

HSRIP REPORT

**AN EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF RETRENCHMENT AT MITSUBISHI
FOCUSSING ON AFFECTED WORKERS, THEIR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES:
IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMAN SERVICES POLICIES AND PRACTICES**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report presents the findings of Stage 1 of a longitudinal study into the health, housing and labour market impacts of job loss at Mitsubishi Motors Australia Limited (MMAL). The research has been supported by the Department of Health and the Department of Families and Communities through the Human Services Research and Innovation Program (HSRIP). Stage 1 of this research was wholly supported by HSRIP with the latter two stages supported by the Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Program with the Department of Housing (DOH) serving as the Industry Partner.

The research aims to understand how the loss of employment arising from the closure of Mitsubishi at Lonsdale, a significant manufacturing plant – and voluntary redundancies at Mitsubishi at Tonsley Park – affects the well-being of workers and their families. The research examines the processes of adjustment and change – health impacts, loss of job and possible loss of income – affecting workers and their families who have been made redundant or accepted voluntary redundancy packages.

In May 2004, Mitsubishi Motors Australia Limited (MMAL) announced the closure of its engine foundry at Lonsdale with approximately 700 involuntary redundancies, as well as 400 voluntary redundancies from its Tonsley Park assembly site. The need to shed jobs was announced in early May 2004, with some contract staff leaving the Lonsdale site at the end of June 2004, and progressive departures occurring from both sites on an on-going basis throughout 2005.

There are three Stages of data collection in this project overall. Stage 1 has involved both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The research incorporates a longitudinal research design with quantitative interviews undertaken with 373 respondents. Initial focus groups were held with workers from Mitsubishi who were about to face redundancy. This informed the development of the Stage 1 survey. The first stage of quantitative interviews was conducted via a face-to-face structured survey. Some qualitative data was also collected from these interviews through notes that interviewers made. A sub-set of 40 workers who had already completed the initial questionnaire was asked to take part in more detailed face-to-face interviews to provide greater qualitative data. These interviews allowed more nuanced and in-depth information to be gathered on the impact of job loss on health, housing, social-well being and labour market outcomes. Involvement in these interviews was based on random selection of interested participants in the full retrenched-worker group. Finally, comparison data was collected from a randomised sample of Adelaide households at the time of the Stage 1 survey. This data was used in particular in analysing the health status of respondents.

It is important to recognise that the Stage 1 results reflect the circumstances of workers who had either not left MMAL or had left MMAL relatively recently. The results are therefore preliminary and it is expected that if negative health, community and economic impacts are to arise, they will emerge over a longer period of time. It is also important to note that MMAL has been – in many ways – a preferred employer for workers in southern Adelaide. It has provided full-time, secure employment; it has had a focus on workplace safety, it has paid high wages relative to other manufacturing establishments in the region; and since 2004 it has provided a payment for involuntary redundancies of five weeks pay for every year of service up to 20 years and one week for every year after that. This level of redundancy payment is undeniably generous. Even those workers who took voluntary redundancy

packages from Mitsubishi left with three weeks pay for every year of service. The favourable working conditions at MMAL and the financial assistance provided to departing workers has clearly affected the attitudes of departing workers and their material circumstances post redundancy. The generous redundancy payout has clearly mitigated against some of the effects of redundancy.

Key findings from the research include:

Demographic Profile

- The participants in this study reflect the population of workers who exited MMAL in total. They are generally middle aged to older men, with limited formal education;
- The participants were largely of Anglo Celtic origin with two thirds Australia-born. The UK-born were the largest immigrant group;
- Most of the participants in the study were married or partnered men;

Employment and Labour Market Issues

- Most respondents to the survey believed they had good prospects for finding employment within the next six months;
- A significant number of respondents had secured employment by the time of the Stage 1 interview, however, many of those jobs were casual or short-term contract employment;
- Most workers expected to earn less in the future than they had earned with MMAL with median wages expected to fall from approximately \$35,000 per annum to \$25,000;
- Many respondents indicated that they intended to undertake further training in the near future. We would argue that a policy priority should be given to assisting displaced workers in achieving this goal;
- Approximately one-third of interviewees who had left MMAL were looking for work that was similar to their employment at MMAL. Half were looking for different types of work. Amongst those who had not left MMAL at the time of interview some 45 per cent were intending to seek similar work to their current job;
- Participants in the survey had a range of views about the services offered to them as part of their redundancy. They had a positive attitude to the resume writing course and the services offered by MMAL, and less positive attitudes towards some of the other services;
- A small group (30 cases) had established, or were planning to establish (a further 30 cases), their own businesses using the capital gained through the redundancy;
- Of the respondents who had left Mitsubishi at the time of their initial interview, 5.5 per cent reported that they were not working because of a disability. Of these, nine

reported that they were receiving the Disability Support Pension (DSP). One respondent was receiving unemployment benefits while four respondents reported receiving some other form of Government provided benefit, which we assume would be the Age Pension. We anticipate that a larger percentage of respondents will be receiving DSP by Stage 2 as they would by then have met the Centrelink time and process requirements;

Social Capital and Health

- MMAL was an important component of the social life of the men and women who worked at Lonsdale and Tonsley Park. Anecdotally, many former MMAL workers reported missing the comradeship of work and it should be a matter of concern that 18.5 per cent of Stage 1 respondents indicated they did not participate in formal social or group activities at all. Fully half of the respondents believed that the loss of employment at MMAL had affected their social life;
- With respect to health, the most significant finding appears to be the higher levels of mental health distress compared to a randomised sample of men in Adelaide. These levels suggest that those losing their jobs were finding the process stressful (although we do not have measures of mental health from the time before they were aware they were to be made redundant). Some of the workers were seeking help and this was reflected in a higher proportion of our respondents had seen a counsellor than for the control group;
- Older workers reported better mental health and it is reasonable to hypothesise that losing your job after age 60 is less traumatic than when one is younger and more likely to have heavier family and financial commitments. These workers were also likely to have worked longer at MMAL and therefore received larger financial settlements;
- The picture of lower levels of mental health for most interviewees was reinforced by the finding that these workers felt a lower sense of control and were less hopeful for the future than the random metropolitan Adelaide sample. The workers who reported their health being affected by their job loss also had lower mental health status;
- The data relating to social capital also indicate some concern in regard to health status. The Mitsubishi workers were much less trustful than their counterparts in the general Adelaide population of big business, government and people in general. A likely hypothesis is that the experience of redundancy had led to the particularly high levels of distrust in government and big business;
- While half of our respondents reported the experience having a negative impact on their life those interviewed were able to identify positive aspects of their job loss. Generally these were related to the loss of negative aspects of their job and having more time to do other things in their life;

Housing and Neighbourhood

- Home and home ownership was important for the respondents. Many of them had lived all their adult lives in the southern region of Adelaide, and while some believed they would need to relocate to find work, the majority did not believe residential

movement would be necessary. Some 160 respondents were mortgagors at the Stage 1 interview and 140 were planning to pay off all or part of their mortgage with their redundancy;

- The overwhelming majority of respondents were owner occupants and just seven households were in public housing. Some 40 respondents were in the private rental market. Many respondents used their payout to acquit all or part of their mortgage;
- An appreciable number of respondents reported that housing costs were a worry to them and some 60 respondents had sought assistance with their housing.

The Report makes a number of policy recommendations that overall emphasise the need to strengthen the community, build a stronger economy and provide additional counselling for workers affected by redundancy. It is noted that these measures are needed to enhance the health status of the workers and the region as a whole.

Specific actions could include:

- Organising events and activities that would be attractive to former MMAL workers. Examples would include family fun days, BBQs or picnics that mirror some aspects of the social functions MMAL used to provide. These events could be organised through local government agencies with funding from state government. These events could be used to make workers and their families aware of the services that are available and how to gain access to them;
- Working with relevant unions, community service providers NGOs and MMAL to encourage former workers to join relevant community groups, which in the case of older men could include ‘The Shed’ at Hackham West;
- Working with relevant unions and MMAL to encourage former workers to become volunteers in community groups and also to lend a hand with vocationally oriented education initiatives. This strategy would contribute to the priority goal within the South Australian Strategic Plan that relates to raising the level of volunteerism, as well as contribute to a more skilled workforce and potentially raising the health profile of workers;
- The need to boost existing programs that address health inequalities in the southern region of Adelaide. This could include bringing together health providers, community groups, NGOs and local government agencies through regional workshops to develop a regional response to community development. Such an initiative would allow key local government and regional organisations to examine how they address the long-term health implications of economic change in the southern region. The DOH could provide funding for a series of workshops on the theme of regional community development in the south;
- Developing a specific policy to address the community and health impacts of large scale redundancies. As noted before, while the MMAL job losses are a notable example of economic restructuring, other industries are also shedding labour in metropolitan and non-metropolitan South Australia. Since the closure of MMAL at Lonsdale several smaller manufacturing businesses such as Hills Industries (also at Lonsdale) and Tenneco have announced redundancies. The development of a policy or

‘action plan’ to address community and health issues in light of plant closures or other large-scale redundancies would make a positive contribution to health in this state;

- One of the apparent absences within our research is a focus on the wives/partners of the workers and there are good grounds for initiating this work;
- Offering on-going financial counselling and support to former MMAL workers and their families. There are already a number of non-government organisations in and around Adelaide that provide financial counselling and they could be funded to provide a number of consultations with former MMAL workers. If nothing else, this would provide ‘peace of mind’ to concerned persons;
- Offering life skills sessions where displaced workers can receive timely assistance with matters that aren’t solely of a financial nature but instead embrace workplace and living skills. Assistance could be provided with applying for jobs, preparing for interviews, literacy assistance, with help in dealing with financial issues, and with the challenge of making decisions in a labour market that has changed fundamentally since the workers joined MMAL;
- Providing on-going financial counselling to those individuals who have set up their own business, who have joint partnership or taken out a franchise. There are two issues to consider here:
 - first, many of those who have set up their own business report that they are working longer hours for less secure income when compared with their time with MMAL. Financial counselling may help their businesses become more successful and help the individuals achieve a healthy balance between work and other dimensions of life;
 - second, it is important to recognise that economic development planning for the southern region of Adelaide in the wake the MMAL job losses has emphasised small business formation (Southern Region Economic Development Blueprint 2006) and it is therefore critical to have policies in place that support individuals starting their own business;
- While extensive assistance was provided through the JobNetwork providers our respondents reported two main problems with these services. Firstly, some interviewees reported that they didn’t know what they could ask for from JobNetwork providers and subsequently found they had not received all the assistance they were entitled to. It appears that many workers relied on their section manager to provide information on the services available, with some section managers being extremely helpful and others either unaware or failing to properly inform workers about their entitlements. Information sessions held for all workers, to explicitly go through services that JobNetwork providers could offer would have assisted ex-MMAL workers in their dealings with the JobNetwork providers. Such information sessions should be compulsory and held before individuals have to choose their JobNetwork provider;
- Many of our respondents reported that the JobNetwork providers were unable to assist workers in their situation. All Mitsubishi workers facing redundancy were fast

tracked on to the Intensive Support Customised Assistance (ISCA) scheme as part of the Federal government funding for the Mitsubishi Labour Adjustment Package (LAP). This meant that Mitsubishi workers facing redundancy were entitled to the same assistance that long-term unemployed individuals receive. This was in many ways inappropriate as these were not unemployed individuals but rather skilled workers. Many respondents reported that the JobNetwork providers did not know how to deal with them, as they were used to dealing with unemployed and relatively unskilled individuals. Staff working from the JobNetwork providers with redundant Mitsubishi workers needed more training in how to deal with this category of skilled workers, as opposed to the type of clients they usually engage with. We recommend that the funding of LAPs, which have been used to assist both Mitsubishi and Holden workers made redundant in 2004 and 2005 be reviewed. This funding could perhaps be redirected to provide further training or re-skilling opportunities to redundant workers;

- Consideration could be given to using the southern region as a pilot when developing new programs that address health inequalities;
- Providing compulsory counselling sessions for redundant workers as part of the “exiting” process as a means of identifying individuals at risk. We also recommend that a programme be established specifically targeting those individuals identified as being at risk. This should bring together local community service providers, NGOs and counsellors. On-going assistance and counselling appointments should be made with the individuals at risk. The focus of these counselling sessions should be to determine how these workers might like to build social networks.
- It would be appropriate to anticipate an increased demand for government-provided health services in the southern region of Adelaide;
- Individuals facing redundancy could be encouraged to take employment opportunities in the Northern areas of Adelaide by offering a travel subsidy. This was a policy measure adopted by the Government in the UK to assist workers made redundant by the closure of the Rover plant at Longbridge. We believe such an incentive would be an appropriate policy response in these circumstances given rising petrol prices and the skills shortage faced by the state;
- Steps should be taken to assist displaced workers gain additional vocational training via:
 - Liaison with TAFE, universities and other relevant education providers to develop appropriate skills and training packages. This could include strategies aimed at marketing the courses to affected workers;
 - The development of an education and skills forum specifically focussed on the needs of displaced workers. While this could embrace workers in the south, it could also cover workers made redundant in other parts of Adelaide.
- Disability Support Pension (DSP) recipients should be encouraged to volunteer for community activities and to participate in the work of NGOs;

- The DOH should work with NGOs to identify paid work that would be suitable for DSP recipients;
- DOH should support health promotion activities that encourage people to take a positive view of their health and participate fully in society;
- Research needs to be undertaken on the impact of new types of support provided to workers at MMAL who have been made redundant more recently. The ‘personal development and community consultation’ consultants offered to this later wave of displaced workers may have a significant impact on mental health and psychological wellbeing. Put simply, DOH needs to know if this step improves the mental health of workers facing employment loss and whether this measure helps them move forward with their life;
- There needs to be a protocol developed for dealing with displaced workers whose mental health is at risk. This protocol needs to step beyond the conventional forms of service delivery and chart a new way of identifying individuals at risk. It then needs to help them improve their mental wellbeing. This could include appointing DOH staff to follow up and visit displaced workers who are perceived to be at risk.

Finally, the report notes the absence of comparable studies elsewhere in Australia and the importance of studies such as this in developing a sound evidence base in responding to employment loss.

ABSTRACT

This Report presents the Stage 1 findings of a longitudinal study into the health, housing and labour market impacts of employment loss in the automotive industry. The study aims to understand how the loss of employment arising from the closure of Mitsubishi at Lonsdale and voluntary redundancies at Mitsubishi at Tonsley Park has affected the well-being of workers and their families. The research examines the processes of adjustment and change – health impacts, loss of job and possible loss of income – for this group.

The Report discusses the outcomes of 373 Stage 1 quantitative interviews with displaced workers, and forty qualitative interviews with a sub-set drawn from the wider population of respondents. The Report shows that most of the respondents were Anglo Celtic males of middle to older age and that approximately half had worked at Mitsubishi for 20 years or more. Roughly half of those who had already left Mitsubishi at the time of their first interview had secured employment and most respondents did not anticipate difficulty in finding a job. However, interviewees expected to earn less post Mitsubishi and approximately forty per cent of those who had gained employment were on short-term contract or casual employment, where previously they were permanent full-time workers.

The Report finds that the respondents had a lower level of mental health than a comparison group drawn from metropolitan Adelaide and that older workers felt less distress than younger workers made redundant. Some 83 per cent of respondents were owner occupants and 140 interviewees used their redundancy payment to pay off all or part of their mortgage. Interviews with service providers did not find an appreciable increase in demand for assistance as a consequence of the job losses.

1. Introduction

This research investigates the health, housing and labour market impacts arising from the loss of employment in the automotive industry within the southern suburbs of Adelaide. The research aims to understand how the loss of employment arising from the closure of Mitsubishi at Lonsdale, a significant manufacturing plant – and voluntary redundancies at Mitsubishi at Tonsley Park – affects the well-being of workers and their families. The research examines the processes of adjustment and change – have been made redundant or accepted voluntary redundancy packages. Along the way, the research seeks to contribute to our understanding of contemporary social processes, the societal costs of employment loss and the efficacy of policy measures that address job shedding and labour market adjustment.

Economic restructuring is an inescapable and important feature of the Australian economy. Over the last two decades de-regulation of financial markets, the lowering of tariff barriers, technological change, globalisation and micro-economic reform have contributed to the reshaping of the Australian economic landscape (Beer, Maude and Pritchard 2003). Changes in economic policy have resulted in a more productive economy and the second longest period of economic growth in the nation's history. Some industries have grown as a result of the more globally-focussed economic environment, while others – and individual businesses – have declined. Moreover, while the total number of jobs in Australia has grown, many of the newly-created positions require skills and expertise not found in the industries shedding labour. Many less-skilled workers leaving industries in decline are therefore at risk of long-term unemployment or of leaving the paid workforce entirely. Their health and well-being are likely to suffer as a result. Current policies and programs may not adequately address the labour market difficulties confronting this group, and may not take account of wider dimensions of well-being, including the psychological strain of employment loss, health impacts, threats to housing security or pressures to move location.

MMAL has been confronted by the challenges of a global operating environment and in May 2004 announced the closure of its engine foundry at Lonsdale with approximately 700 involuntary redundancies, as well as 400 voluntary redundancies from its Tonsley Park assembly site. The need to shed jobs was announced in early May 2004, with some contract staff leaving the Lonsdale site at the end of June 2004, and progressive departures occurring from both sites on an on-going basis throughout 2005.

The loss of employment at Mitsubishi is likely to have a profound regional impact because it was a major employer in the southern suburbs of Adelaide and that region has already experienced the closure of the Port Stanvac Oil Refinery in 2002. Moreover, manufacturing employment growth in South Australia is concentrated in northern Adelaide, with a commuting time from the south of more than 80 minutes. In addition, the southern region of Adelaide is marked by lower household incomes and lower levels of educational attainment than national and state averages. The fact that there are few alternative employment opportunities available to retrenched workers will exacerbate the impact of the Mitsubishi job losses. The social, economic and health consequences of the job losses are likely to be considerable and it is these impacts that this research will illuminate.

This research project sets out to conduct a longitudinal questionnaire study of the housing, economic, labour market, health and social service impacts of large scale job losses. It does so in order to:

- track the changing effects of job loss over critical transition period;
- conduct detailed investigations with workers and their families;
- study the impact of job losses on the children of retrenched workers;
- assess the perceived impact of job losses on the southern area by service providers;
- better understand which local community networks and resources support retrenched workers; and, finally,
- draw out theoretical and policy issues that arise through this research.

The research has also attempted to understand the interactions between the various dimensions of personal well-being – tenure, employment status, physical health, psychological health and social supports – in order to better understand how employment shocks affect region-wide well-being.

Understanding the impact of plant closures on the affected workforce and on a region's well-being is an important issue both for the advancement of knowledge of Australian society and for the development of effective policy to support change. Mitsubishi is not the only major employer to shed jobs in the recent past: BHP reduced its Whyalla workforce by one-third in 1999 (and subsequently restructured into OneSteel); Fletcher Jones has effectively closed their manufacturing plant in Warnambool, Victoria; and Kodak shed 600 jobs from its Melbourne manufacturing facility in 2004. Plant closures and associated job losses are therefore a significant feature of contemporary Australian society, and one which needs to be better understood in order to inform policy development, public debate and social welfare responses.

There is limited literature on the impacts of plant closures in Australia despite a more solid evidence base internationally (Green and Leevs 2003; O'Connor 1999; Westin 1990). Job losses arising from the closure of a major manufacturing plant are likely to result in:

- higher levels of alcohol use and abuse amongst some workers made redundant (Dee 2001; Mattiason *et al.* 1990; Price, Choi and Vinokur 2002);
- higher levels of conflict and stress within households – including a greater risk of domestic violence; psychological distress, including the loss of sleep and significant erosion of self esteem (Bohle, Quinlan and Mayhew 2001; Dekker and Schuafeli 1995; Iverson and Sabroe 1988; Joelson and Wahlquist, 1987; Keefe *et al.* 2002; Mattiasson *et al* 1990);
- reduced lifetime earnings and a consequent reduction in resources to cope with other life emergencies (Hunter 2004; Webber and Weller 2000); and,
- increased propensity for family break-up and greater prospects for children to be placed at risk (Fallick 1996).

Longitudinal studies of redundancy have reported some physiological changes (Cobb 1974), increased rates of pensionable disability (Westin 1990), increased use of GP surgeries (Beale and Nethercott 1987), changes in rates of hospitalisation for some conditions (eg increased for coronary vascular disease but reduced for musculoskeletal problems) and accidents (Iversen and Sabroe 1988; Beale and Nethercott 1987). Low self esteem has been associated with unemployment (Winefield and Tiggemann 1985; Kasl

1982). Research suggests that positive psychological health facilitates re-employment following unemployment (Waters and Moore 2002).

