been instrumental in turning the culture and the company around when he arrived 5 years ago. During that time he established a culture and approach to management which has positively impacted on the quality of work. Every focus group participant and interviewee indicated that the company was a good place to work and none of them indicated that they wished to leave the organisation. When the turnover rate is contextualised in the geographic region where this company is based, it has greater significance due to competing heavy industries in the region offering much higher wages and who experience turnover rates of anywhere up to 30%. Although attraction and retention have not been an issue for the company (except with regard to some specific skill sets 18 months ago) the workforce is aging and this will begin to impact on the company over the next five years.

Summary of the Main Findings in relation to the quality work framework

Dimensions	Key findings	Influence on productivity/innovation
Dimension 1 Job Prospects	Job Security was the highest ranking dimension (along with Skills and Discretion- Dimension 3) perceived as positively affecting the quality of work in the business.	Job security was regarded highly in a region easily impacted by commodity prices & was also a source of attraction/retention. Turnover in this company was low.
Dimension 2 Extrinsic Job Quality	Earnings were ranked equal second as a key positive impact on the quality of work. A good physical environment was also ranked highly by several interviewees.	Earnings were ranked highly by the majority of interviewees - this was compared to other major employers in the region. The benefits offered in the other dimensions and the clean work environment offset any potential negative impacts.
Dimension 3 Intrinsic Job Quality	Skills and Discretion was the highest ranked dimension (along with Job Security-Dimension 1). Work itself and good social environment , were also ranked highly as positively impacting on the quality of work. This dimension was the most frequently rated positive dimension, with all but 2 of the 12 interviewees rating this dimension as important.	Having autonomy and discretion over one's work was seen as crucial for employee's satisfaction and work quality. This allows for innovation/the uptake of ideas towards improving productivity, contributing to meaningfulness and satisfaction related to work. Repeated references made to the friendly, supportive, community and family feel of the company.
Dimension 4 Working Time Quality	Work life balance/fit was identified as important in positively impacting on the quality of work ranking above Duration/Work scheduling	This dimension was overwhelmingly considered to be one of the major benefits of employment and job quality at this organisation. In particular the 9 day fortnight and hours which allowed for more quality time with family was a key attraction/retention factor.

Summary: As noted earlier EnergyCo is currently experiencing a difficult time due to a cyclical downturn and associated financial constraints and this is affecting perceptions of job security which was ranked as an important factor influencing job quality. Management are cognisant that they cannot compete with other companies in the area with regard to wages so they aim to provide good working conditions in other areas *“we have to look at providing other things like the working environment and conditions that attract people to our organisation. So we’re really trying to get a family balance, and having a good working culture where people can feel as though they are adding value to the business, and also getting some family-friendly balance with their responsibilities at home [Manager].*

The Dimension 3, intrinsic job quality factors, namely - skills, autonomy, the meaningfulness of work and a good social environment were all ranked highly (in that order) as influencing job quality by most participants in the case study. Participants discussed the need to have clear expectations of what they need to achieve, gain recognition for work that is done well, feel that they are contributing, valued and part of the community in the workplace. Autonomy was mentioned as helping employees to make a difference:

one of the key things that I noticed differently when I started here, was just being able to make changes - you can see where the improvement is needed, if you can see improvements and they’ll allow you to make improvements, I think that’s probably one of the key things that impact on productivity. The employee went on to say that if you are told “you have got to do it our way, it sort of de-motivates, so your productivity will go down. I think productivity and innovation probably go hand in hand, you know, if a worker is valued in their ideas then they’ll be more productive for you’.

This perspective was supported by a union representative who said *“I believe we have a fair bit of input in how our work is organised, how our workshop is arranged, how we conduct our work, being a wages and unionised site, I believe we have a fair bit of say about conditions. Obviously we don’t have total say and the company has their right to manage, and we understand that. We don’t agree with everything they say but I believe we’ve got a pretty happy balance at the moment.*

The ‘direct supervision’ factor was not ranked highly by most people at EnergyCo. However, there was recognition that the management culture was positive which may mean that this aspect was ‘taken for granted’ and was part of an effective workplace culture *“...if you hold a decent job I don’t think it needs to be micro managed, I think you need to be able to go about your own job within a certain framework, and be able to happily do it’ (employee).* Another interviewee commented that a common theme in the New Starter and Exit Survey is that EnergyCo employees are very friendly, helpful, and supportive. *“So when a new person comes in there are lots of people there to support them and to help them, and to answer any questions that they may have. They really feel as though they are part of a family”.*