Job losses associated with a plant closure are likely to have complex effects. For example, older workers made unemployed who are home owners are likely to leave the formal workforce, while younger workers and those who rent their homes are likely to remain in the paid labour force, even if they remain unemployed for a considerable period of time (Bridge *et al.* 2003a). There is a limited evidence base about which factors assist redundant workers in finding alternative employment and which factors increase the risk of long-term unemployment. Relatively little is known about the full impacts of plant closures in Australia despite their relative frequency. There is an absence of published literature on the closure of BHP at Newcastle. International studies are not directly relevant to Australia because of our unique social security system, the nature of the Australian workforce and the ways in which various dimensions of social policy – employment assistance, health provision, tenure *et cetera* – are organised and delivered. Research therefore needs to shed light on how national, local and regional factors shape the outcomes of mass retrenchments for individuals.

This research project has been funded by the South Australian Government's Department of Health and the Australian Research Council (ARC). The ARC contributed \$308,558 for Stages 2 and 3 of the study. The Department of Health contributed \$450,000 to this study, \$176,892 was for Stage 1 and was funded as part of HSRIP. It is important to recognise that this research report only refers on Stage 1 of the project. Stages 2 and 3 are still to be completed and will be reported on according to ARC guidelines.

2. Project Management

2.1 Functioning of the Project Advisory Group

The Advisory Group was established to provide strategic advice to the project. The group comprises senior members from

- Southern Adelaide Health Service;
- Inner Southern Community Health Service;
- Noarlunga Health Services;
- Noarlunga Healthy Cities;
- South Australian Housing Trust;
- Department for Families and Communities;
- Australian Manufacturing Workers Union;
- City of Mitcham (Manager of Community Services);
- City of Onkaparinga (Senior Manager);
- Uniting Care Wesley; DECS;
- Department of Trade and Economic Development;
- Office of the South; Southern Division of General Practice;
- Department of Health; Mitsubishi (Human Resources);
- SACOSS;
- SACHRU; and
- DFEEST Office for Employment.

The project Advisory Group has met on four occasions – 16 March 2005, 8 June 2005, 7 September 2005 and 15 March 2006. At the first meeting the role of the Advisory Group and the background of the project were outlined. An update on progress of the project was presented at the second meeting, followed by useful strategic advice, which was provided from the Advisory Group on further recruitment strategies. During the third meeting there was a focus on the role of community service providers and whether any increased demand on services had resulted from the redundancies at Mitsubishi. The community service providers have played an important part of the Advisory Group as a source of contacts and information into the region. It was reported to the Advisory Group that while there was the potential for more demand on services, it had not yet occurred given the large redundancy package that many workers had received upon leaving. Service providers reported that they were anticipating there could be a greater demand on their services during the next year or so.

On 15 March 2006 preliminary results of Stage 1 were reported to the Advisory Group.

2.2 Effectiveness of Collaborative Arrangements

There have been effective collaborative arrangements between Flinders University and the Department of Health. The Department of Health has representatives participating on the Advisory Group. Ms Heather Petty has attended Advisory Group meetings.

2.3 Project Plan and Timelines

The project plan and timetable is divided into three stages. HSRIP funding was for Stage 1 of this project only.

Stage 1 – before job loss

Face-to-face quantitative survey interviews with up to 400 permanent full-time workers experiencing job loss were conducted. In-depth qualitative interviews were undertaken with 40 of these workers. These interviews were carried out between March and November 2005. A comparison group survey with 250 respondents was undertaken as part of the Social Health Monitor to enable a comparison of the health of workers facing redundancy with that of the Adelaide metropolitan average. These interviews were conducted in September and October 2005. The children of retrenched workers were to be interviewed and these interviews were conducted in April 2006.

Interviews with 15 service providers were conducted during 2005.

Stage 2 – 6 months after Stage 1 interview

Survey interviews took place by telephone with 300 respondents.

Stage 3 – 18 months after Stage 1 interview

Survey interviews by telephone are proposed with 300 respondents and these will be followed with in-depth interviews with 40 respondents.

This project is longitudinal in design and is to be completed in three years. HSRIP funding was for Stage 1 of this project. Stages 2 and 3 are being funded through the ARC with the Department of Health as the industry partner. The later stages of the project will be reported on according to ARC guidelines. This current report describes Stage 1 of the project.

The first stage of the project was completed in December 2005 with 373 face-to-face interviews and 40 in-depth qualitative interviews conducted. These interviews took longer to complete than originally anticipated. This was largely because recruiting Mitsubishi workers for the study proved more difficult than originally anticipated mainly due to it commencing after the first wave of workers had already left Mitsubishi. While Mitsubishi assisted in an initial mail-out to workers, it took over four months to get a second mail-out. Other recruitment methods were used such as snowballing techniques which involved following up with contacts given by individuals already interviewed. This proved the most successful method of recruitment however it was a much slower method and process than originally anticipated. A press release on the project was circulated as another way of recruiting respondents. The press release resulted in a two page article in the *Southern Times Messenger* on 6 July 2005, a small article in the *Sunday Mail* on 17 July 2005 and a segment appearing in the Channel 9 news on 19 July 2005. While raising the profile of the study, this media attention did not result in any recruits.

Working with Mitsubishi during what has been a time of great uncertainty for them has been productive. We have developed and maintained good relationships with senior staff at Mitsubishi who have been genuinely interested and supportive of the research. However,

given the ongoing publicity surrounding Mitsubishi and the possibility of the closure of Tonsley Park, Mitsubishi have been sensitive about publicity resulting from this project. The project team addressed Mitsubishi's concerns about negative publicity and agreed to contact them regarding any possible media coverage. This helped build trust and co-operation with staff from Mitsubishi.

However, the delay in the original mail-out and then the second mail-out put the project behind schedule. Had the mail-outs occurred earlier, closer to the dates when workers were leaving Mitsubishi, significantly more workers would have been recruited into the study. Members of the project team did establish particularly good relationships with senior management at the Lonsdale plant who were very interested in the outcomes of the study. Staff from Flinders University presented some very early findings to these managers who organised for staff from the project to give presentations to workers on site at Lonsdale. In some cases the managers also allowed interviews to be conducted during work hours. The support from these managers for the study helped strengthen recruitment, but it was limited as many workers had already left the company by the time these recruitment sessions took place.

As part of Stage 1 a comparison group of 250 workers from similar companies, whose jobs were not under threat, were to be interviewed. The project team had intended to undertake these comparison interviews with Holden who had agreed to participate in the study. With the announcement of redundancies at Holden and the cancellation of their third shift Holden became an inappropriate comparison group. The comparison interviews instead took place through the Social Health Monitor. The Department of Health assisted with this process, ensuring that Flinders University was able to place additional questions into the survey. Respondents from the Social Health Monitor were matched with the profile of Mitsubishi workers interviewed. Respondents were also asked if their details could be passed on to staff at Flinders University so that follow-up interviews could be conducted by staff at Flinders.

There were 35 children of retrenched workers who have been interviewed. This is fewer than originally anticipated as we have found most retrenched workers have children who are over 18 years of age. While the results of the Stage 1 survey indicate that many of the respondents have children living with them, it is important to realise that the majority of these offspring are over the age we intended to focus on.

2.4 Project Staff Support

The project has had a full-time project officer appointed to manage and co-ordinate the day-to-day activities of the project and provide support to staff. The project officer, Dr Holli Thomas commenced the position on 18 April 2005. The project also has a 0.4 Administrative Assistant. Together these two positions have provided the necessary support for the progression of the project. These project support staff were particularly important in co-ordinating the work of a large research team with multiple concurrent tasks.

3. Method

Stage 1 of this research project involved both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

The research incorporates a longitudinal research design with quantitative interviews undertaken with 373 respondents. Initial focus groups were held with workers from Mitsubishi who were about to face redundancy. This informed the development of the Stage 1 survey.

The first wave of quantitative interviews was conducted via a face-to-face structured survey. Some qualitative data was also collected from these interviews through notes that interviewers made.

As a consequence of privacy legislation, MMAL was not able to supply the names and addresses of the exiting workers to the survey team. Instead the invitations to participate in the research were prepared at the university and cleared by the university Ethics Committee, as were the questionnaires and all other material used during the research. MMAL agreed to print labels with the relevant names and addresses on condition that the letters and reply paid envelopes were then taken to the Tonsley Plant and the labels affixed under the control of their staff. Mitsubishi staff also made available mailing facilities so that the filled envelopes could be sent out in bulk. However this meant that Flinders staff could only undertake the mail-out at a time convenient to MMAL and when their machines were free.

The invitation letter sent to exiting workers required them to initiate their participation in the survey. The cover letter explained the purpose of the research and stressed the anonymity of responses. However, the fact that workers who were already worried about their situation then received a letter from Flinders University asking them to participate in research did lead to some negative feedback. In addition it was clear that a number of people had already left the addresses supplied. We were informed that many workers did not supply new addresses to MMAL and material was frequently returned marked 'not at this address' even when workers were still employed.

Exiting or already redundant workers who wished to be involved in the research were asked to return a tear off slip in a pre paid envelope and when this was received they were contacted within a few days to arrange an interview. It was important for the interview team to make contact as quickly as possible in order to ensure that those willing to be involved knew their contribution was valued.

Initially this method produced a modest response from workers who had left MMAL, but there were many others who were still employed. Through the co-operation of MMAL we were able to recruit workers during MMAL's exit counselling sessions. This access was of considerable value as workers were able to be interviewed on site.

Workers were also recruited to the survey through snowballing techniques. In addition a press release was circulated as another way of recruiting participants for the study. It is important to note that some of the workers were surveyed while they were still working at Mitsubishi and were waiting to be 'exited'. This was a deliberate feature of the research design as we wanted to examine the expectations, attitudes and circumstances of those awaiting redundancy. Other respondents were interviewed after they had left Mitsubishi. The timing explains why not all sections of the survey are answered by all respondents as the

survey design had to distinguish between those who had already left Mitsubishi and those who were about to leave the company.

While the initial mail-out received a moderate response a decision was made to send a follow up invitation to participate. This took place when MMAL was able to supply addressed labels and access for research team members to fill envelopes with the material to be sent out. There were delays in undertaking this second mail-out and the response rate was therefore lower than had been anticipated.

A sub-set of 40 workers who had already completed the initial questionnaire was asked to take part in more detailed face-to-face interviews to provide greater qualitative data. These interviews allowed more nuanced and in-depth information to be gathered on the impact of job loss on health, housing, social-well being and labour market outcomes. Involvement in these interviews was based on random selection of interested participants in the fully retrenched worker group.

A comparison group of 250 workers from Holden, whose jobs were not under threat, were to be interviewed. Due to the announcement of redundancies at Holden comparison interviews were instead conducted through the Social Health Monitor. Flinders University had additional questions placed in the survey and asked respondents for permission for contact details to be passed on to Flinders University. This will allow staff on our research team to conduct follow-up interviews.

In interpreting the data it is important to realise that many people had either just left or were about to leave Mitsubishi and so they had not used many of the services available to them. The data collected in Stage 2 will therefore tell us more about this. Furthermore, because our study is a longitudinal research design, many of the effects of redundancy will not show up in Stage 1, but we anticipate that Stages 2 and 3 of the study will capture this. The research framework was designed so that Stage 1 interviews would provide a baseline for comparison with the findings from later stages.

Stage 1 of the research is an important step leading us towards being able to answer the following questions in Stages 2 and 3:

- What effect does involuntary retrenchment have on the mental and physical health of workers and their children?
- What characteristics of workers lead to greater resilience in response to retrenchment?
- How are housing careers affected by involuntary retrenchment?
- How does involuntary retrenchment affect the stability of tenure for public and private renters and home buyers/owners?
- How does the use and perception of housing change with the changed work circumstances, is home ownership a burden, a support or something else?
- What are the patterns of use of services for retrenched workers and their families?
- Was the health status of workers as they left employment an indicator of future re-employment and does the health impact of job loss differ across demographic variables?
- How do any new jobs compare (in wages and conditions) with their MMAL job?
- What job-finding strategies are effective for retrenched workers?
- Of retrenched workers who do find new jobs, what proportions find full-time employment and what proportion find themselves in precarious employment?

- What percentage of retrenched workers see their changed employment status as a chance to retrain and enter a new vocation or career?
- Which workers are able to find other jobs, what job-finding strategies are effective, how do any new jobs compare (in wages and conditions) with their MMAL job?
- What role do social networks play in retrenched workers' experience of job loss and future employability?
- What are children's experiences of their parents' changing employment conditions, with particular emphasis on relationships with family and peers; education; sport; leisure and holidays; current and future expectations and hopes about their own employment?
- What are the policy implications of the involuntary retrenchments?

4. Demographics

4.1 Population Characteristics of the Respondents

Some 373 workers participated in the Stage 1 survey. Of these 335 were men and 37 were women. This gender distribution reflects the predominantly male employment profile at MMAL, especially within the production facilities at Lonsdale. Amongst the respondents, 280 had already left MMAL and a further 92 were waiting to leave (Table 4.1). Of this number, 137 of the respondents (37 per cent) had left voluntarily with the remaining 156 workers 'exiting' as an involuntary redundancy. These data suggest that workers who took a voluntary redundancy were slightly over-represented amongst our participants and this may reflect differences in attitudes amongst the two groups. It would be reasonable to expect that those forced to leave MMAL would exhibit more animus to their former employer, and therefore be less willing to participate in this research.

Table 4.1: Have You Left Mitsubishi?

	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	280	75.1
No	92	24.7
Total	372	99.7
Missing	1	0.3
	373	100.0

As expected, the majority of workers participating in the Stage 1 survey were of middle to older age, with the age cohort 50 to 59 years the modal category, followed by those aged 40 to 49 years (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Age in Categories in 2006

	Frequency	Per cent
Less than 30 Years of Age	15	4.0
30 to 39 Years of Age	80	21.4
40 to 49 Years of Age	100	26.8
50 to 59 Years of Age	107	28.7
60 to 69 Years of Age	59	15.8
70 or More Years of Age	2	0.5
Total	363	97.3
Missing	10	2.7
	373	100.0

The elevated age profile of the study participants is also reflected in their period of service, with a median period of employment of around 20 years (Table 4.3). Some had worked at Mitsubishi for more than 40 years, with at least one respondent working for Chrysler before the Tonsley Park plant had been built. The elevated age profile of this group is why very few of households of former MMAL workers contained many children. Across the 373 respondents to the survey there were just 357 children or step children living in the households of the respondents. However, it is crucial to recognise that many are, in fact, adults who still live with their parents.

It is important to note that:

- Generally, MMAL was seen by the majority of workers to be a good employer that paid well and provided good conditions. This point is significant because workers tended to stay at MMAL for all or most of their working lives. In many instances whole families – brothers, sons, cousins et cetera – worked together on the production line;
- Many of the men commenced their working career with MMAL, often asking at the front gate for employment and staying at MMAL thereafter. A significant number of respondents had started work for Mitsubishi when in their late teens or early twenties;
- The length of employment at MMAL is reflected in both the anecdotal evidence provided by respondents about the strength of social networks at the plant and the quantitative data discussed elsewhere in this report.

By far the overwhelming majority of respondents to the Stage 1 survey were married at the time of interview, with a further eight per cent in a de facto relationship (Table 4.4). Approximately 10 per cent of respondents were divorced, separated or widowed at the time of interview, though it should be noted that many of the married persons may have been divorced previous to their current relationship.

Table 4.3: Period of Employment at Mitsubishi

	Frequency	Per cent
5 Years or less	12	3.2
6 to 10 Years	59	15.8
11 to 15 Years	59	15.8
16 to 20 Years	70	18.8
21 to 25 Years	23	6.2
26 to 30 Years	25	6.7
31 to 35 Years	20	5.4
36 to 40 Years	15	4.0
More than 40 Years	9	2.4
Total	292	78.3
Missing	81	21.7
	373	100.0

Table 4.4: Current Marital Status

	Frequency	Per cent
Single, Never Married	42	11.3
Married	258	69.2
De Facto/Partnered	29	7.8
Divorced	26	7.0
Separated but Not Divorced	13	3.5
Widowed	3	0.8
Total	371	99.5
Missing	2	0.5
	373	100.0

The overwhelming majority of the respondents are of Anglo Celtic origin (Table 4.5). Some 63 per cent of respondents were born in Australia and a further 22 per cent were born in the United Kingdom. Only 36 interviewees reported that they spoke a language other than English at home and just two people indicated that they were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.

Table 4.5: Country of Birth

	Frequency	Per cent
UK	83	22.3
Southern Europe	7	1.9
Northern Europe	11	3.0
South and East Asia	10	2.7
Central Europe	3	0.8
NZ and Australasia	7	1.9
Africa	3	0.9
South America	3	0.9
North America	2	0.6
Australia	235	63.0
Total	364	97.6
Missing	9	2.4
	373	100.0

The majority of respondents were middle income earners and came from middle income households (Tables 4.6 and 4.7). The median household income was \$52,000 to \$77,999 and the gap between this figure and median personal income is a reflection of the importance of the incomes of partners. Many of the interview respondents had partners in full-time or part-time work and their partner's income further complicates any decision to move to find work.

Table 4.6: Annual Personal Income by Category, Respondents

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent
Under \$15,600	11	2.9	3.0
\$15,601 to \$20,799	8	2.1	2.2
\$20,800 to \$25,999	4	1.1	1.1
\$26,000 to \$31,199	15	4.0	4.1
\$31,200 to \$36,399	33	8.8	9.0
\$36,400 to \$41,599	83	22.3	22.7
\$41,600 to \$51,999	84	22.5	23.0
\$52,000 to \$77,999	85	22.8	23.2
\$78,000 to \$103,999	26	7.0	7.1
\$104,000 to \$129,999	6	1.6	1.6
\$130,000 or more	11	2.9	3.0
Total	366	98.1	100.0
System	7	1.9	
	373	100.0	

Table 4.7: Annual Household Income by Category

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Under \$15,600	5	1.3	1.4
\$15,601 to \$20,799	4	1.1	1.1
\$20,800 to \$25,999	2	0.5	0.6
\$26,000 to \$31,199	2	0.5	0.6
\$31,200 to \$36,399	17	4.6	4.7
\$36,400 to \$41,599	48	12.9	13.3
\$41,600 to \$51,999	62	16.6	17.2
\$52,000 to \$77,999	102	27.3	28.3
\$78,000 to \$103,999	74	19.8	20.6
\$104,000 to \$129,999	26	7.0	7.2
\$130,000 or more	18	4.8	5.0
Total	360	96.5	100.0
System	13	3.5	
	373	100.0	

The participants in the Stage 1 survey are, on average, relatively unskilled by contemporary standards. Over one-third had not completed high school (Table 4.8) and a further 20 per cent had a basic trade certificate as their highest level of education. Only 11 per cent of respondents held a Bachelors degree or a postgraduate degree from a university. In large measure the nature of the skills set held by the workers who left MMAL reflects the nature of their work, with 160 of the 371 respondents production workers, with others occupied in basic trades – such as electricians (Tables 4.9 and 4.10). It is worth noting, however, that the population of respondents includes a small group of professional employees such as engineers and senior management.

Table 4.8: Highest Level of Education Completed

	Frequency	Per cent
No Formal Schooling	1	0.3
Left School Before the End of High School	136	36.5
Completed High School	53	14.2
Basic Trade Certificate	73	19.6
Advanced Trade Certificate	63	16.9
Bachelor Degree or Equivalent	35	9.4
Postgraduate Degree	11	2.9
Total	372	99.7
Missing	1	0.3
	373	100.0

Table 4.9: Job Title at Mitsubishi, Workers Not Left Mitsubishi at Time of Interview

	Frequency	Per cent
Engineering and Process Worker	5	6.3
Science Professionals	1	1.3
Building/Engineering Professionals	2	2.5
Sales and Marketing Professionals	1	1.3
Business and Information Professionals	3	3.8
Building/Engineering Associate Professionals	7	8.8
Business and Administrative Associate Professionals	1	1.3
Mechanical Engineering Tradespersons	12	15.0
Fabrication Engineering Tradespersons	1	1.3
Automotive Tradespersons	2	2.5
Secretaries and Personal Assistants	1	1.3
General Clerks	1	1.3
Material Recording and Dispatching Clerks	3	3.8
Mobile Plant Operators	3	3.8
Miscellaneous Intermediate Production and Transport Workers	2	2.5
Process Worker	34	42.6
Food Preparation Worker	1	1.3
Total	80	100.0

Table 4.10: Job Title at Mitsubishi, Workers Had Left Mitsubishi at Time of Interview

	Frequency	Per cent
Resource Manager	1	0.3
Engineering and Process Worker	12	4.1
Sales and Marketing Managers	4	1.4
Science Professionals	9	3.1
Building/Engineering Professionals	5	1.7
Accountants and Auditors	1	0.3
Sales and Marketing Professionals	1	0.3
Computing Professionals	3	1.0
Business and Information Professionals	13	4.5
Building/Engineering Associate Professionals	12	4.1
Business and Administrative Associate Professionals	1	0.3
Managing Supervisors	2	0.7
Mechanical Engineering Tradespersons	40	13.7
Fabrication Engineering Tradespersons	14	4.8
Automotive Tradespersons	10	3.4
Electrical and Electronic Tradespersons	3	1.0
Wood Tradespersons	1	0.3
Secretaries and Personal Assistants	2	0.7
General Clerks	3	1.0
Intermediate Numerical Clerks	1	0.3
Material Recording and Dispatching Clerks	8	2.7
Intermediate Sales and Related Workers	1	0.3
Mobile Plant Operators	24	8.2
Intermediate Stationary Plant Operators	1	0.3
Intermediate Textile Machine Operators	4	1.4
Miscellaneous Intermediate Machine Operators	3	1.0
Miscellaneous Intermediate Production and Transport Workers	7	2.4
Elementary Clerks	1	0.3
Process Worker	102	34.9
Food Preparation Worker	2	0.7
Total	292	100.0

5. Employment Issues

5.1 Introduction

This section examines the employment outcomes (at Stage 1 of the study) for MMAL employees who had either left employment at MMAL or were about to exit the company. In exploring the data presented below it is important to consider the complex pathways workers had followed, or had planned to follow, at the time of their Stage 1 interview:

- Some had formally retired;
- Some were unemployed but not yet in receipt of Jobsearch allowance;
- Some were on a disability pension or expected to qualify for such assistance in the near future;
- Some workers had found permanent employment, others had moved to casual or contract arrangements;
- Some workers had established their own business; and
- Some were formally unemployed.

It is likely that these circumstances will affect workers' responses to a range of questions, including their views on prospects for work and the use of employment related services.

As noted earlier in Table 4.1, 280 of the 373 workers interviewed in Stage 1 had exited MMAL, and the remaining workers were still at MMAL, in various stages of being exited.

5.2 Respondents Who Had Left Mitsubishi

Employment Status at Time of Stage 1

The employment status of those who had left MMAL is provided in Table 5.1. The table reveals that 51 per cent of workers had found paid employment *of some form*, while nearly one quarter of workers were unemployed at the time of their Stage 1 interview. Twelve per cent were either retired, studying full-time, or not looking for work. This indicates a considerable percentage of workers who had withdrawn from the labour market even at Stage 1. We anticipate these figures will rise by Stages 2 and 3.

Table 5.1: Employment Status at Stage 1 Survey

Employment Status	Per cent of Respondents
Self Employed	10.6
Working Full-time for Pay	30.5
Working Part-time for Pay	9.6
Unemployed, Looking for Work	22.3
Retired	7.2
Full-time Student	1.7
Household Duties, Not Looking for Work	3.1
Not Working Because of a Disability	5.5
Other	8.6
No. of Respondents (count)	292

While roughly half of workers appear to have found paid employment, Table 5.2 reveals that a third of workers in paid employment (excluding the self-employed) were employed on a casual basis only, and 15 per cent were employed on short-term fixed contracts.

Table 5.2: Form of Employment at Stage One Survey

Form of Employment	Per cent of Respondents
Permanent	43.5
Casual	36.2
Short-term contract less than one year	14.5
Medium-term contract one-three years	1.4
Long-term contract three-five years	1.4
Not currently employed	2.9
No. of respondents (count)	138

Hence, considerable caution needs to be exercised in interpreting the overall status of workers in paid employment. In particular the complexity of combined work arrangements should be noted. For example, when one respondent was asked what he was currently doing he replied:

All sorts of shit. Yeah. Do you know how hard it is to get a job?...One guy I'm working for is not in a very good financial position. I've drawn up a wages bill that's getting a bit out of hand and he can't pay me. So all sorts of promises and I'm looking to go somewhere else. I've been to a couple of places on a contract but only for a week at a time and there's nowhere else to go so I may as well go back there...

Another worker mirrored this complexity and ambiguity in patterns of employment since leaving MMAL:

I've had a few jobs since leaving Mitsubishi...they were part-time and contract...it took me three months to find a job, we had a contract at Walkers which we were led to believe could be permanent. After nine months of contract it faded out. I found another job six weeks later. I'm assuming that we'll be talking about permanency in February (2006). I'm assuming that because they sort of indicated three months' probation.

Table 5.1 revealed that nearly 11 per cent of respondents who had left MMAL were self-employed at the time of the Stage 1 survey. Table 5.12 indicates the type of self-employment that workers were involved in.

Of respondents not in paid work, just over one quarter were in receipt of unemployment benefits, while just under a quarter were receiving a disability benefit.

Job Search Activity

Of the workers who had left MMAL, 42 per cent were actively seeking employment. Of interest here is the breakdown of those seeking employment while in paid work, and those seeking employment while not in paid work. Further analysis reveals that the majority of workers actively seeking work while in paid employment were those employed under casual and short-term contract arrangements (63 per cent combined). This could be interpreted to suggest a sufficient level of dissatisfaction for workers employed under such work arrangements to warrant ongoing job search activities.

Fifty six per cent of workers not in paid work were actively seeking employment. Perhaps not surprisingly, of this group of respondents it was unemployed workers who indicated that they were actively seeking work (82 per cent).

Of the self-employed respondents, only one quarter indicated that they were continuing to actively seek other employment. It is not clear however if this job search activity was meant to supplement their self-employment or replace their existing self-employment situation.

Methods of Job Search Activity

Respondents were asked to indicate the type(s) of job search activity, both formal and informal, that they used and the frequency of their usage. Table 5.3 shows that while the most used formal job seeking means were Job Network providers and newspaper searches, those that did use Job Network providers did not do so regularly, while newspaper searches were more likely to be conducted daily or more than twice a week. The Internet was the most often used means of seeking employment with 26 per cent of respondents who used the internet as a job search tool doing so on a daily basis.

Table 5.3: Formal Job Search Methods and Level of Usage

	Job Network Per cent	Other Employment Agencies Per cent	Newspaper Searches Per cent	Internet Per cent	Other Per cent
Daily	5.9	4.3	17.5	25.8	12.5
Twice a week	10.8	6.5	36.9	24.7	9.4
Once a week	19.6	21.7	31.1	12.4	3.1
Not regularly used	54.9	32.6	7.8	14.4	21.9
Never used	8.8	34.8	6.8	22.7	53.1
No. of respondents	102	92	103	97	32

Table 5.4 reveals that few respondents actively used informal job search methods. The most used informal job seeking means were friends (70 per cent) followed by the use of networks with previous MMAL co-workers. It should be noted however that these informal means were not used on a regular basis.

Table 5.4: Informal Job Search Methods and Level of Usage

	Family Members Per cent	Friends Per cent	Previous MMAL co- workers	Other Per cent
Daily	3.2	0.00	1.0	5.3
Twice a week	3.2	10.0	6.3	7.9
Once a week	15.8	19.0	16.7	2.6
Not regularly used	24.2	41.0	30.2	18.4
Never used	53.7	30.0	45.8	65.8
No. of respondents	95	100	96	38

Expectations

Overall expectations of finding a job within the next six months were positive, possibly reflecting a perception of a buoyant labour market. Table 5.5 reveals that 63 per cent of all respondents thought they had a good or very good chance of finding a job, while less than 20 per cent thought they had poor or very poor chances.

Table 5.5: Chances of Finding a Job in the Next Six Months

	Per cent of Respondents
Very good	44.0
Good	19.3
Moderate	17.4
Poor	11.0
Very poor	8.3

Of respondents who were unemployed at the time of the Stage 1 survey, 59 per cent indicated their chances of finding employment in the ensuing six months were either good or very good, with 20 per cent feeling their chances were poor or very poor.

Similar Work or Other

Respondents were asked to indicate if they saw their changed employment relationship as an opportunity to embark on a different career, or whether they were seeking similar work to their role at MMAL. Table 5.6 shows that over half of those respondents who had left MMAL saw this as a chance to do something different in their working lives, while a third were seeking broadly similar work.

Table 5.6: Seeking Similar Work, or a Chance to do Something Different

	Per cent of Respondents
Seeking similar work	33.0
Looking at moving to a different type of job	52.4
Planning to establish own business	2.4
Planning to leave the workforce	3.9
Other	8.3

5.3 Respondents Who Had Not Left MMAL

Job Search Activity

Of the respondents who had not left MMAL at the time of the Stage 1 survey, only one-third were actively seeking work. Several workers commented that there was some uncertainty associated with the dates of their departure from MMAL, hence it is likely that many workers were postponing job search activity until they had more clarity as to their availability to commence new employment.

Expectations

As with workers who had left MMAL at the time of Stage 1, workers still employed by MMAL exhibited fairly positive expectations of finding a job within the next six months, and again this possible reflects a perception of a buoyant labour market. Table 5.7 reveals that 77 per cent of respondents still at MMAL thought they had a good or very good chance of finding a job, while only six per cent thought they had very poor chances.

Table 5.7: Chances of Finding a Job in the Next Six Months

	Per cent of Respondents
Very Good	50.0
Good	26.5
Moderate	17.6
Very poor	5.9

Methods of Job Search Activity

In this section we explore the methods of job search activity for the group of workers still employed at MMAL.

Table 5.8 indicates that newspaper searches were the most used and most frequently used formal means to seek employment, followed by internet search activity.

Table 5.8: Formal Job Search Methods and Level of Usage

	Job Network Per cent	Other Employment Agencies Per cent	Newspaper Searches Per cent	Internet Per cent	Other Per cent
Daily	0.0	0.0	7.4	4.2	12.5
Twice a week	0.0	5.6	29.6	25.0	25.0
Once a week	8.7	16.7	51.9	33.3	0.0
Not regularly used	69.6	27.8	7.4	8.3	50.0
Never used	21.7	50.0	3.7	29.2	12.5
No. of respondents	23	18	27	24	8

Table 5.9 identifies informal methods of job search activity, however, the small cell values should be taken into account here, with not many of workers still at MMAL engaging in informal job search activity. Nevertheless, there is some slight evidence to indicate the friends and previous co-workers from MMAL were being used as potential means to secure future employment.

Table 5.9: Informal Job Search Methods and Level of Usage

	Family Members Per cent	Friends Per cent	Previous MMAL co- workers Per cent	Other Per cent
Daily	4.2	3.8	8.3	12.5
Twice a week	-	-	4.2	-
Once a week	12.5	26.9	8.3	12.5
Not regularly used	33.3	46.2	29.2	37.5
Never used	50.0	23.1	50.0	37.5
No. of respondents	24	26	24	8

Seeking Similar Work or Other

As with respondents who had left MMAL, workers still at MMAL were asked to indicate if they saw their changed employment relationship as an opportunity to embark on a different career, or whether they were seeking similar work to their role at MMAL. Table 5.10 shows a different pattern to that exhibited by the exited MMAL workers. Forty six per cent of workers still employed at MMAL were seeking similar work (compared with 33 per cent of those who had left) while only 35 per cent saw this as a chance to do something different in their working lives (compared with 53 per cent of respondents who had exited MMAL). At this stage of the study, one can only speculate on the differences in this case between the two groups.

Table 5.10: Seeking Similar Work, or a Chance to do Something Different

	Per cent of Respondents
Seeking similar work	45.8
Looking at moving to a different type of job	34.7
Planning to establish own business	5.6
Planning to leave the workforce	4.2
Other	9.7

5.4 All Respondents

All respondents (ie those who had left MMAL and those still at MMAL at the time of the Stage 1 survey) were asked to indicate their expectation of future income compared with the income they received at MMAL. They were also asked questions related to the minimum weekly wage they would be willing to work for, as well as their intentions for future training, and the usefulness of the assistance they were given. These issues are now explored.

Expectation of Future Income

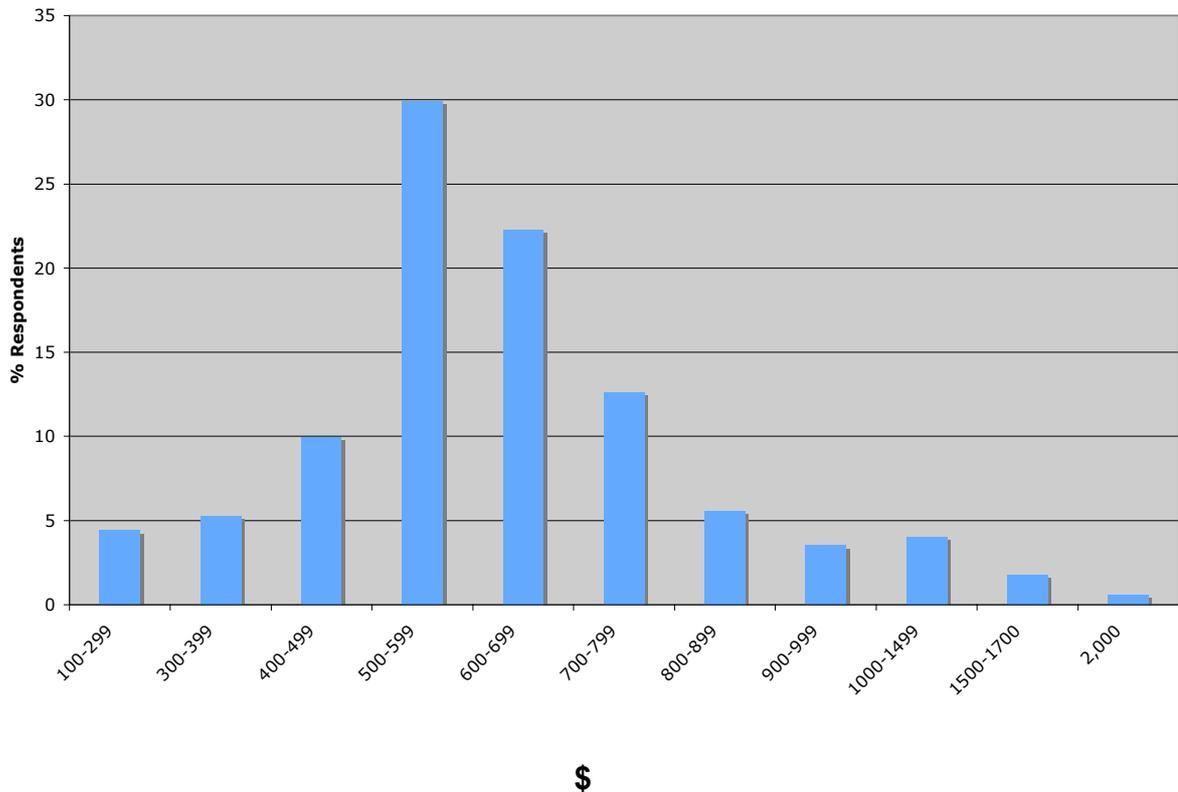
While all respondents had indicated a certain level of optimism about the chances of securing employment in the next six months (see Tables 5.6 and 5.8) , this optimism was not repeated in the expectation of future income compared to that provided by MMAL. Table 5.11 shows that nearly three quarters of respondents expected a drop in income, with only seven per cent expected to match their MMAL income and 13 per cent expecting an increase.

Table 5.11: Expectation of Future Income Relative to Income from MMAL

	Per cent Respondents
Less than at MMAL	72.8
The same as at MMAL	7.3
More than at MMAL	13.0
Don't know	6.8

Figure 5.1 indicates that most workers would be willing to work for around \$500.00 per week, an amount which is less than the \$35,000 per annum most production workers reported while working at MMAL. An important issue here is that even if all workers find employment in the manufacturing sector, regional incomes will fall as individuals earn less for the same quantum of labour. This has potential implications for future economic growth and the demand for services. Nevertheless, \$25,000 per annum appears to be the industry standard for work of this nature at this point in time. Of those respondents who expected to earn more than at MMAL, 16 per cent were more likely to have advanced trade qualifications, 20 per cent held a Bachelor degree or equivalent and 18 per cent held a postgraduate degree.

Figure 5.1: Amount (\$) Willing to Work For



Plans for Future Training

Fifty-nine per cent of all respondents indicated that they had plans for further training which may assist their future employment. However, only five respondents reported that they were full-time students, which suggests that the level of formal retraining amongst this group is relatively low. Respondents who currently held a tertiary qualification were more likely to have plans for further training (70 per cent with a Bachelor degree and 73 per cent with a postgraduate qualification), followed by those who had left school before the end of high school (62 per cent). There is likely to be a role for government intervention in this area, with a clear VET demand for those workers who had not completed high school but who intended to pursue job-related training. For example, one respondent (aged 49 years old) with very little formal schooling clearly indicated a willingness to undergo further job related training:

I haven't had any paid work since leaving Mitsubishi. Since two weeks after I left Mitsubishi I've been studying full-time, Computer Power, I'm trying to get an IT qualification to try and get a job in IT. I wanted to start studying straight away. I just thought the sooner I get out and get some qualifications and get back in the workforce probably the better.

Self Employment

Over ten per cent of respondents indicated that they had become self-employed and a similar percentage of those waiting to be made redundant reported that they expected to start their own business. Table 5.12 indicates that of the 30 individuals who had already established their own business, 22 had established a business in their own right, five had entered a partnership or business with a family member, one had become a franchisee and two had entered other arrangements.

Table 5.12: Type of Self Employment Arrangement (n = 30)

Type of Self Employment	Per cent of Respondents (in Self Employment)
Own business	73.3
Business/Partnership with family	16.7
A Franchise	3.3
Other	6.6

While we are aware of a number of different businesses that people entered – such as a bakery, a butchers shop, an electrical business and office services – many of those who started their own businesses were skilled workers such as electricians who became established as sub-contractors. For example, one respondent explained what had enabled him to establish his own business

Yeah I run an installation company. As soon as I heard we were closing down I started to think well what am I going to do with myself and come up with heaps of ideas and this one just grew slowly... I'm an electrician by trade...and the guy I was speaking to owns this business here, the AGL business so we've now started another business that piggy backs on this one...Whatever's sold in this shop, my company installs.

Qualitative evidence suggests that self-employment was seen to offer workers a range of benefits, including greater freedom in the selection of work and in dealing with a need to relocate. For example, one self-employed person responded to questions about pressures to move out of the region along the following lines

Yeah, I probably would, but then being self-employed I don't have to move because I'm on the move every day. I travel but it's a bit of a hypothetical one because it depends what you're doing. If someone like BMW said to me come to Sydney and we'll pay for you and you can do all our show cars and you'd travel around the world and do our show cars, I'd say yeah, probably I would. I mean if Mitsubishi did the same with me and that's what I wanted to do with them.

Another respondent expressed the greater freedom and sense of control self-employment had given him

The best things are I suppose that I can make the decisions. I can put the direction in where I was governed before... I've got my own destiny, I can point this business wherever I want to take it.

Self-employment, however, was seen to also have costs. Some reported higher levels of stress as they strove to build their business, while others who bought into existing enterprises found they had to deal with additional pressures such as staff management, book keeping and general business matters. For example, one respondent reported

I'm finding it hard, it's a lot of hours... I work more hours.... I spend probably about ten hours here most days.... I'm trying to do everything, trying to do a lot of things and I think as the business gets big enough to stand on its own two feet I can start offloading some of that to somebody else. I could probably get a clerk in or a secretary or something to try and take some of the workload away from me, so I can build the business. That's the hardest part at the moment, because I just don't have the time to grow it....you've got all that running the business side of things and the accountancy stuff and the workcover and the superannuation and banking. Lots of stuff.

Some of the self-employed respondents also reported a significant drop in income. These respondents were hopeful that as they built their business their income would grow. However the qualitative data revealed the stress that a decrease in income and security was having on self-employed respondents. One respondent expressed these sentiments about how life had become financially more stressful since leaving Mitsubishi

Yeah I was on a pretty good wicket [at MMAL], I'd worked my way up progressively over time and got to a situation where I had a company car and a decent package with superannuation and all that. And you come and run your own business, you can't afford to have all that. Although I do have a company car still, because I need that for deliveries, but the wage dropped about \$30,000. I just couldn't afford to pay myself that sort of money. But I'm hoping as time progresses as the business grows big enough, I'll get back to that, but I just know....I'm a bit worrying at night. I sit at home and I think, because I've got employees, I've got four employees, I have to make sure there's enough work so I can pay these guys, because these guys have got families and all that, so you sort of do worry a little bit about that.

Disability Support Pension

One of the questions respondents to the survey were asked dealt with their current employment status. This question was only asked of respondents who had already left Mitsubishi, ie 280 people. Of the respondents who had left Mitsubishi at the time of their initial interview, 5.5 per cent reported that they were not working because of a disability. Fifteen of these respondents were male and one female. Of these, nine (56.3%) reported that they were receiving the Disability Support Pension (DSP). One respondent was receiving unemployment benefits while four respondents reported receiving some other form of Government provided benefit, which we assume would be the Age Pension. We anticipate that a larger percentage of respondents will be receiving DSP by Stage 2 as they would by then have met the Centrelink time and process requirements. At present to qualify for DSP because of an illness, injury or disability you must be:

- Aged 16 or over and under the Age Pension age
- Be assessed as not being able to work full-time for at least two years
- Income and asset tested

In some cases it may be that the large redundancy payout these respondents received led to a delay in them being able to qualify for DSP. Furthermore, we anticipate that a significant

number of those men still working at Mitsubishi at the time of being interviewed, will stop working because of a disability after leaving MMAL and possibly go on to receive DSP. While Stage 2 is not completed, those surveys that have been undertaken demonstrate that an increased number of respondents have gone on to receive the DSP since leaving MMAL. Many individuals when interviewed at the time of Stage 1 were either still working at Mitsubishi, had left work but were about to embark on a long holiday, or were still trying to resolve workcover issues with MMAL which made them ineligible to receive DSP. One respondent who was not working because of a disability reported that while he was not currently receiving DSP he anticipated that he would be in the near future

I'm still on income protection from Workcover with Mitsubishi, but that runs out 1st of May 2006, so I might have to go to the Disability Support Pension then.