Case Study 9: ConsultCo

Background: ConsultCo provides a range of professional and consulting services to clients to clients from a wide range of industries. The larger partnership employs around 6,000 people in 16 offices nationally and it is part of a global organisational structure. The Perth offices have around 500 employees and provide integrated services including economics, technology, media and telecommunications, financial and consultancy services. ConsultCo outperformed its key competitors through the Global Financial Crisis and has benefited from strong growth in the Asia Pacific region. The Perth office has been one of the fastest growing of the national offices in recent years, due in part to strong demand flowing from the Western Australian resources sector. 6 people were interviewed for this case study, two males and four females and all were full time, permanent staff. 3 were managers and 3 non-managers, 5 were less than 44 years and 1 less than 24 years of age. All had been with the Company for more than 1 year and 2 for more than 5 years, all were degree qualified.

HR Profile: ConsultCo's vision is "... to be the most inspiring firm to work with – for its people, its clients and its communities". It stresses innovation as key to its competitive edge and to creating value for its clients, citing seven key values in its organisational culture: empower and trust; recruit and retain the best; talk straight; continuously grow and improve; play to win – think globally; aim to be famous; have fun and celebrate.

ConsultCo has been listed in the top 15 of Australia's 'Best Places to Work', as an 'Employer of Choice for Women' each year from 2002-2012, and has been recognised for excellence for its innovation program. Commitment to the community is facilitated through staff engagement in a range of community services, including an annual Impact Day where staff participates in a full day of community services.

There is no union as employees work with their managers with respect to their performance and career development, with a high degree of transparency evident concerning expectations. The organisation has a relatively flat hierarchical structure based around local teams and considerable autonomy is delegated to them. In an attempt to allow employees to focus more on work involving problem solving and innovation, there has been an ongoing program involving outsourcing back-office and transactional work to Hyderabad in India.

Strategies for professional development include encouraging movement across different service lines to build expertise in various roles, including the opportunity to work overseas. The onus is placed on employees to manage their careers, supported by resources available via a learning portal 'My Growth and Development', which includes on-line courses, access to books, materials and Harvard provided leadership development training. The company also measures job quality through an annual employee survey and other regular initiatives.

Telecommuting is not supported by the company as a formal arrangement because of the perceived importance of interaction and communication although most interviewees stated that they do some work from home. To quote one manager: "Employees can work from home occasionally if necessary, but if they want to build a career they need to be at work". Flexibility in working hours is increasing, largely managed within teams or by agreement between the employee and their manager rather than through any formal flexitime system. Approximately one-fifth of employees at the Partner level now work part-time, however, it was acknowledged that lack of flexibility contributed to a lower representation of women at the more senior levels, despite the organisation's other efforts with regard to gender equality. Annual staff turnover was estimated to be 18% nationally and for the Perth office typically 5% higher. The high-performance environment and the fact that time spent with ConsultCo makes employees highly marketable outside the firm contribute to this.

Findings

Dimension 1: Job Prospects It was accepted that ConsultCo is a prestigious place to work and there are expectations that employees perform and develop. There is a development path and, if effort is expended, then they are rewarded. Managers indicated "we don't have

dead wood". Opportunities to work in other sections of the organisation, and particularly to work and gain experience overseas, were also seen as positive for career progression.

Job security "There's a fair sense of job security, even though the market is pretty depressed at the moment. People might feel that there is pressure to perform, but we haven't had redundancies."

be performance managed out, but we haven't had redundancies." (Partner)

Recognition "There's a real sense at ConsultCo that if you have a good idea, it doesn't matter if you're an employee or a partner, you're backed" (employee)

Career Progression "We have a 6 month career plan. That's where they say 'how you tracking now?'. This is what you want to achieve. The progression is clear ... you drive your own career plan. It's how much effort you put in." (employee)

Dimension 2: Extrinsic Job Quality It was clear that ConsultCo has an organisational culture constructed around intrinsic, rather than extrinsic motivation. Employees acknowledged that they could earn more by leaving the firm, notably by a move to a company within the resources sector, but their work would not be as interesting. The social and physical environment was one way the company compensates for this, with a focus on regular social gatherings seen as important to newer graduates. They also value the prestige associated with working for ConsultCo.