Another respondent who reported in Stage 1 that they were not working because of a disability stated that they were not receiving DSP because they were waiting for Centrelink assessment. When interviewed for Stage 2 this respondent had gone on to receive a DSP.

A further reason that we anticipate an increase in the number of respondents going on to receive DSP benefits is that the profile of retrenched MMAL workers closely fits the distinct profile of DSP recipients. First, older industrial areas with lower rates of economic growth such as Newcastle, Wollongong or Adelaide exhibit higher DSP recipient rates (Argyrous and Neal 2001, Cass, Gibson and Tito 1988). Second, older people are more likely to become DSP recipients. Between 1995 and 2000, 70 per cent of women and 70 per cent of men who became DSP recipients were aged over 40 years of age (Chalmers and Siminski 2003). Of our respondents not working because of a disability, 93.3 percent were over 40 years of age. We therefore anticipate that Stages 2 and 3 of our study will show an increased percentage of respondents who have been unable to remain in the labour market and go on to receive DSP.

Of the 16 respondents not working because of a disability, none were actively seeking employment. In addition 62.5 per cent of these respondents did not use any Government/Job Network assistance or any State or local government assistance. The qualitative data further illustrates how these individuals seem to have fallen through the cracks of government services and assistance. One respondent, when asked if he had been assigned a Job Network provider responded

My wife left me about two years ago and to be honest I've had a very, very difficult time in the sense of, I might have received that yes, I might have but because I've had a lot of depression, I've had a lot of decisions to make, my children have left home and it's been a whole change for me and I've got to recreate myself I guess in some way but it's been a very, very tough road. I've got stuff there, I've got appointments but my mind's not really with it sort of thing and I forget appointments.... It was hard for me to pay a bill.

The same respondent also reported having suicidal thoughts and had planned his suicide. He was seeing a GP but had not sought any other health or professional counselling services. While 62.5 per cent of those respondents not working because of a disability reported that they had seen a GP more than usual, and 37.5 percent had been a hospital in-patient more than usual, none of these respondents had used a self-help or support group and only one respondent had used a private counsellor.

Those individuals not working because of a disability also appear to be more socially isolated with 37.5 per cent participating in no group activities. Furthermore while 75 per cent were married or in de facto partnerships, 18.8 per cent were divorced, or separated but not divorced. This should be compared to the full number of those interviewed as part of this study, where only 10.5 per cent of respondents were divorced or separated. The qualitative data further supports the point that these respondents were far more socially isolated and less likely to use either government or health services. One respondent reported that since leaving Mitsubishi his wife and children had left him and all moved interstate. He lived alone and admitted that he was grappling with bad back pain as well as depression. Despite admitting that he was not coping he reported that he did not want to visit his GP as he felt all that would happen is he would be forced on to medication:

My health hasn't been good. I've let myself go basically because the disappointment of my wife going as well. You'd look at things, oh I better do that, and then you'd sort of walk in and this is how you are, this is depression, you look at it and say what's the point, what's the point, just let it go... You just can't be bothered and I really should eat more. When my wife left I was drinking loads of wine as an escape... From experience you go to the GP and say well how are you feeling ... and I'm saying well not too good, oh why's that, well I've had a lot of trouble with my back and then I appreciate their understanding right but well do you need any medication sort of thing, it gets to that, and really it's not going to solve anything. It's sort of like going back on the old drug trap again and I don't want to do that because it didn't get me anywhere. Matter of fact it probably did more harm than good actually. If I really had to see my GP I'd definitely go for sure but at the moment I'll wear what I have to wear and try and deal with it.

It is of concern that these individuals who are in need of support to help manage both their physical and mental health, are not receiving the assistance they require. This is a difficult issue because most of these respondents have chosen not to use the government and health services available to them. However there are various measures that could be undertaken to ensure that these individuals do not slip through the cracks. This will be elaborated on in the policy recommendations section.

In the May 2005 budget, the Australian Government announced the new *Welfare to Work* arrangements. The main change will be that applicants will only receive the DSP after 2006 if they are assessed as being incapable of working 15 hours of work a week. If DSP applicants are assessed as being able to work 15-29 hours per week their benefits will be paid through the Newstart unemployment benefit system and they will be obliged to seek part-time work. Such individuals will receive approximately \$40 a week less under the Newstart benefits. The Australian Government argues that new 15 hour work test and Job Network services will result in a significant proportion of DSP applicants being diverted to the Newstart benefits and consequently finding part-time paid employment. This could have implications for a considerable number of respondents in our research group.

This section of the Report has shown that the majority of former MMAL workers are older men who have worked with the company for a considerable time. Many have received good packages upon leaving Mitsubishi. They are an Anglo-Celtic group, with two-thirds born in Australia. Most are optimistic about their prospects for employment into the future but recognise they may need to accept lower wages. In many ways this group and their experiences are typical of broader scale changes occurring in Australian labour markets since the mid 1980s, with a decline of full-time employment, job scarcity for older males and an increasing reliance on casual and contract work. These economic and demographic circumstances establish the context within which the health and community service outcome of MMAL workers are framed and this is discussed in the next section.

6. Social Capital and Health

6.1 Introduction

This section of the report has been prepared by the health group of the multi-disciplinary team working on the Mitsubishi project. It describes the early findings that relate to health and patterns of social capital. Not surprisingly a number of studies have found that job insecurity and/or redundancy have an adverse impact on health, especially mental health (Bohle, Quinlan and Mayhew 2001; Dekker and Schuafeli 1995; Ferrie *et al.* 1998; Ferrie 2001; Iverson and Sabroe 1988; Joelson and Wahlquist 1987; Keefe *et al.* 2002; Mattiasson *et al.* 1990; Polanyi *et al.* 2004; Wichert 2002). In this study we have set out to discover if that is the case with the workers from the MMAL plant and to examine the possible reasons why some workers fare better than others. Part of this quest is to determine whether individuals' patterns of social capital (conceived of as levels of trust, social network and community activity) play a role in protecting workers from the adverse consequences of job loss. There is some evidence that people with higher levels of social capital have better mental health status (Almedom 2005; Baum *et al.* 1999; Ziersch *et al.* 2005; Ziersch, 2005) and physical health status (Baum *et al.* 1999; Kawachi *et al.* 1997) and this is the reason for our decision to link social capital and health in this study. There is a range of explanations for the positive influence that social capital can have on health including that the presence of social capital can boost self esteem, provide social support, help people to access better resources, and act as a buffer against stressful life events (Campbell and Wood 1999; Woolcock and Narayan 2000).

In this section we describe the levels of social capital of interviewees and their self-reported health status by various socio-economic characteristics using two SF-12 summary scores, the Physical Component Summary (PCS) and Mental Component Summary (MCS) and the General Health Questionnaire which is an additional measure of mental health status. We also present a comparison of the levels of trust, health status and sense of control between the Mitsubishi workers and a metropolitan Adelaide sample of men in a similar age group. The low number of females in the Mitsubishi sample means the sections of the report which provide comparisons only include males.

Most of the data presented are those data that can be quantified. We have also included responses to open-ended questions in the questionnaires. The analysis does not, however, include the results from the in-depth interviews that were conducted with a sub-sample of 40 of respondents.

6.2 Social Capital

Group Activities

More than 80 per cent of respondents had participated in community groups/organisations activities on more than one occasion. Figure 6.1 shows the involvement of the respondents in the nine group activities. Sporting and recreation groups were the most popular, with more than half the respondents (52%) having taken part in these activities. The second most frequent group activity that people were involved in was social clubs, with 26 per cent of respondents actively involved. And the third was involvement in children, parenting or related social groups (19%). The next three activities were unions or professional groups (14.5%), religious or spiritual groups/organisations (12.3%), and other clubs (12.3%).

Figure 6.1: Group Activities in Which Mitsubishi Respondents Were Involved in the Past Year

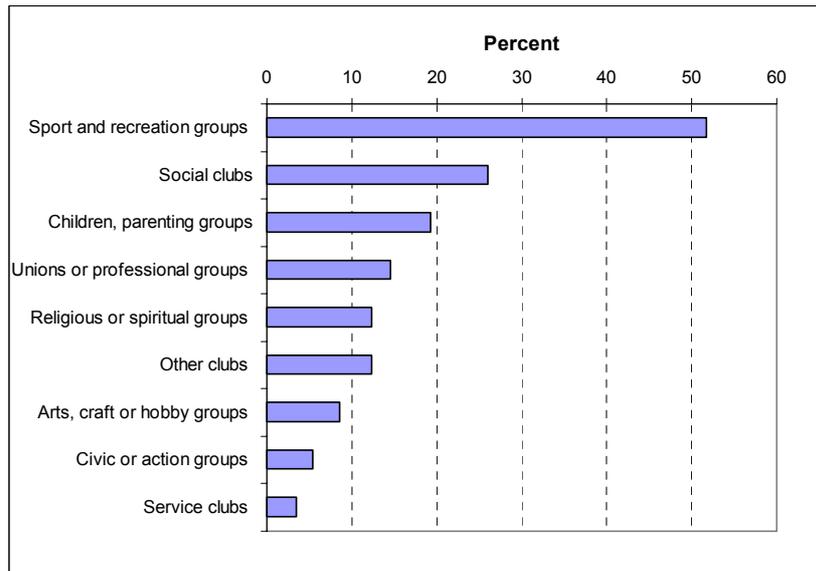
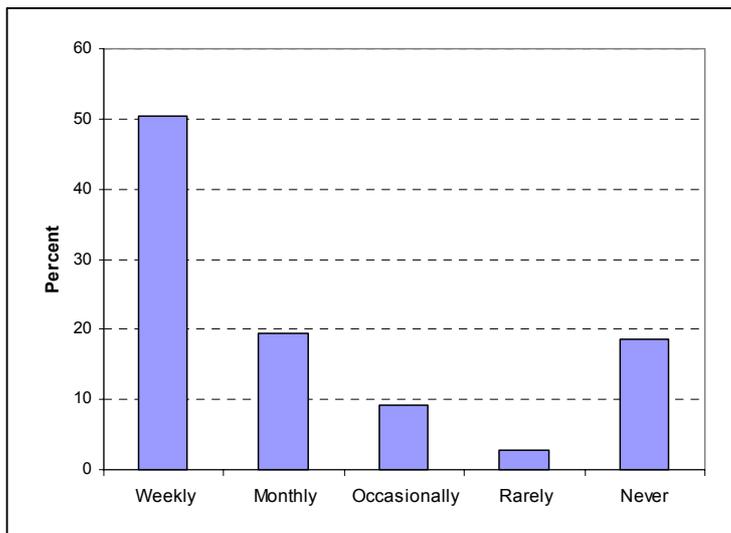


Figure 6.2: Regularity of Mitsubishi Respondents' Involvement in Group Activities in the Past Year



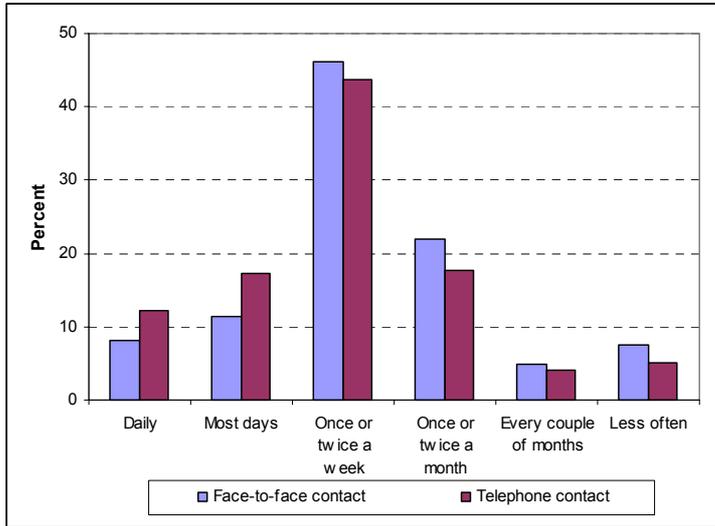
About half the respondents were involved in group activities on a weekly basis, and another 20 per cent on a monthly basis. While the majority of respondents were involved with community groups/organisations, it is worth noting that a little more than one fifth had never, or rarely, participated in any group activities. In addition, nearly 10 per cent took part in group activities only occasionally (Figure 6.2).

Informal Socialising

The survey measured the regularity of respondents' informal socialising by asking them how often they had contact with their relatives and friends, either on a face-to-face basis or by

telephone. The answers were arranged on a six-point scale, ranging from one which represented ‘every day’, to six which represented ‘less often’ (less often than every couple of months).

Figure 6.3: Regularity of Mitsubishi Respondents’ Face-to-Face and Telephone Contact With Relatives



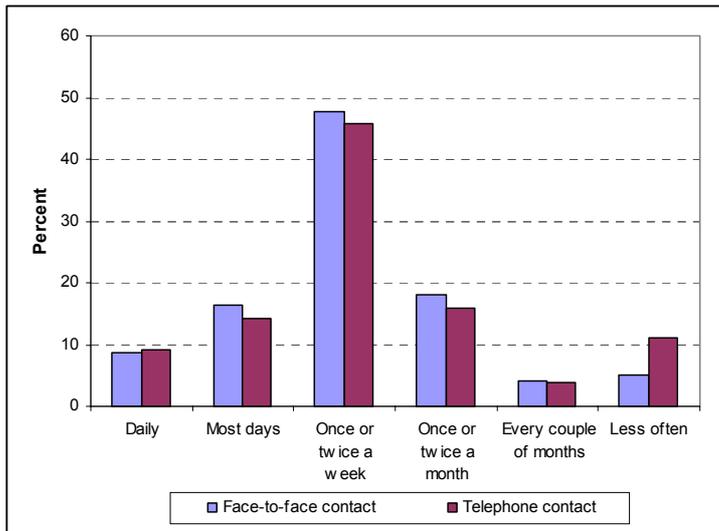
Contact with relatives

Figure 6.3 shows regularity of face-to-face or telephone contact with relatives who did not live with the respondents. The majority of respondents had both face-to-face and telephone contact with relatives at least once or twice a week, or more often. The more frequent contact (daily or most days) was made by telephone rather than face-to-face (19.5% vs 29.5%).

Contact with friends

Figure 6.4 shows the regularity of face-to face or telephone contact with friends. Similarly to the contact with relatives, the majority of respondents also kept contact with their friends at least once or twice a month, or more often. Nonetheless, of those having contact on most days, a slightly higher proportion had contact face-to-face rather than by phone, although the proportions were almost equal for contacts on a daily basis.

Figure 6.4: Regularity of Mitsubishi Respondents’ Face-to-Face and Telephone Contacts With Friends



Relevance of Mitsubishi to social networks

Group membership through work at Mitsubishi

The survey suggested that to some extent respondents' social participation was associated with their work at Mitsubishi. Of those who participated in group activities, which was the majority of respondents, one-third reported that some of the groups in which they were involved were related to the workplace. Nearly 30 per cent reported that they were also involved in other regular or social group activities at or through work.

Figure 6.5 shows the proportion of respondents whose participation in group activities was related to their workplace, and how long they had worked at Mitsubishi. There was a slight difference between respondents by the number of years they had worked at Mitsubishi, with the highest proportion (37%) in the middle group who had worked there for between 11 and 20 years.

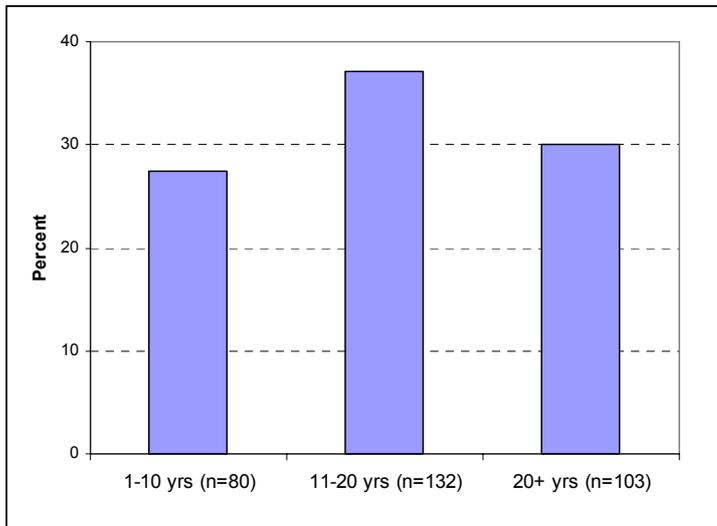
However respondents reported that most contact they had with fellow workers at Mitsubishi was not through formal group activities but rather more informal activities such as having a few drinks at the local pub after work. In the qualitative interviews respondents were asked what they liked most about their job at Mitsubishi, many made reference to the people they worked with and the close team environment and the sense of community and family that they felt towards fellow work mates at Mitsubishi. Typical comments were

The people would have to be the best. I made some good friends and there was a lot of good people there and still are there. Social aspect was very good.

The company of the people that you're going to work with, you spend more time with those people in there than what you do with your own family. So I think it was the friendships, the mates....and I think that's something that you miss because being able to intermingle with those people after you left.

It was like being part of an extended family really. Being a shift worker meant I saw more of my co-workers than I did of my family. Also no longer see so much of my co-workers outside of work socially.

Figure 6.5: Proportion of Mitsubishi Respondents Reporting Group Activities Related to the Workplace, by Years Worked at Mitsubishi



Knowing people through work at Mitsubishi

Respondents were asked to what extent people they knew in social and group activities were from or through work at Mitsubishi. About 15 per cent of respondents reported that all or most of the people they knew were from or through their work at Mitsubishi. Another 16 per cent reported that about half the people they knew were from or through work at Mitsubishi.

Figure 6.6 shows the extent to which people whom the respondents knew were from or through their work at Mitsubishi, by how many years they themselves had worked at Mitsubishi. Compared with those who had worked at Mitsubishi for less than 10 years, the proportion of people known from or through Mitsubishi was much higher for those who had worked there for more than 10 years, and in particular for those who had worked for 11 to 20 years.

The qualitative data further illustrated just how important the social networks at Mitsubishi were to respondents and the extent to which respondents were missing this contact. One respondent expressed that

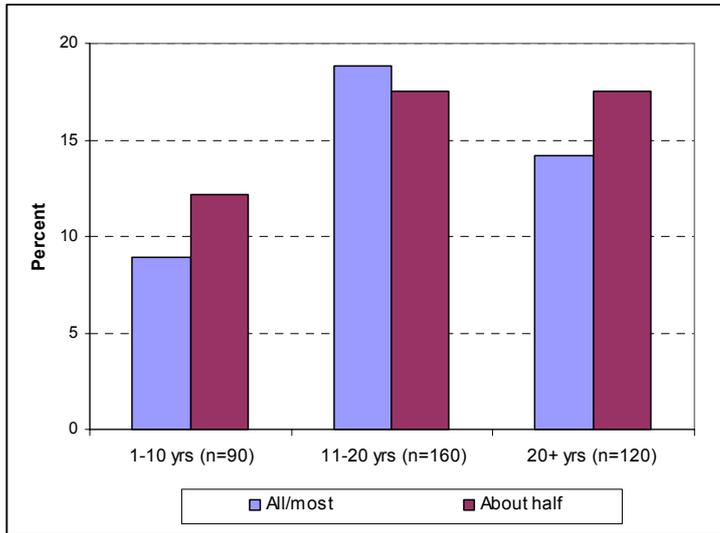
It's the people that I miss the most about MMAL. I really miss all the chats, smokos, jokes and friends from work. In a way it is like leaving your family – it is sad. I have lost contact with a lot of people from work.

When asked what they would miss most about working at Mitsubishi almost all respondents simply stated 'the people'. Respondents were also asked if they went through a grieving process after leaving Mitsubishi and many stated they did, mostly because of the loss of contact with friends they had seen on a daily basis. One respondent explained his sense of grief

when you're sitting around doing nothing and you start thinking about something that you used to do or something will happen and oh yeah that relates me back to something that happened in there [Mitsubishi].... I'm a Crows supporter, when the Crows beat Port Power a bloke said to me he said what do you think. I said I'm bloody disappointed. He said why's that. I said well I'm retired, I said I can't go around and get stuck into all the

Power supporters at work, and that's the type of thing that there's always something that you can relate back to there.

Figure 6.6: Proportion of Mitsubishi Respondents Reporting That All/Most or About Half the People They Knew Were From or Through Their Workplace, by Years Worked at Mitsubishi



Effect of changing job circumstance on social life

There were 222 respondents who described how changes at MMAL had effected their social and group activities by adding to their tick in the box response (breakdown of responses in Table 6.1).

Table 6.1: Effect on Social Activities (Open-ended Responses)

Response	Number of Respondents
Fewer social activities	153 (31 due to financial pressures; 14 had moved house)
New life/job positive effect	52
New job/life negative effect	18
No change	8

Of the comments 153 were about having less contact with friends and colleagues at MMAL. This was mainly due to the closure of the various social clubs, loss of day-to-day contact and people taking up other jobs or moving out of the district. When social groups continued to meet it was often to discuss the job loss situation and to provide support. Typical comments were:

Seems like we spend more time with work mates than partner at home. These work relationships are important and will be missed.

Working there for 15 years meant I had built up a large group of friends who socialised regularly. We would go to each other's houses, fix cars together, help each other build sheds etc. This has virtually ceased since I left. I work shift work which also interferes with socialising.

You don't see them anymore, everyone has different work commitments, different times. If you needed a hand from a friend you could call on someone, now you can't.

Because a lot of the guys are still not settled and you don't feel comfortable going around for a BBQ when you have a job and they don't. I don't have the regular contact any more. You don't miss the place but you miss the guys.

Financial barriers to social activities were mentioned by 31 of these people – they now had to be more careful about spending on non-essentials.

I don't want to go out and spend money – I'm watching my pennies, I'm worried about money, you don't know when you'll have another job.

More careful with money, tend not to go as much.

Fifty-two respondents stated that their new life or new job made it easier to take part in social activities. Mostly this was because they now had more time and/or they were working different shifts as these comments indicate.

I have more time to engage in social activities.

Social life has improved now because I don't work afternoon shift anymore.

Before spent almost all time with MMAL people, but now feel a whole new world opened up.

For 18 people their new life or new job had a negative impact on socialising due to lack of time or shift work.

Definitely – because I have to work overtime on Saturdays – I can't play sport. I also can't do sport during the week due to work.

Change of shift from afternoon to day shift and can't go fishing during the day any more and only fish now and again on weekends.

Effect of changing job circumstances on family life

Next, respondents were asked about the effect on their family life (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2: Effect on Family Life (Open-ended Responses)

	Effect	Number of Respondents
Positive effects	More time with family	57
	Other positive effects	23

Negative effects	Stress\worry	49
	Financial stress	53
	Less time	15
	Marital breakdown	14

Positive effects on family life were reported by 80 people with comments such as:

For the better. Not much stress now. A very stressful situation at MMAL, especially the last three years with so much speculation about the jobs, too much pressure on everybody.

For the better. Wasn't too happy towards the end of my time at MMAL due to the ongoing uncertainty that had been going on there for years.

Mostly the positive effect was due to being at home more and having more opportunity to take part in family life as these remarks illustrate:

In a positive way, because it's nice for my kids to see me a bit more relaxed, it's given me a bit more time, my children like having me around and I can do more for them.

The kids see me more now because I used to be on afternoon shift – overall it's had a positive effect – more time with the family.

We spend more time together - I'm looking forward to it – I'm going to fix up the house, get the garden going, install rain water tanks, run some chooks, spend some more time with the grandkids.

Negative impacts were described by 131 respondents. Forty-nine talked about the stress and worry that their job loss had brought to themselves and their family and made comments such as:

Coming home grumpy and snappy, people's attitudes at work have been very negative. Its been tough on my wife and she worries as well.

Kids wondering whether dad will be re-employed and what is going to happen down the track. Wife worried about my future employment prospects as well.

It was causing a lot of instability, I was agitated, tense, anxious, I was concerned about maintaining my income, you didn't want to fail my family and myself.

A further 53 said there were financial implications for the family – having to plan spending more carefully and being uncertain of the future. Some people were concerned about their ability to support their children through school and university and expressed it thus:

Financially, have had to rethink plans they had for future and retirement. Less money has also effected what they can do socially.

... financially not earning as much – my salary pays for the kids' education and music lessons.

Fifteen people reported now having less time with family – this was due to the demands of a new job, longer travel times, changes in shifts or moving to a new area.

Because I'm working longer hours now I don't see the kids as much. Lost every second Friday off, used to knock off 3.30, now I finish at 7 pm and I have to travel longer ... takes 1 hr 15 min each way.

For 14 respondents there had been marital breakdown or severe relationship problems typified by this comment:

Since leaving MMAL there is a lot more conflict in the relationship – we fight a lot now and the tension lasts for days. Have almost split up twice this year.

Help and Assistance

Number of people available for help

The survey asked respondents how many people would be available for help if they wanted to talk about personal problems or needed help making an important decision. About 5 per cent of respondents reported having no one available for such help; 37 per cent reported having one or two people who could offer help, and another 32 per cent reported three to four people available. More than one quarter of respondents reported that they could seek help from five or more people.

Having called on people for help

The majority of respondents had at least one person available for help and did seek such help when they had problems. Fifty four per cent of respondents reported that they had called on people for help since their work situation changed.

Table 6.3: Source of Help Received (Open-ended Responses)

Source of Help	Number of Respondents
Did not specify	73
Friends	75
Family	66
Neighbours	3
Professional	35
Work manager	3

Respondents were asked to describe an example of help seeking. A large number of respondents did not specify the source of the help they had received (Table 6.3). Of those that did, friends and family were most likely to be asked. Approximately 35 respondents described accessing professional help, mostly in financial counselling.

Table 6.4: Type of Help Sought

Type of Help	Number of Respondents
Work advice	75
Financial advice – 25 paid	61
Practical help – house, lifts	57
Personal/decisions – wife, close family	28
Borrowing money – until payment	15

The examples mostly described seeking advice about new work, financial advice and practical help. Work contacts and advice was often from previous colleagues at MMAL or other family and friends. The following are examples of the types of help received.

Spoken to a friend a lot who has their own business about how to manage that.

I have been speaking to friends about jobs and networking with friends about what was available.

All our friends have been really helpful with advice and helping with resume and covering letter etc.

Nephew helped me out with setting up my lawn mowing business as he has been doing the same thing for 15 years.

Sister has helped me looking for a job and sending applications with the computer.

Speaking to my boss and co-workers about writing job applications and addressing selection criteria.

Some 25 persons had sought financial advice had sought this from a professional (Table 6.4), others had spoken to a friend or family member who was qualified in some way.

Family helped with financial counselling (someone in our family works in that area) and some monetary assistance.

Practical help was mostly in home or car maintenance, or lifts.

Mate helped set up machines for self employment at home.

Had to get a drain put in after heavy rains so friend helped dig a trench.

Asked a friend to help me with a repair I needed to do on my car.

I have had friends take me shopping, here and there, I've lost my licence.

A smaller number of respondents described talking about personal decisions – this was usually with a partner or close family member – and 15 had borrowed money – again this was usually from family

Consulted family and friends re decisions about marriage break up and selling home.

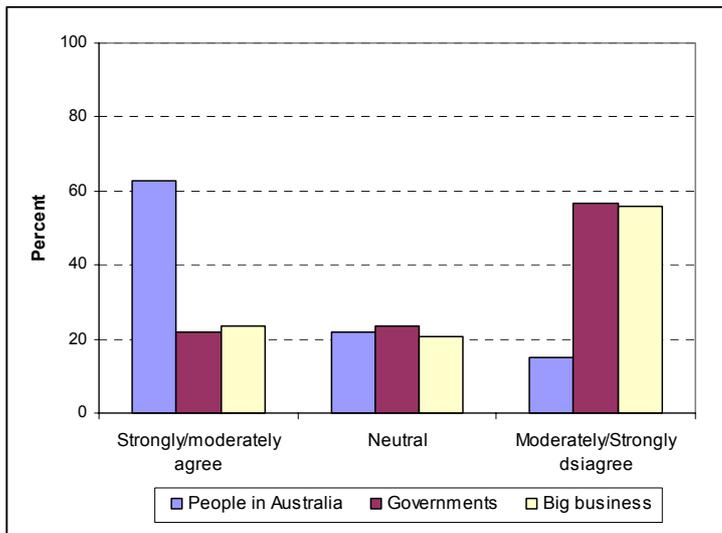
Parents helped out a couple of times having to lend money to pay bills.

Levels of Trust

In the survey respondents were asked their perceptions in relation to generalised trust in three areas. The statements presented were: 'Generally speaking, people in Australia can be trusted', 'Generally speaking, you can trust governments', and 'Generally speaking, you can trust big business'. Perceptions were rated on a 5-choice response scale, ranging from 1 'strongly agree' to 5 'strongly disagree', with 3 being 'neutral'.

Figure 6.7 shows the responses in each category. In general, Mitsubishi respondents were more likely to trust people in Australia than they were to trust governments or big business. Sixty three per cent of respondents chose to strongly/moderately agree that, generally speaking, people in Australia could be trusted, and only 15 per cent chose to moderately/strongly disagree with this. In contrast, only 20 per cent of respondents strongly/moderately agreed that governments and big business could be trusted, and about 55 per cent moderately/strongly disagreed.

Figure 6.7: Responses of Mitsubishi Respondents to Statement that, Generally Speaking, You Can Trust People in Australia, Governments and Big Business



An SA state-wide Health Monitor survey was conducted at the same time as the survey of redundant workers at Mitsubishi. The same questions about levels of trust were asked in the two surveys. Figures 6.8 and Figure 6.9 compare the proportions of male respondents in the Mitsubishi sample and those in metropolitan Adelaide reporting that they strongly/moderately agreed or disagreed with the three statements of trust (comparisons are not made for females, due to the small sample size of only 37 females at Mitsubishi). The figures show that male respondents in metropolitan Adelaide recorded much higher levels of trust on all three aspects, with one quarter more respondents in metropolitan Adelaide being highly trustful of people in Australia and of governments, and one fifth being more highly trustful of big business. By contrast, more of the Mitsubishi respondents showed distrust on these three aspects, and they were especially distrustful of governments. Compared with governments and big business, far fewer respondents both in metropolitan Adelaide and Mitsubishi showed distrust of people in Australia in general (8% in metropolitan Adelaide vs. 16% in Mitsubishi) than they did of governments and big business.

Figure 6.8: Comparison of Strong/Moderate Agreement With the Three Statements on Levels of Trust Between Male Respondents in Mitsubishi and Metropolitan Adelaide

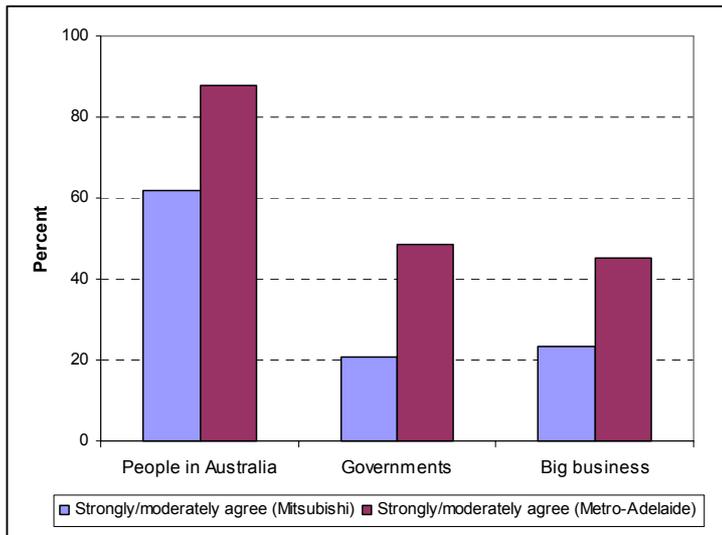
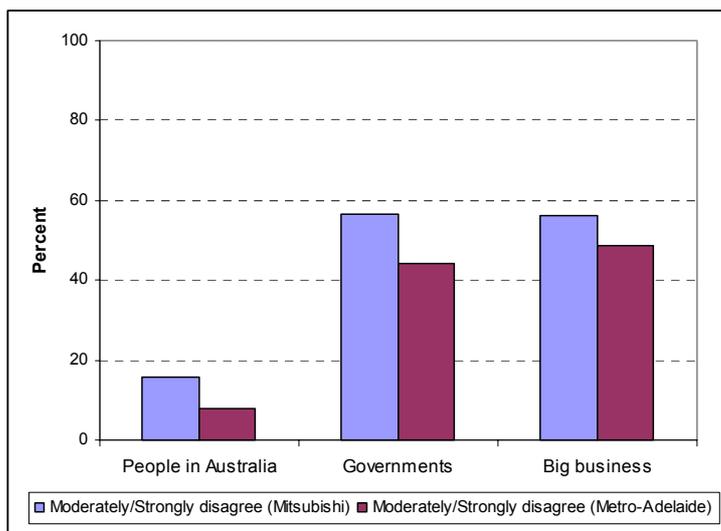


Figure 6.9: Comparison of Strong/Moderate Disagreement With the Three Statements on Levels of Trust Between Male Respondents in Mitsubishi and Metropolitan Adelaide



Health Status

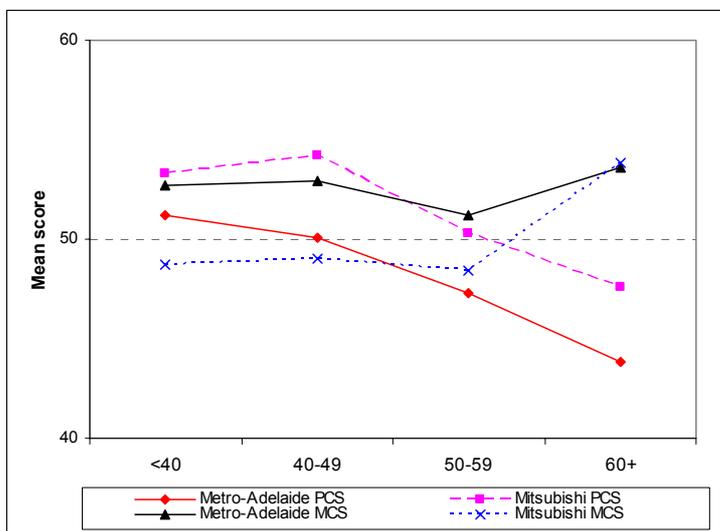
The Mitsubishi survey used questions from the SF-12 Health Survey to measure the health status of respondents. Two summary scores from the SF-12 are used to represent respondents' health: Physical Component Summary (PCS) and Mental Component Summary (MCS). These two summary scores have a range of 0 to 100, with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10, based on the US population norm. The higher the score, the better the physical and mental health. Any score over 50 represents better than average physical and mental health. For mental health the clinical cut-off score is 42, and a score below this indicates symptoms of depression. The lower the mental health score below 42, the more severe the symptoms of depression.

The survey also used questions from the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) to measure respondents' self-reported health. In this report we only present the comparison of GHQ results for male respondents (in Mitsubishi and metropolitan Adelaide), due to the small number of females in the Mitsubishi group.

Comparison of physical and mental health between male respondents in Mitsubishi and those in metropolitan Adelaide

Questions from the SF-12 Health Survey were used both in the SA Health Monitor survey and the Mitsubishi survey. Figure 6.10 compares the physical and mental health status of male respondents in Mitsubishi and those in metropolitan Adelaide. In terms of physical health, both the Adelaide average and the Mitsubishi respondents showed an overall declining trend in health status as age increased, although the physical health of the Mitsubishi respondents aged 40-49 was a little better than that of other males at Mitsubishi. However, on average, Mitsubishi respondents had better physical health than the Adelaide average in each age group. This may reflect the fact that all of the Mitsubishi respondents were healthy enough to be in the workforce, whereas not all of the general Adelaide population is in the workforce and would include people with various disabilities and illnesses who are unable to work as a result.

Figure 6.10: Comparison of Physical and Mental Health Between Male Respondents in Mitsubishi and Those in Metropolitan Adelaide



Comparison of GHQ scores between male respondents in Mitsubishi and those in metropolitan Adelaide

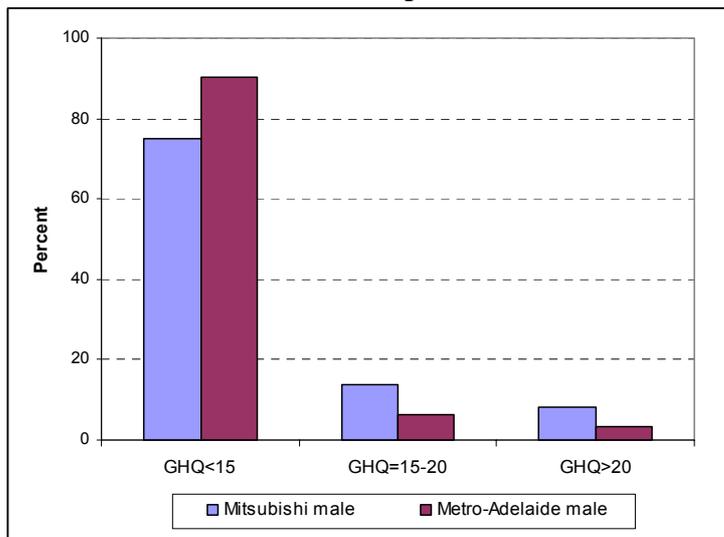
Mental health is a different story to the physical health measures. Except for those aged 60 and over, Mitsubishi respondents had lower mental health scores than the Adelaide average in each age group. This is possibly related to their impending job loss. For example, about 13 per cent of males in metropolitan Adelaide showed depressive symptoms, while the proportion was 22 per cent for the Mitsubishi male respondents (measured with the MCS from the SF12)..

The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) was used in both the SA Health Monitor and the Mitsubishi survey. The GHQ result is indexed using the Likert scoring method, which has a range of 0 to 36. The typical GHQ score is approximately 11-12, with a score higher than 15 suggesting evidence of distress, and higher than 20 suggesting severe problems and psychological distress.

Figure 6.11 compares the GHQ scores between male respondents in the Mitsubishi survey and those in metropolitan Adelaide. More than 90 per cent of the metropolitan Adelaide males

had GHQ scores lower than 15, while only three quarters of Mitsubishi males did. About 22 per cent of Mitsubishi males showed some evidence of distress (GHQ = 15 or above), compared with only 10 per cent of metropolitan Adelaide males. More importantly, the GHQ suggests that 8 per cent of Mitsubishi males may have severe problems and psychological distress, while this is the case for only 3 per cent of metropolitan Adelaide males. These results are consistent with the MCS results measured using the SF-12, and both suggest that Mitsubishi male respondents have lower levels of mental health compared with the metropolitan Adelaide average.

Figure 6.11: Comparison of GHQ Scores for Male Respondents in Mitsubishi and Those in Metropolitan Adelaide

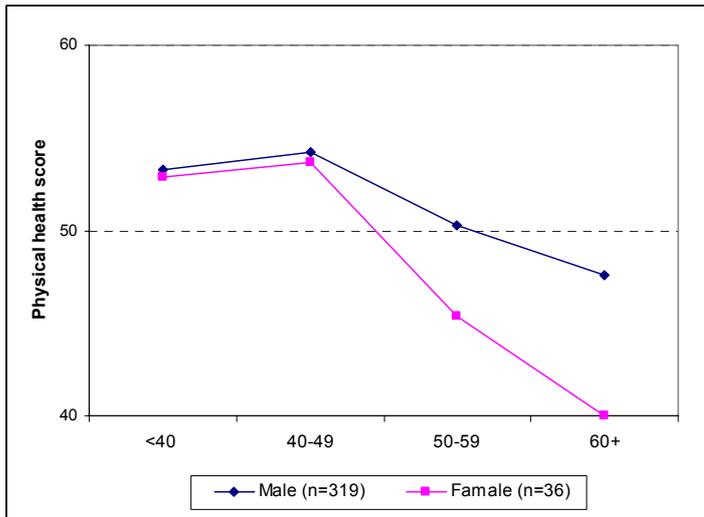


Physical health by socio-economic characteristics

Age and gender

Figure 6.12 shows the physical health status of Mitsubishi respondents by age and gender. For both male and female respondents aged below 50 there were no significant differences in physical health. However, the older females had a much lower level of physical health than their male counterparts, especially after age 60. (Note however the small sample size of the female group which makes meaningful comparisons difficult.)

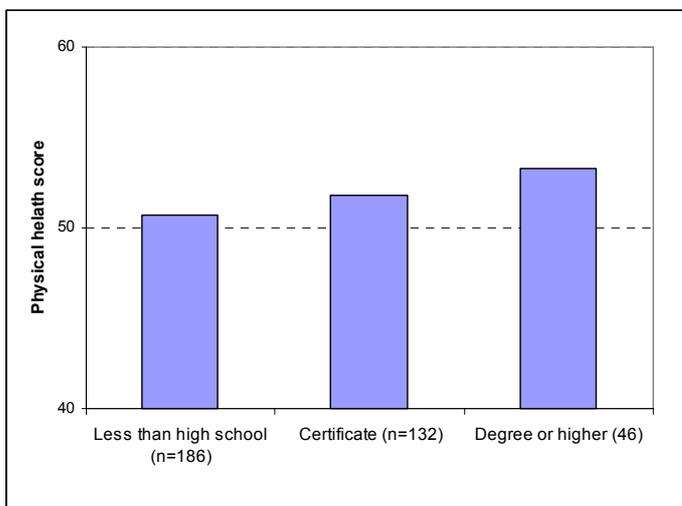
Figure 6.12: Physical Health of Mitsubishi Respondents by Age and Gender



Education level

Figure 6.13 shows the physical health status of Mitsubishi respondents by education level. Overall, respondents had above average physical health status. In addition, physical health status rose slightly with education level. Nonetheless, such differences were statistically insignificant.