Earnings "It's the non-dollar remuneration and the non-tangible rewards. We won't compete with industry. We can't. It's well documented there's higher salaries out there." (Partner)

Good Physical Environment "Working in a pretty cool office environment is important, but then we're also consulting, so we're out working with a range of clients, so it doesn't really bother me" (Partner).

Dimension 3: Intrinsic Job Quality Employees discussed the value they derive from autonomy, the variety of work, being challenged, taking pride in performance, opportunities for training/advancement working in teams and with like-minded people. This included being part of the Company's community and charity projects.

Skills and Discretion "If you can work efficiently and work smarter, in general you can manage your own hours a bit better" (HR Manager)

Training Access "I find that the training that is provided to us is very valuable to our role, in our career planning they really look out for you. There is compulsory training to keep yourself abreast, which I find that very helpful." (employee)

Work Intensity "...is a double-edged sword. If your job isn't intense then you don't feel like you're getting anywhere, you're lacking or something's missing, but on the other hand if it's too intense then you're too stressed ... if you can find that middle ground it's perfect." (employee). "I think that stress isn't always a bad thing, we signed up to work in a stressful environment." (Partner)

Good Social Environment "I spent three of four years in industry and then came back. The reason I came back – it's probably a bit of a cliché, but it's about the people." (Partner) "In our exit interviews, people always say they are really going to miss the people and the working environment." (HR Manager)

Supervision & consultation "It's more the relationships and the team environment ... the people we work with ... is a big plus." (employee) "The flat hierarchical structure is definitely a huge impact for me. Being able to walk into a Partner's office is great, to be on the same level and to have that level of conversation and be taken seriously ... the opportunities for growth are hugely accelerated." (employee)

Organisational support “There’s a real sense that if you’ve got a good enough idea you’re backed and you’ll be listened to.” (employee). “If you do something well people are very happy to recognise it.” (HR Manager)

Dimension 4: Working Time Quality Some degree of autonomy is available in terms of the pace of work and how work is scheduled although working from home is not encouraged due to the emphasis on teamwork, communication and interaction as a source of innovation.

Work Life Balance/Fit “It’s not an hours thing ... It’s that flexibility. I work two half days because I’ve got kids ... then if I have to hop on the laptop then I’ll do that. It’s making sure individually you’ve got time to spend on the important things.” (Partner)

Duration/Work scheduling “we probably work more than most... it’s that elite environment where you’re expected to go over and above.” (Partner)

Summary of the Main Findings in relation to the quality work framework

Positive Factors	Negative Factors
Dimension 1: JOB PROSPECTS Recognition, Career Variety	Dimension 1: JOB PROSPECTS None
Dimension 2: EXTRINSIC JOB QUALITY Prestige, Social activities, Pleasant environment	Dimension 2: EXTRINSIC JOB QUALITY Lower earnings than elsewhere
Dimension 3: INTRINSIC JOB QUALITY Relationships, Challenging work/variety Team work/absence of hierarchy	Dimension 3: INTRINSIC JOB QUALITY Work intensity Stress
Dimension 4: WORKING TIME QUALITY Flexibility, Reciprocal/reward for commitment	Dimension 4: WORKING TIME QUALITY Weekend, overtime hours, Lack of flexibility

Summary: ConsultCo is a firm competing in the knowledge economy, where people and innovation is imperative for value adding. The firm’s strategy revolves around developing an environment that is conducive to employing people who are intrinsically motivated – who relish challenges, take pride and “have passion” in the value of the work they do, enjoy autonomy and working alongside similar people. Its position within a global organisation allows ConsultCo to offer opportunities for employee growth, learning and development. No interviewees mentioned issues with earnings and managers confirmed that they do not attempt to compete with other companies in terms of pay. However, despite the fact that the pay was lower than many employees could command with other firms, and there were high performance expectations that may compromise work life balance, employees readily admitted the working environment promoted higher productivity and encouraged them to perform at their best.

The challenging work, levels of autonomy, career advancement, teamwork and being associated with a prestigious organisation, provided employees with high levels of intrinsic job quality which clearly contributed to the encouragement of innovation and productivity. It was also confirmed that there is a commitment to non-discrimination, diversity and inclusion was genuine, that ‘comes from the top’.