Figure 6.13: Physical Health of Mitsubishi Respondents by Education Level



Marital status

The majority of survey respondents were either married or partnered. Here we divide them into two groups: those married or partnered, and those not in a domestic partnership (ie never married, separated, divorced or widowed). Nonetheless, there was no significant difference between the two groups, both of which had above average physical health status.

Household and personal income

There was no difference in physical health by household income. However, physical health status differed significantly by personal income. [less than \$36,399 (n=68) PCS=47.9; \$36,400-51,999 (n=163) PCS=51.3; \$52,000+ \$52,000+ was 53.9 (n=127)].

Managing financially

The MMAL survey asked respondents whether they were managing financially well. Fifty seven per cent of respondents reported managing 'very/quite comfortably', while the rest reported 'getting by/difficult'. Although the former group appeared to have slightly better physical health, this difference was not statistically significant.

Time at Mitsubishi and nature of departure

Of the survey respondents, two thirds had worked at Mitsubishi for less than 20 years. However, this group did not have significant differences in physical health compared with those who had worked there longer. Nearly 40 per cent of respondents reported that their redundancy was voluntary, however, this group did not have any significant differences in mental health.

Mental health by socio-economic characteristics

Age and gender

Figure 6.14 shows the mental health of Mitsubishi respondents by age and gender. Males aged over 60 reported better mental health than other groups (possibly because their redundancy coincided with their plans for retirement). The situation for females was somewhat more complicated, but it is important to remember that this is only a small group of women. Nevertheless, the females aged 40-49 (n=12) had worse mental health than the other females and some showed depressive symptoms.

Education level

Figure 6.15 shows the mental health of Mitsubishi respondents by education level. It appears that as education level rises, mental health status also rises slightly. However, statistical tests show that this difference is insignificant.

Figure 6.14: Mental Health of Mitsubishi Respondents by Age and Gender

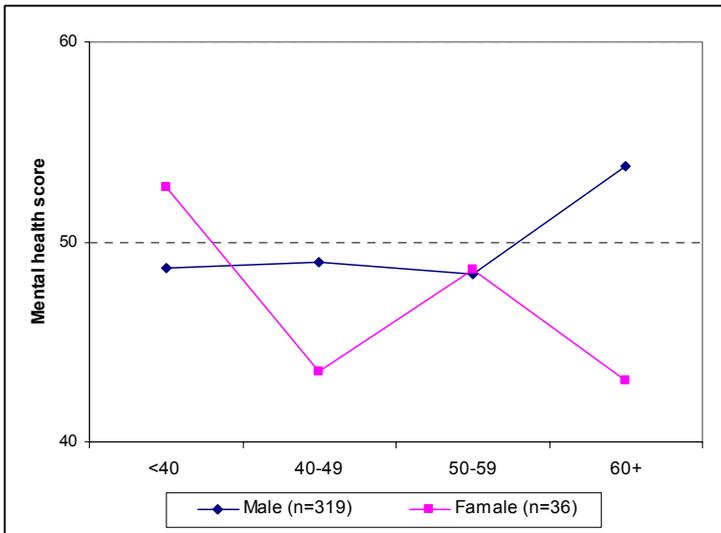
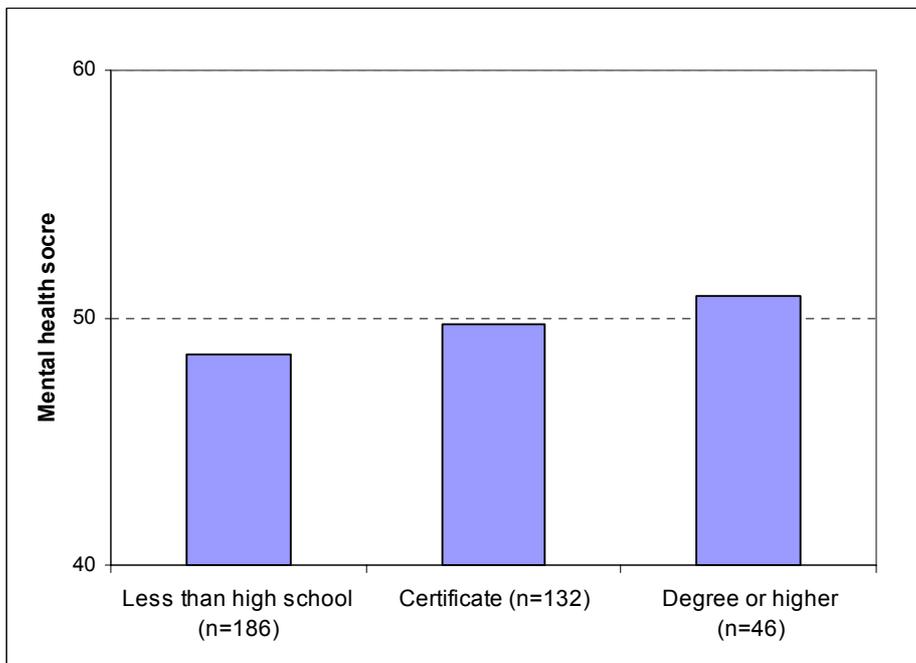


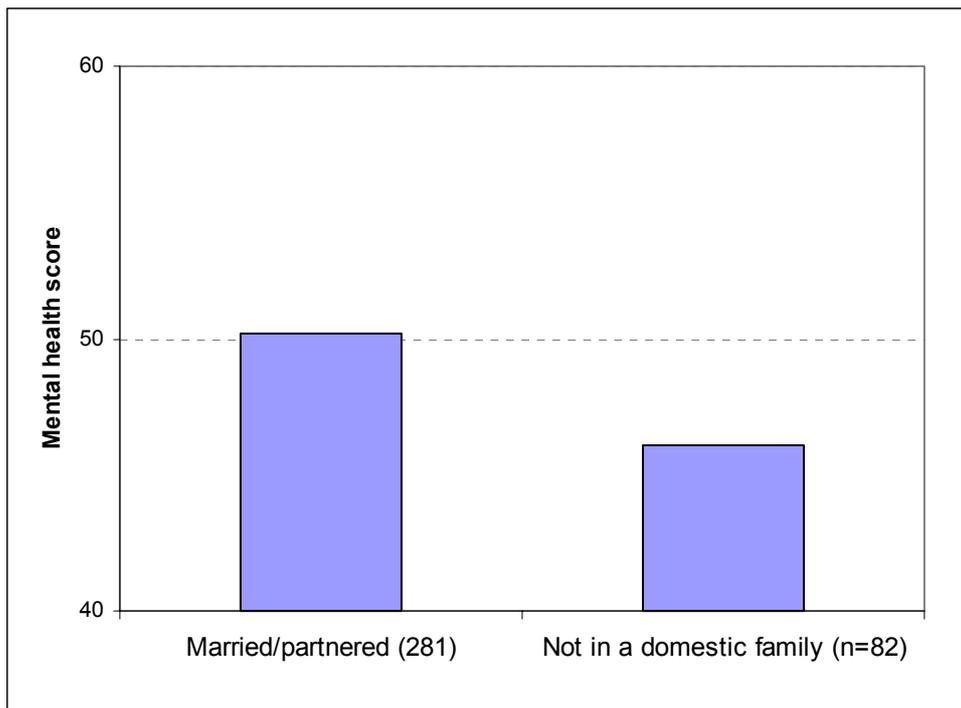
Figure 6.15: Mental Health of Mitsubishi Respondents by Education Level



Marital status

Figure 6.16 shows the mental health status of respondents by marital status. There was a significant difference between the two groups, those married or partnered, and those not in a domestic partnership. Those who were married or partnered had average mental health status, with a mean Mental Component Summary (MCS) score of 50. However, those not in a domestic partnership (never married, separated, divorced or widowed) had a mean MCS score of 46 with a standard deviation of 12. This suggests that many of them were suffering symptoms of depression.

Figure 6.16: Mental Health of Mitsubishi Respondents by Marital Status



Household and personal income

There were no differences in mental health status by either household or individual income.

Managing financially

There was a significant difference in mental health between respondents who felt financially comfortably and those who reported just getting by financially or having financial difficulties. There were higher and lower income earners who reported that they were just getting by which indicates the importance of perception and the different commitments people are likely to have.

Time at Mitsubishi and nature of departure

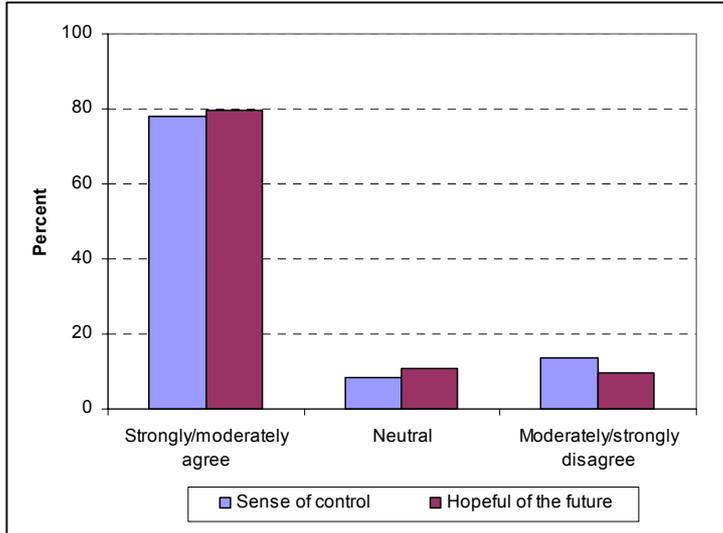
There was a significant difference in mental health between workers who had been at Mitsubishi for less than 20 years and those who had worked there more than 20 years. This may be related to the fact that those who had worked there more than 20 years were older and hence had better mental health or that the older men were less concerned about leaving Mitsubishi. There was no significant difference in mental health status between respondents who left their job voluntarily and those who left involuntarily.

Sense of control

The survey asked Mitsubishi respondents their perceptions of sense of control and hope for the future. Answers were arranged with a 5-choice response scale, with 1 representing 'strongly agree' to 5 representing 'strongly disagree', and 3 being 'neutral'. The majority of respondents, around 80 per cent, perceived that they had a sense of control and felt hopeful of

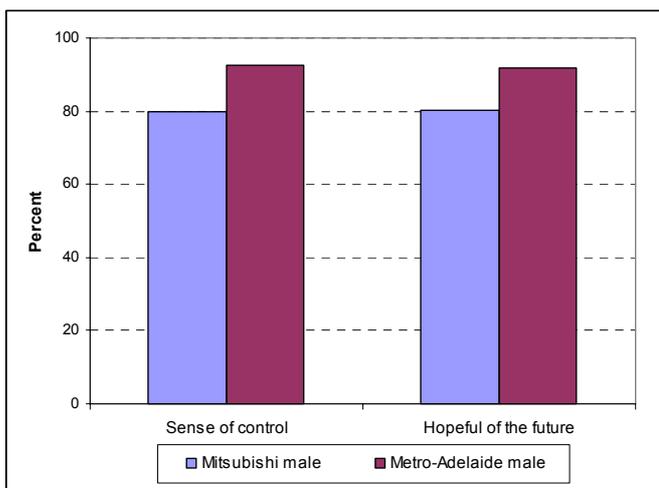
their future (Figure 6.17). However, it is important to note that 14 per cent of respondents did not have a sense of control and about 10 per cent felt unhopeful.

Figure 6.17: Mitsubishi Respondents’ Perceptions of Sense of Control and Hope for the Future



When the Mitsubishi male respondents are compared with the metropolitan Adelaide males (Figure 6.18), there is some difference in the proportion perceiving a strong sense of control and feeling of hopeful of the future. More than 90 per cent of metropolitan Adelaide respondents perceive a strong sense of control and feel hopeful of the future, compared with 80 per cent of Mitsubishi respondents.

Figure 6.18: Comparison of the Proportion Reporting Strong/Moderate Agreement with the Statements of Sense of Control and Feeling Hopeful of the Future Between Male Respondents in Mitsubishi and Metropolitan Adelaide



Use of health services

The survey asked Mitsubishi respondents whether they had used various health services in the past year. Figure 6.19 shows the proportion using different services. (Due to very few

respondents using community health centres and government social support services these services do not appear in the figure.) One fifth of respondents reported having used a GP more than usual in the past year. A little more than 10 per cent had used a hospital in-patient service more than usual and about 5 per cent reported that they had used government family and youth services or a private counsellor more than usual.

Figure 6.19: Mitsubishi Respondents' Use of Different Health Service in the Past Year

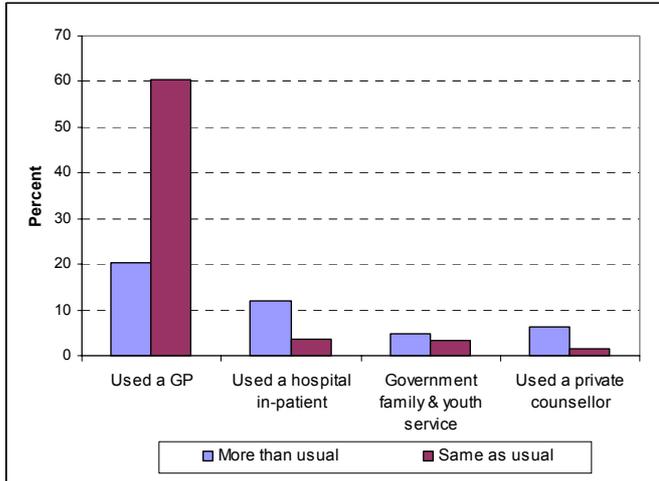
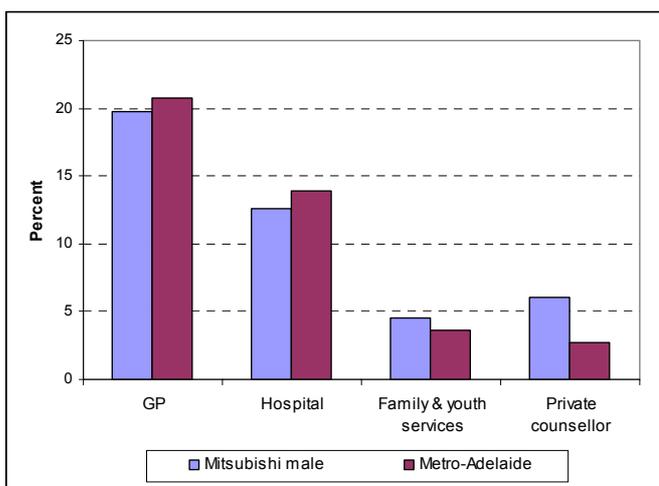


Figure 6.20 shows a comparison between male respondents in Mitsubishi and metropolitan Adelaide of the proportion using selected health services more than usual in the past year. There were no major differences in the use of the services of a GP, hospital, or family and youth services. Nonetheless, a higher proportion of Mitsubishi respondents used a private counsellor (6% vs 2.6%).

Figure 6.20: Comparison in the Proportion Using Health Services More than Usual, Between Male Respondents in Mitsubishi and Metropolitan Adelaide



Job loss, health status, and social and family life

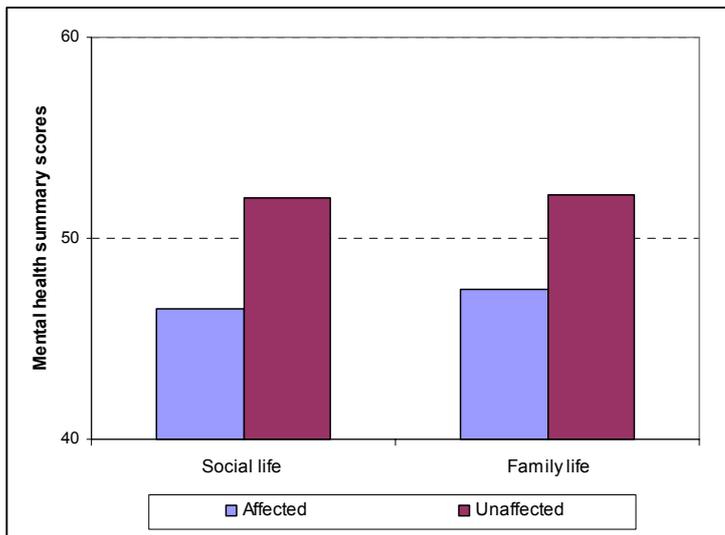
Perceived impacts on social life and mental health

The survey asked each respondent ‘Do you think that the changes at Mitsubishi have effected your social and group activities?’. Half the respondents said ‘yes’, while the other half did not think there had been any effects. However, there was a statistically significant difference in the mental health scores between these two groups (Figure 6.21). The mean mental health score was much higher for those who did not perceive that the changes had effected their social life.

Perceived Impacts on family life and mental health

The survey further asked each respondent ‘Do you think that the changes at Mitsubishi have effected your family life?’ A little less than one-third of respondents believed that the changes had effected their family life. Again, there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups in mental health (see Figure 6.21). Respondents who did not consider that the changes had effected their family life had much higher mental health status.

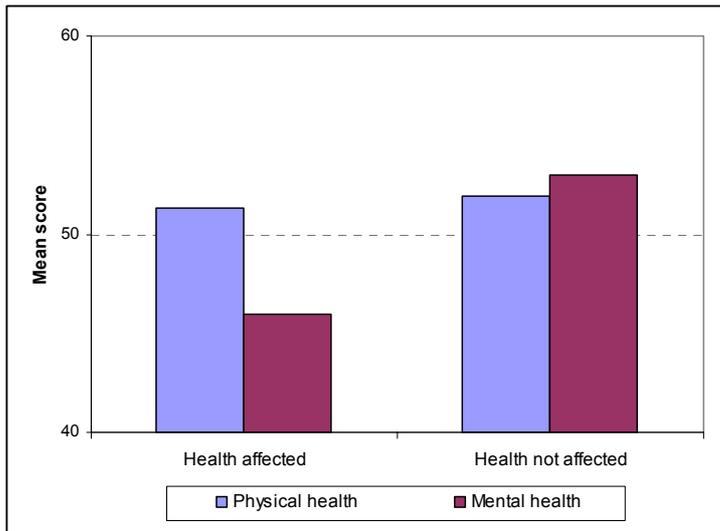
Figure 6.21: Mean Mental Health Scores and Mitsubishi Respondents’ Perceived Impacts of the Workplace Changes on Social and Family Life



Perceived impacts on health, and physical and mental health status

The survey asked respondents if they thought that their health had been effected by the changes at Mitsubishi. There was no difference in *physical* health between those who considered that their health had been effected and those who did not think so (Figure 6.22). However, for those who considered that their health had been effected, the mean *mental* health score was 46, while the score for those who did not think so was higher, at 53. Such a difference is highly significant statistically.

Figure 6.22: Physical and Mental Health Status of Mitsubishi Respondents By Perceptions of Whether Their Health Had Been Effected by the Workplace Changes



Two hundred and thirty nine respondents elaborated on their response about the impact of the job loss on their health status. Approximately equal numbers of respondents believed their health had improved as believed it had worsened (Table 6.5). A small number described both improved and worsened aspects of their health and a similar number stated that their health was unchanged. Other responses were not relevant to the question.

Table 6.5: Self-Perceived Effect on Health (Open-ended Responses)

Response	Number of respondents
Health improved	96
Health worsened	94
Improved and worsened	14
Health same	18
Other	17
Total	239

There were 96 respondents who indicated that their health had improved since leaving MMAL. Of those who went on to give more details, 25 spoke about having less stress and improved mental health. This was linked with, for example, feeling the insecurity was over, having more time to spend with the family, or no longer working the night shift. Typical comments were:

Would say health is better since not working there as a result of less stress and more time to enjoy life and less worry now mortgage paid off.

For the better – not because of job but because of the stress and uncertainty at MMAL.

I think I'm still on a high. I can just relax if I want to – I feel quite secure even if I don't do anything for a year I'm fine. I got a year's wages when I left.

Has improved. I have a personal trainer now, take my little boy to school – have lots of time now, more time with family and friends.

Twenty-three people believed their health had been adversely effected by working in a factory environment, particularly the foundry, and most of these described better respiratory health now that they were not exposed to dust.

Yes my health has improved. I was working in a filthy, dirty environment in the foundry. I used to come home black. My sinuses are much better now I can smell normally again.

Health has improved since leaving MMAL. Cleaner skin and breathing improved. My current job is outside therefore I am becoming fit.

Other physical improvements were linked to less heavy physical work putting a strain on the body. Some people reported that they are now more fit or now have time to undertake regular exercise.

Not in pain as much as I used to be. I had a neck injury which was work related, but it has pretty much disappeared now.

Improved significantly since leaving – lost 5kg and much fitter as I am involved in more daily physical activity and now not desk bound.

It has improved because of a lifestyle change for me, I was getting more sleep, had more time, more relaxed and I am now doing what I want to do.

There were 94 respondents who indicated that their health was worse. These respondents focussed on mental and emotional health problems. Sixty-five people described increased stress in their lives and this manifested itself in terms of disrupted sleep, raised blood pressure, increased smoking, weight increase or irritability with family members. Specific stressors mentioned included financial worries and being in a position of having to apply for work.

I am much more angry, uptight and frustrated. I am now very cynical. This has had a negative effect on my emotional health.

Basically, worry, stress. Sleeping effected. Basically the insecurity of not knowing what's around the corner and knowing I am getting older, employment wise.

I have added stress in my life as I have to worry about where the next dollar is coming from. Constantly having to look for work also adds stress.

I have now got high blood pressure and for a while there, and still from time to time, I get stress headaches. I am not overly keen on the job I am doing. I have been feeling depressed and still do off and on.

A further twenty-eight respondents described themselves as depressed or described symptoms that suggested depression – this was linked to a lack of motivation and loss of structure to the day now they were no longer working. Some respondents talked about a loss of confidence and self-esteem linked to their job loss and several described being lonely and missing the friendships that had been connected to their work situation.

That is nothing around the house that fills in for all the activities I did at work. My lifestyle has changed so completely, the loss of interaction, there is a big void, it's too big a change of life.

You do go down hill to a certain point until you get your act together. Definitely a little stressed and depressed. Now I no longer have to get up for work it feels like there is just nothing there.

Emotionally it has changed me. I've gone from a secure job to being unemployed. I have been feeling more down as I haven't found any suitable work yet. Not having a job has made me lose confidence in myself.

Making me less confident in life. Puts pressure on me in providing support for my family and worrying about my health and ability to remain in workforce as a provider (for family) and self esteem and worthiness for myself and in the community.

Physically and emotionally – feel like everything around me is falling down, I feel I am depressed, I drink more alcohol, have put more weight on, quick tempered, feel angry a lot of the time, tend to take frustrations out on my wife, we argue more. There is a lot of stress and disharmony. I feel really old and unfit. I don't even go fishing any more.

Thus there is a somewhat mixed picture in terms of the perceived impact on health. For some work had been perceived as causing health problems either through physical aspects of the stress of insecurity. Approximately one-third of our sample reported that the job loss had effected their health either physical or mental and most of the explanations emphasised the stress and uncertainty associated with their employment situation.

6.3 Conclusion to Social Capital and Health Section

The main value of the Mitsubishi study in terms of assessing the impact of job loss on health and social capital will be when we are able to compare health status and social capital levels over time. These data will be available once the Stage 2 and Stage 3 interviews are complete. Nonetheless the data from Stage 1 do suggest some interesting findings in relation to the workers.

The most significant finding appears to be the higher levels of mental health distress compared with a randomised sample of men in Adelaide. These levels suggest that those losing their jobs were finding the process stressful (although we do not have measures of mental health from the time before they were aware they were to be made redundant). Some of the workers were seeking help as a higher proportion had seen a counsellor than of the general population. The older workers reported better mental health and it is reasonable to hypothesise that losing your job after 60 is less traumatic than when one is younger and more likely to have heavier family and financial commitments. These workers were also likely to have worked longer at MMAL and so receive larger financial settlements. The picture of lower levels of mental health was also reinforced by the fact that these workers felt a lower sense of control and were less hopeful for the future than the random Adelaide sample. The workers who reported their health being effected by their job loss also had lower mental health status.

The data relating to social capital also indicate some concern in regard to health status. The Mitsubishi workers were much less trustful than their counterparts in the general Adelaide population of big business, government and people in general. The reasons for this are not clear and may become clearer as we analyse the in-depth interviews where the workers levels of trust are explored in detail. A likely hypothesis is that the experience of the redundancy had led to the particularly high levels of distrust in government and big business.

While there does appear to be some concern about the impact of the redundancy on mental health status and about half of the workers report the experience having a negative impact on their life those interviewed were able to identify positive aspects of their job loss. Generally these were related to the loss of negative aspects of their job and having more time to do other things in their life.

So overall the snapshot picture of the Mitsubishi workers indicates that while some were coping well with the redundancy there is a significant group for whom the loss of their job was exacting a significant toll on their health, family and social life. The impact of the job losses on health and social capital will become much clearer when the Stages 2 and 3 interviews data are available.

7. Impact on Community and Service Providers

7.1 Introduction

This section of the report addresses the research strand that is exploring the perceived impacts of job losses on the region by human service providers and the impacts for ‘community’.

The human service sector in the southern region is diverse and extensive and includes a myriad of social, community/welfare, health, training and employment related agencies/organisations. For example, the Onkaparinga Community Directory includes nearly 200 entries for health related services and 80 entries for community organisations and facilities. These include government and non-government organisations. Similarly ‘community’ is not a homogenous concept and has many meanings. The definition of ‘community’ used here is threefold: as *identity* (symbolism, meaning); as *resources for exchange* (material exchanges, connections/networks); as a *facilitating environment* for support, friendship and care.

There are three distinct threads of activity that inform this research strand. First we are engaging with service providers from the region through a series of workshops, one scheduled for May 2006 and another scheduled at the end of Stage 2. This Stage 2 workshop will be used to identify other issues that may be explored via the final survey (Stage 3). Second we are currently consulting with service providers and community members in the region about how best to explore more fully the community wide impacts of the job losses. Finally we are engaging with service providers and policy makers through the research Advisory Committee, which is a critical structure for dialogue about research themes and their implications. Fifteen interviews were conducted with service providers as part of Stage 1 of this project, however most of the research activity is scheduled to occur in Stages 2 and 3 of the project.

7.2 Engaging with Service Providers

A preliminary scoping exercise was conducted in the period very soon after the retrenchments were announced. These face-to-face or phone interviews were exploratory and designed to inform the research design.

Fifteen interviews were conducted with staff from human service organisations in the Southern region. The agencies/organisations interviewed are drawn from government (local, state and commonwealth agencies/and non-government organisations) and provide a diverse range of services. These included health care, social planning, crisis interventions, financial assistance, community development, counselling, housing assistance, family services, training and group programs. The organisations surveyed covered a range of sites and locations across the southern region including Morphett Vale, Marion, Hackham, Noarlunga, Christies Beach, Lonsdale, and Seaford.

We asked organisations whether they had considered the impact of the job losses in their service planning. Responses can be grouped into three types. Most organisations had not factored the retrenchments into their service planning, some described planning that was informal and ad hoc, and a third response, from one organisation, was that comprehensive organisational planning had been done based on likely scenarios in the wake of the retrenchments and forward anticipation about the implications for service provision and ‘community’. This organisation had also implemented staff development whereby staff and volunteers were informed about the retrenchments and the possible impacts.

A number of the service providers we spoke with made positive mention of the informative and proactive role played by Centrelink in communicating with service providers in the region. Centrelink however has a mixed reception from respondents as evident in some of the qualitative interviews where some interviewees express frustration about their dealings with this agency.

In respect to questions about anticipated impacts of the job losses there was commonality in a view that agencies were not anticipating these to be short-term, but rather perceived the impacts would be revealed more fully over time. As some respondents explained they expected that the substantial nature of the payouts would both materially and psychologically cushion against some of the downsides of retrenchment. Furthermore there were many workers who had gained support to take up new employment opportunities. A further cushion against hardship or stresses was perceived to be the personal, family and communal resources available to assist people cope with the life changes that the loss of employment may have engendered. For example one interviewee, in response to a question about use of services, indicates in his reply his reliance on his own networks:

No. There was no-one else and I suppose we were really fairly fortunate again, because I have worked with so many people over the years so we were able to bounce off each other different ideas...yeah supporting each other to make sure that everyone had, did what they needed to do.

A further issue which emerges from Stage 1 data and is amplified in qualitative interviews, is the lack of knowledge by many of the workers about the human service delivery system and how to access supports or other services. For example in response to questions about services and assistance one interviewee says, 'I don't know. I'm not very good when it comes to that sort of thing'.

It was suggested by service providers that longer-term impacts might well be complex and multi-layered. For instance, that in time, there may be increased demand on services, including requests for financial assistance, housing assistance, counselling, and supports requested for mental health stress, substance abuse, domestic violence, depression, anxiety and loss of self-esteem. Loss and grief issues were also signposted and it was suggested that these could arise from changes in identity and social networks, and be exacerbated if the transition to new opportunities is not forthcoming or unfolds as expected.

However at the time of these interviews there were few visible signs of an increase in demand that service providers could directly relate to the changes at Mitsubishi. This picture matches that provided through the Stage 1 survey data, which shows that relatively few survey respondents made use of State or local government provided services. It is also interesting to note that the format of data collection categories within agencies makes it difficult to connect increased demand with changes at Mitsubishi. For example, as indicated in the scoping exercise data on employment status are rarely collected.

Nonetheless there was a general expectation that any increased demand will place extra pressure on human service resources that are already stretched. For instance waiting lists for services are already long and the resources available for financial assistance are in high demand and are finite. One respondent said 'it will put pressure on all of us further down the track'. A picture of services under pressure is confirmed in the annual 2006 *ACOSS Australian Community Services Sector Survey* which reports increased client demand and people being turned away from services. For instance ACOSS report that in South Australia

for the period 2004-2005 there was a 16 per cent increase in client demand, 80,625 more people accessing services and 28,504 eligible people being turned away from services (2006, p. 5).

Impacts were not just perceived by service providers to be in the realm of service provision. There was a view expressed that the Lonsdale closure will have rippling impacts for community identity and community capacity building, and again, that these impacts will be revealed more fully over time. There were different dimensions to the possible impacts. One dimension is in respect to physical land use impacts. For instance one survey respondent talked about their observations that local people near the Mitsubishi site were worried about the land use implications of the job losses and the affect of any possible site redevelopment (eg housing redevelopment) on property values, population profile, amenities and other attributes of the local geographic space. Another dimension relates to the economic support provided by Mitsubishi. This concerned their pivotal relationship with local businesses, and by extension to the wellbeing of the local community, and the financial support given to local community development through grants and other supports. One survey respondent said that a loss of financial support for their community programs would be deeply felt. A view was also expressed that the retrenchments might contribute to the pool of people able to be active in volunteer work and that this would be a positive contributor to the community.

A further perspective on the potential longer-term impacts concerned employment pathways and identity markers for young people. One service provider made the comment that Mitsubishi had been an important perceived pathway for employment and opportunities for young people. They spoke of a local discourse that low skilled and young people had the option to 'get a job at Mitsubishi'. With this option diminished this service provider feared that this would negatively impact on both the imagined and actual prospects for young people in the region.

From the scoping exercise we have identified a number of themes that will be the basis for a series of thematic focus group discussions with service providers that will occur in May and June 2006. These are as follows:

- Organisational capacity to respond should service demand increase;
- Organisational planning systems and the extent to which they consider changes in local industry;
- Organisational systems for identifying whether demand is the result of Mitsubishi retrenchments;
- Promotion of services to former Mitsubishi workers;
- The intermediate impacts including demands on services;
- How unmet demand is responded to and potential implications for clients;
- Implications for service providers;
- Expectations for longer term trends;
- Community identity and development implications.

7.3 Community Strategy

The second component of this research strand is a community strategy that involves mapping resources (schools, community sites, churches, neighbourhood and sporting facilities, shops, hairdresser, pubs and clubs) within the area around the Lonsdale and Tonsley Park sites. These maps will provide backdrop information for the community strategy. We will then talk

with representatives from local community development activities/projects/groups about the best possible ways to engage a wider group within ‘communities’ about the impacts of the job losses on community as *identity* (symbolism, meaning); as *resources for exchange* (material exchanges, connections/networks); as a *facilitating environment* for support, friendship and care.

As part of this process we are meeting in May 2006 with representatives from Noarlunga Healthy Cities, Eat Well be Active (EWBA) and Communities for Children (CFC) to begin this dialogue. The rationale for including CFC and EWBE is that they are large funded community based projects that have recently undertaken very extensive community consultations within the study area.

7.4 Children’s Interviews

The research objective of this segment of the project is to identify the impact of the MMAL plant closure on the children of retrenched workers. The research objective here is to identify children’s views on the impact of the plant closures on themselves and their families.

A qualitative approach was used, informed by the theoretical framework of the ‘new sociology of childhood’, which acknowledges the self-agency of children (MacDougall *et al* 2004). Children are viewed as active participants in the research process and therefore this component of the study is centred on research with, not about, children: thereby providing new sources of data (Darbyshire *et al* 2005).

Sampling

The participants in the research are children of MMAL workers who have been retrenched. As noted in the methods section of this report Stage 1 of the project was a face-to-face survey interview with retrenched workers. All respondents were asked if they had children and if they would consent to their children being included in this stage of the study. Twenty nine families consented, which resulted in an estimated 35 children between the ages of 8 and 16 years.

This part of the report is based on preliminary analysis of interviews with 21 children from eight families, whose ages and sex are shown in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Ages and Sex of Children Interviewed

Age	4	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	16	17
Boys	1		1		1	2	1	1	1	2		
Girls		1		2		2	1	1		1	2	1

We included children aged under 8 years who were in the house at the time of interviewing older siblings in order not to exclude them from the discussion.

It became clear that parents wanted to contribute to the discussion to prompt children or give their view of the children’s experience. Two mothers wanted the opportunity to provide information about their perspective, or to comment on the information provided by their husbands. These comments are included as part of our field notes. Table 7.2 shows which adults were in the house during the interviews with children.

Table 7.2: Adults in the House During Interviews with Children

Mother	4
Father	2
Mother and father	2

Developing the Interview Guide with Children

To involve children in the research process, the interview guide for this study was developed using a focus group with four boys and four girls aged between ten and 16 years. After an introduction, Colin MacDougall made the following statement to the group and then worked with the children to discuss the order and phrasing of questions to be used in the planned face-to-face discussions:

I would like to find out about what work at Mitsubishi means for children. What it means for children when they know their parents will have to get another job. I need your help so together we can work out the right questions to ask other children when we talk to them later in the year. This is important and I don't want to get it wrong. We are doing our best to find out stuff that can make it better for children when their parents have to look at getting other jobs, moving etc. Because none of us are children, we need to know what is important to you about where your parents work, how they work, and what happens when work is hard to get.

The result was a semi-structured interview guide shown in Box 7.1. This report uses the interview guide to develop themes for coding the interviews.

Interviews lasted between 20 and 30 minutes and were conducted in the children's homes in April 2006. Interviews were tape-recorded. At the end of each interview, the interviewer summarised the major findings and asked children to confirm that they reflected the discussion. A parent or parents were present at all interviews and, as discussed below, we took the opportunity to record salient comments from parents in our field notes.

Box 7.1

Semi-structured interview guide derived from a focus group with children

- 1. Thank you for agreeing to take part in the study. Do you have any questions for me before I ask you some questions?**
- 2. How do you feel about the Mitsubishi factory closing? (use prompts if necessary comprising cards with faces including a smiley and sad face and use that to ask how the children feel)**
- 3. Was there a significant change in your family life because of the job loss of your mum/dad? Prompt to see if these were positive, negative or neutral changes.**
- 4. How is your dad/mum coping since they lost the job?**
- 5. Has your dad/mum been able to find another job?**

Themes from Interviews with Children

Feelings about factory closing

When children were asked to think back to when they first knew the redundancies were going to happen, and when they actually occurred, most did not describe it as a memorable, or negative, event. Some – mainly older children - talked about ‘*worries*’ or feelings of uncertainty about the future. Some said they or the family were ‘*sad*’ or ‘*upset*’ about hearing that their parent (usually father) would lose their job. Some were concerned about how the redundancy would affect their regular activities or special events (eg regularity of cinema outings). The children in three of the eight families particularly mentioned that they would miss the Mitsubishi Christmas Parties.

One older girl said it was hard on everyone and she had worried about money. She did not tell her parents about her worries. A younger boy in the same family said he didn’t care at the time because ‘*I wasn’t into jobs*’. At the same time they were pleased if they thought the redundancy payout might bring one-off or ongoing benefits, such as a family holiday or their father spending more time at home.

One respondent said he ‘*relaxed and let the ride take him*’, and many said they now had a better life. Another said she trusted that all would work out and her parents would organise things. One family group responded that they were less worried about the redundancy once it actually happened and they saw that their father was less worried.

All children appreciated that they had not had to change houses, schools or friendship groups. This conferred a strong sense of stability.

Changes to family life because of job loss/finding another job

The main change that children reported was the alteration to the family's daily or weekly routine, particularly to the times when parents were at home or work. This change depended on whether the father had found new work or not, and whether the mother's work routine had also changed in response. Where workers had not yet been able, or not wanted, to find another job, children often noticed that their father was '*around more*' and they sometimes had more time with him. However for teenage children this did not necessarily mean more time together if they were often out with friends, or they did not spend much time with their father anyway. The children of one worker from Mitsubishi's 3pm to 11pm shift found that their father's new earlier work shift meant he was now around afternoons and evenings - times which they felt offered more quality interaction than the previous 'before school' slot.

Men who had worked on Mitsubishi's 7am to 3pm shift had often been able to collect children after school, or be around the house in the afternoons and evening (although this had apparently only happened in the last few years since overtime had all but disappeared). In one family, because the father now worked 9am-5pm, the children disliked having to go to their grandparent's each day after school until 6pm, rather than being in their own home with their father around. Spending time job-hunting, studying or in a new job with different hours, especially more standard 9am to 5pm hours, weekend work, or work geographically further away, could mean that their father had less time with the children, less chance to attend children's weekend sport, and less time for domestic work (eg shopping, gardening).

The most consistent finding was that children appreciated spending more time with their father. This was expressed as time in general – not tied to particular activities or outings.

How mum/dad have coped since the job loss

Some children talked about their father being '*grumpy*' or '*sad*' before he left Mitsubishi. Some older children were aware of their parents being under stress from looking for a new job, or from being in a job with worse working conditions and longer hours for less pay than at Mitsubishi. Although one father felt he had been less grumpy since leaving MMAL, his daughters (aged 7 and 10) said they had noticed no difference. One 10 year old boy said his mother had been much more tired from increasing her paid work hours to full-time (1 to 3 jobs) to try and compensate for their financial uncertainty. While the children saw the mother at school somewhat more, as one of the jobs was at their school, they saw her less at home because she now needed daytime naps.

Impacts on finances/outings etc

Most children did not notice reductions to the family budget. The girls in two families (teens and younger) said their mothers had felt increased pressure to budget well and watch expenditure, although most did not feel that parents had had to buy them less (even if parents felt they had said this). After the redundancy one family now received Centrelink payments, and the two teenage daughters had had to start regularly phoning in to report their casual income (\$30 per fortnight). They had also been contributing some of their paper-round

money to buy anything their mother considered ‘wants’ (although the parents still paid for ‘needs’).

Knowledge of other Mitsubishi families

One boy said he knew of children whose father had been made redundant, but he had only had a superficial conversation about it. He said he would not discuss his feelings with the other children. Overall, children did not report mixing with, or knowing what happened, to children of other Mitsubishi workers. One group of sisters (aged 6, 8 and 11 years) said they were sad because both they and their father would not see his ex-workmates as much as they had formerly.

Checking Results

Researcher triangulation: Two researchers shared the interviews and discussed methods, merging findings and conclusions, especially exploring for any hints that any negative effects on children had been missed.

Field notes from discussions with parents: two mothers present at the child interviews said that the children probably had not noticed much because as parents they had consciously shielded them by having couple discussions when the children were not present. Mothers said that fathers were good at ‘hiding’ any negative feelings. Others had minimised the impact on children by deciding not to move house elsewhere in Adelaide or interstate, or not to seek work further from home.

Several mothers and fathers mentioned wanting to stay in the same house/area so that their children’s education and friendships were not disrupted, even if this reduced the chances of finding new work. Even some with adult children elected not to move to avoid disruption to the extended family.

All parents present confirmed that, in their view, children had not been negatively affected. Two fathers confirmed that they enjoyed spending time around the children. One said ‘Being Mr Mum for a year and a half is the hardest job I’ve ever done in my life’ in a way that showed enjoyment and pride in his new role.

It was common for parents to say the redundancy was ‘a godsend’, ‘the best thing that happened to us’: echoing the positive statements from children. Parents also said life hadn’t changed for children - except for fathers spending more time with them.

Analysis of interview data with adults for comments about impacts on children:

Analysis of the Stage 1 adult interviews located additional comments about impacts on children. One theme to emerge was that of *adults shielding children*, although some had discussed as a family (and even with the youngest children) that the redundancies were going to occur and what this might mean for them as a family. Most of the responses from adults suggested that, in their view, there had not been negative effects from the redundancies on their children. These findings corroborate the children’s views.

Conclusions, Caveats and Context

Great care must be taken in interpreting and using the results from this part of the study for the following reasons:

- **Lifecourse:** we interviewed an homogenous group who had worked at MMAL for many years, were skilled, with intact families. They could consider a comfortable financial future either without the man working or by choosing work arrangements carefully. Three men and one woman cautioned that life may not be as positive for younger men with young children and big mortgages, who had not worked at MMAL for as long. On the other hand, these men may have better employment prospects than the older men, although the pay and conditions may not match that at Mitsubishi.
- **Selection:** families were able to select whether their children were involved. Families interviewed in this section of the research exclusively lived in South Australia. We therefore do not know about children whose parents did not consent, or who moved interstate.
- **MMAL as an employer:** the men had been in stable employment, as part of a semi-skilled or skilled workforce and received a carefully planned separation package which they said was very useful for protecting their children.

The overall conclusion is that the children interviewed so far did not say they were negatively affected to any great extent by their parent(s)' redundancies from Mitsubishi. For many children the redundancy was followed by a better life, after some worries. However, we stress that these are conclusions from these children, in these families, who were made redundant from this factory under particular redundancy packages. The following factors influenced the way children coped:

- **Communication:** Most children appeared to have been aware that the redundancies were imminent, and many had experienced family meetings to discuss the changes.
- **Preparation and protection:** The news was not sudden, so families made a series of decisions to prepare for redundancy, including how to shield children.
- **Trust:** The reciprocal of parental protection was trust by children that their parents would make the decisions on their behalf to help the family through the redundancy.
- **Going with the flow:** Children and parents discussed going with the flow, or going for the ride, or moving on to what became a better life. This may represent a family story or coping strategy used to interpret change in a positive way.
- **Stability of home, school and friends:** This sample appreciated environmental and social stability.
- **'Just being there' time with fathers:** All children appreciated extra time with fathers – not tied to specific activities or events - but 'just being there'.

8. Housing and Residence

Housing and residence data sheds light on both the attachment to the region and the financial security of workers. As might be expected given the age profile of the participants in the survey, almost 84 per cent were either home owners or home purchasers at the time of the Stage 1 interview (Table 8.1). Only seven respondents rented from the South Australian Housing Trust (SAHT) and 40, or roughly 10 per cent of respondents, were in the private rental sector.

Table 8.1: Tenure

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent
Outright owner/Joint owner	149	39.9	40.3
Mortgagor	161	43.2	43.5
Renting from SAHT	7	1.9	1.9
Renting privately	40	10.7	10.8
Living with partner/ parents paying off mortgage	7	1.9	1.9
Other	6	1.6	1.6
Total	370	99.2	100.0
Missing	3	0.8	
	373	100.0	

For many retrenched workers from MMAL the change in their world of work has provided an opportunity to pay off their mortgage. Fully 141 respondents (Table 8.2) indicated that they would use their payout to discharge all or part of their mortgage, which suggests that the level of outright ownership is likely to rise amongst this group. As one ex-MMAL worker who paid off his mortgage said, ‘It’s the working man’s dream’ and for many completion of house purchase is a positive aspect of the redundancy process.

Its worth noting that – partly because of age – many respondents did not put the majority of their payout into their mortgage as they had already paid off most of the loan. When asked whether he had committed much of his redundancy payment to his mortgage one of the respondents said

Very, very little. Extremely, very little, because we had a very little on the mortgage anyhow.

While another respondent in response to a question about the use of financial counsellors said he hadn’t used that service because:

No. I had a mortgage and I thought any money that they give me I pay the mortgage off. That’s the best financial thing that I can do with the money, because that’s a debt that’s costing me, so the best thing I could do is pay that. And not that it paid it off, but it took a big chunk out of it.

Table 8.2: Are You Planning To Pay Off Your Mortgage with Your Mitsubishi Payout?

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent
Yes	141	37.8	54.0
No	120	32.2	46.0
Total	261	70.0	100.0
Missing	112	30.0	
	373	100.0	

The participants in the Stage 1 survey were, in large measure, a residentially stable population with 30 per cent living in their current dwelling for five to nine years and 28 per cent living in their current house for more than 15 years (Table 8.3). These data should be compared with national averages from the ABS Census which suggest that 40 per cent of all households move address between each 5 year Census.

Table 8.3: How Long Have You Lived in Your Current House?

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent
Less than one year	40	10.7	10.8
One to three years	67	18.0	18.1
Four to nine years	111	29.8	29.9
Ten to 15 years	47	12.6	12.7
More than 15 years	106	28.4	28.6
Total	371	99.5	100.0
Missing	2	0.5	
	373	100.0	

Stability in the current house and neighbourhood was reflected in people’s long-term tenure with 40 per cent living in their neighbourhood for more than 15 years (Table 8.4). It would be reasonable to expect that some, if not all, displaced workers would need to relocate residence to find a job after leaving MMAL but as Table 8.5 shows, over 40 per cent of respondents had not lived outside the southern region of Adelaide at any stage in their life. This factor needs to be borne in mind in planning for jobs into the future as some members of this group will be reluctant to move to find employment. That said, some 37 respondents at the Stage 1 interview had moved house since leaving Mitsubishi (Table 8.6) and a further 70 indicated that they expected that they would need to move (Table 8.7).

It is important to acknowledge that the group interviewed in Stage 1 may not be representative of movement intentions and practices of the wider population of MMAL workers who left following the April 2004 announcement. Our survey recruitment methodology was more likely to find persons who had not moved house than those who had. And while we have undertaken telephone interviews with respondents now living in Victoria and NSW, this group is most likely to be under-enumerated here.

Figure 8.1: Location of Interviewees

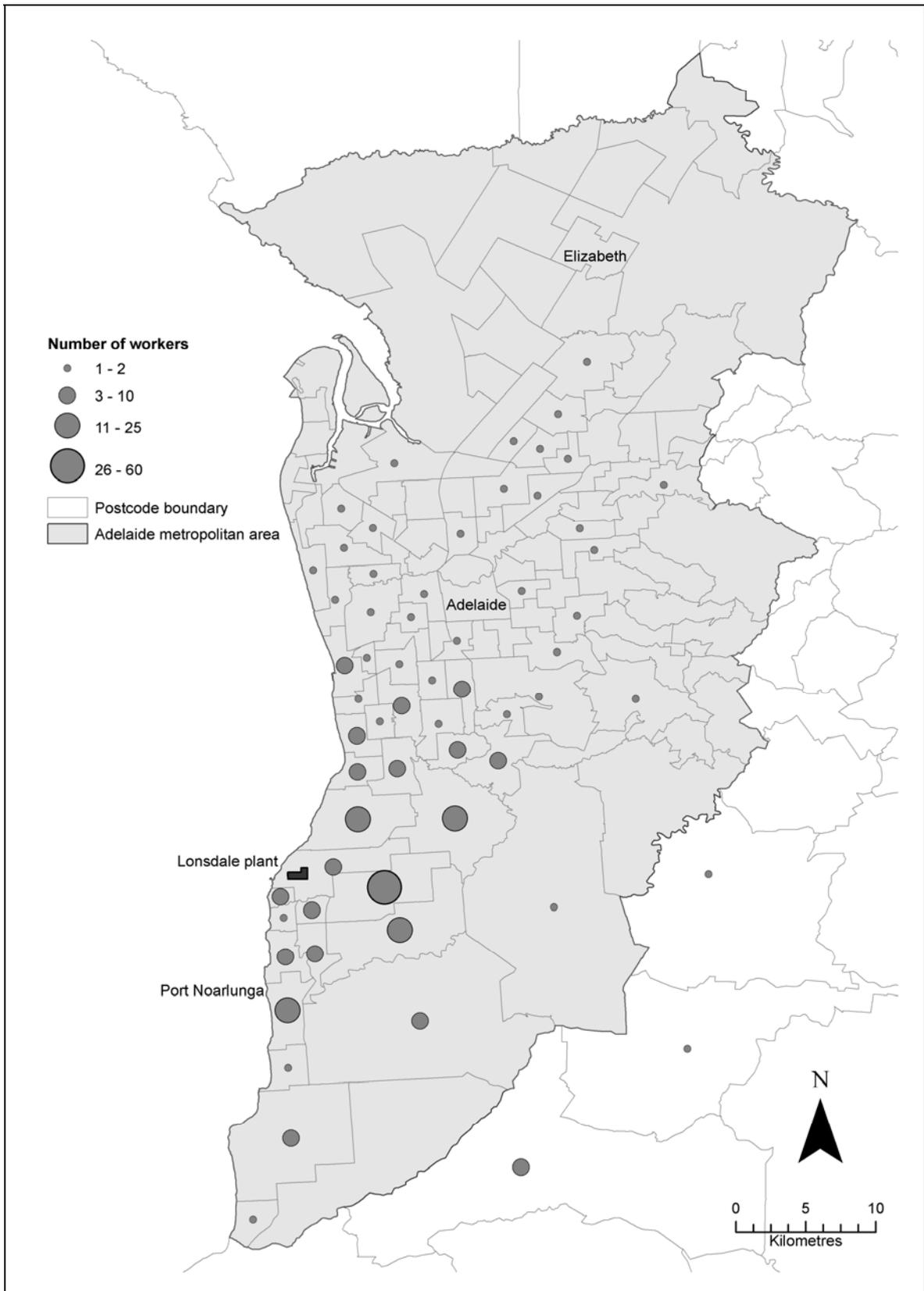


Table 8.4: How Long Have You Lived in Your Current Neighbourhood?

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent
Less Than One Year	28	7.5	7.8
One to Three Years	43	11.5	12.0

Four to Nine Years	83	22.3	23.2
Ten to 15 Years	52	13.9	14.6
More than 15 Years	151	40.5	42.3
Total	357	95.7	100.0
Missing	16	4.3	
	373	100.0	

Table 8.5: Have You Ever Lived Outside the Southern Region?

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent
Yes	212	56.8	57.8
No	155	41.6	42.2
Total	367	98.4	100.0
Missing	6	1.6	
	373	100.0	

Qualitative data reveals the extent and depth of the workers' tie to the local region (and see also Figure 8.1). For example, in response to a question about the strength of attachment to the neighbourhood and the region one respondent outlined a pattern of movement entirely focussed on the southern region.

Sure. As a young teenager, early adult, I lived at Seaview Downs with my parents and then we were married, my wife and myself were married and we moved to Noarlunga, Old Noarlunga to live down there and build down there for probably about 10 years and then we built this house here at Aberfoyle Park and we've been here for probably about 20 years now I suspect, yeah, about 20 years. Yeah, it's great. So, yeah, look, that's the circle of what we've done.

As the quantitative data has shown, this pattern of movement would be typical of many former MMAL workers. Moreover, the participants in this study felt a sense of attachment and belonging based on their neighbourhood and neighbours. As one said

Yeah. It's a quiet street but the neighbours, you get to know them and a few neighbours leave so it's not good to see people leave. One just left the other day across the road. In this street a fair few people move around. The neighbours are important. I want to get along reasonably well with them.

Table 8.6: Have You Moved Since Leaving Mitsubishi?

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent
Yes	37	9.9	12.5
No	257	68.9	87.1
Other	1	0.3	0.3

Total	295	79.1	100.0
Missing	78	20.9	
	373	100.0	

Table 8.7: Do You Expect to Need to Move?

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent
Yes	69	18.5	19.3
No	287	76.9	80.4
Other	1	0.3	0.3
Total	357	95.7	100.0
Missing	16	4.3	
	373	100.0	

For those who do move home following their departure from MMAL, relocation is likely to represent a further significant disruption in their lives as ‘home’ was an important aspect of life for more than 90 per cent of respondents (Table 8.8) and home ownership – or the chance to own a home – was similarly important (Table 8.9). Home ownership and the attachment to place may form a significant impediment for this group to relocation for employment – an observation that reflects debates in housing research about the relationship between unemployment levels and owner occupation (Bridge *et al.* 2003b).

Table 8.8: How Important is Your Home to You?

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent
Not at all important	8	2.1	2.2
Somewhat important	8	2.1	2.2
Mildly important	14	3.8	3.8
Important	17	4.6	4.6
Decidedly important	28	7.5	7.5
Of major importance	42	11.3	11.3
Very important	254	68.1	68.5
Total	371	99.5	100.0
Missing	2	0.5	
	373	100.0	

Table 8.9: How Important is it To You To Own Your Own Home?

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent
Not at all important	9	2.4	2.4
Somewhat important	4	1.1	1.1
Mildly important	4	1.1	1.1
Important	18	4.8	4.9

Decidedly important	21	5.6	5.7
Of major importance	35	9.4	9.5
Very important	279	74.8	75.4
Total	370	99.2	100.0
Missing	3	0.8	
	373	100.0	

Home is very important to many of the participants in this study. Many of those we interviewed were able to express the depth and complexity of their attitudes to home and the role it plays within their lives. For example, one respondent said

Yeah, look, it's a base, it's a base and I suppose where we all come home to at night and relax and take it easy and whereas at the moment I'm relaxing and taking it easy here every day, bar one. But, no, it's clearly a base and a happy house, yeah, it's just something we all work hard for and we strive and we've achieved that. Yeah, it's good.

While another noted that

Home is definitely the place where you hang out. It's where you raise your kids. It's where you and your family are. It's where you sleep. I don't know if this is a trick question ... what else can I say ... it means a lot I guess.

As the latter quote suggests, for many workers displaced from MMAL, home is central to their sense of identity, and central to the identity of their family and events such as redundancy that put such values at risk are extremely stressful.

Given the high level of home ownership, housing costs were of greater concern to respondents than would have been anticipated (Table 8.10) and 63 respondents had sought some form of assistance with their housing (Table 8.11). The former outcome may reflect the insecurity of tenants who have lost their income, as well as the concerns of home purchasers whose payout was not sufficient to completely discharge their housing debt.

The qualitative data also suggest that some respondents may have taken on additional financial commitments that have then put strain on their housing. For example, one female respondent noted that while her household paid off the mortgage, they immediately took out a car loan that resulted in another form of debt

No well we, yeah we did, because we took a loan out for my car that I got, so when that came they wanted collateral, I don't know what they call it. We paid that off, so they couldn't take the house, so we got that done.

Concerns with housing costs, therefore, may reflect the consumption patterns in other areas of this group.

Table 8.10: Are Your Housing Costs a Worry to You?

	Frequency	Per cent
Not at all important	136	36.5
Somewhat important	36	9.7
Mildly important	28	7.5
Important	50	13.4
Decidedly important	42	11.3

Of major importance	25	6.7
Very important	54	14.5
Total	371	99.5
Missing	2	0.5
	373	100.0

Table 8.11: Have You Sought Assistance for Your Housing?

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent
Yes	63	16.9	17.3
No	302	81.0	82.7
Total	365	97.9	100.0
Missing	8	2.1	
	373	100.0	

9. Recommendations and Policy Implications

This report provides some preliminary results from the Stage 1 survey. To a certain degree, the material provides only an equivocal evidence base from which to extend further research and policy development. As many of the respondents were still working at MMAL at the time of being interviewed the impact of retrenchment cannot be completely understood or measured. Many of those who had left Mitsubishi at the time of interview had adopted an interim position – such as an unpaid holiday or awaiting a determination by Centrelink – prior to ‘settling down’. However, the policy implications that can be taken from the first wave of data collection and analysis are discussed below.

9.1 Building a Healthier Community by Building a Stronger Community

Social isolation and the risk of social isolation remains a major challenge for policy makers and service providers. Through this Report we have shown that there was a strong sense of community within MMAL and that these social networks have, in large measure, been destroyed by redundancy. Some former MMAL workers have been left with no or few social networks, while others have social networks that aren't as full as they once were. At the same time, service providers have reported that there is no identifiable additional demand for support because of the MMAL job losses. We would suggest that this result is to be expected given that Anglo-Celtic middle aged men are infrequent users of health and support services. We would therefore recommend that the DOH develops new strategies for engaging with this group, with a view to helping individuals rebuild and redefine friendships formerly based on their place of work. Specific actions could include:

- Organising events and activities that would be attractive to former MMAL workers. Examples would include family fun days or BBQs and picnics that mirror some aspects of the social functions MMAL used to provide. Many Mitsubishi workers spoke of the annual Christmas BBQ that MMAL used to hold for staff and families as being a highlight of the year. A similar event could be organised for former Mitsubishi workers by local government agencies working in partnership with state government. These events could be used to bring together former Mitsubishi workers and to make ex-MMAL workers and their families aware of the services that are available and how to gain access to them;
- Working with relevant unions, NGOs, community service providers and MMAL to encourage former workers to join relevant community groups, which in the case of older men could include ‘The Shed’ at Hackham West;
- Working with relevant unions and MMAL to encourage former workers to become volunteers in community groups and also to lend a hand with vocationally oriented education initiatives. This strategy would contribute to the priority goal within the South Australian Strategic Plan that relates to raising the level of volunteerism, as well as contribute to a more skilled workforce and potentially raise the health profile of workers;
- Developing a specific policy to address the community and health impacts of large scale redundancies. As noted before, while the MMAL job losses are a notable example of economic restructuring other industries are also shedding labour in metropolitan and non-metropolitan South Australia. Since the closure of MMAL at Lonsdale several smaller manufacturing businesses such as Hills Industries (also at Lonsdale) and Tenneco have also announced redundancies. The development of a policy or ‘action plan’ to address community and health issues in light of plant closures or other large-scale redundancies would make a positive contribution to health in this State.

One of the apparent absences within our research is a focus on the wives/partners of the workers. Approximately 90 per cent of those persons interviewed as part of this study were men of middle age or older age. Many found it difficult talking about their emotional wellbeing, their family life and/or their future prospects. Separate research focussed on the partners of retrenched workers may provide useful additional insights into both the mental state of former workers and how best to help them. The proposed research does not fall within the scope of the current study, but initiating such a project would ensure that full value is obtained from the current work.

9.2 Gaining Access to Services and Ensuring Financial Health

Many workers reported that they had not gained the full benefit from the advice and services offered to them as part of the process of 'exiting' MMAL. While assistance had been provided through both Mitsubishi and the JobNetwork providers, workers felt they needed more time to consider the information put before them and ideally would have liked repeat visits while they worked through issues of concern to them. For example, some interviewees reported that they didn't know what they could ask for from JobNetwork providers and subsequently found they had not received as much assistance as they were entitled to. Others said that they would have liked to spend more time discussing their financial arrangements with counsellors prior to their departure from MMAL. It is worth noting that this issue has been recognised by service providing agencies and that in the most recent round of redundancies at MMAL (May 2006) long-term counsellors have been provided as part of the assistance package funded by the Australian Government. However, the workers we have interviewed have not had access to this support and most workers expect to earn less in the future than they had earned with MMAL with median wages expected to fall from approximately \$35,000 per annum to \$25,000 per annum. Financial stress can represent a significant impost on the health of individuals and families and actions designed to make the households of former MMAL workers more financially secure will contribute to long-term health gains. It is worth noting that a significant number of interviewees were worried about their housing costs at the Stage 1 interview. Actions that could be taken include:

- Offering on-going financial counselling and support to former MMAL workers and their families. There are already a number of non-government organisations in and around Adelaide that provide financial counselling and they could be funded to provide a number of consultations with former MMAL workers. If nothing else, this would provide 'peace of mind' to concerned persons;
- Offering life skills sessions where displaced workers can receive timely assistance with matters that aren't solely of a financial nature but instead embrace workplace and living skills. While many of our respondents reported that they found the resume writing assistance provided by Mitsubishi very useful, they informed us that what they really needed was assistance in how to apply for jobs, how to prepare for a job interview, how to write covering letters and other practical matters involved in searching for, and gaining, new employment. What is clear from our survey results is that it had been decades since they had engaged with the workforce outside Mitsubishi or sought new employment. Indeed, it was a common story for many of these men to have started their working life at Mitsubishi immediately after completing school. It is clear that the workforce and labour market had changed considerably while these men were employed at Mitsubishi and many of them appeared to be struggling. Assistance could be provided with preparing for job interviews, writing job applications and other practical matters relating to gaining new employment. This should be provided in addition to resume

writing assistance. Help in dealing with financial issues, and with the challenge of making decisions in a labour market that has changed fundamentally since the workers joined MMAL, would also assist these workers in making the many decisions associated with the transition back into the workforce;

- While extensive assistance was provided through the JobNetwork providers our respondents reported two main problems with these services. Firstly, some interviewees reported that they didn't know what they could ask for from JobNetwork providers and subsequently found they had not received all the assistance as they were entitled to. It appears that many workers relied on their section manager to provide information on the services available, with some section managers being extremely helpful and others failing to properly inform workers about their entitlements. Information sessions held for all workers, to explicitly go through services that JobNetwork providers could offer would have assisted ex-MMAL workers in knowing what they could ask for and expect from the JobNetwork providers. Such information sessions should be compulsory and held before individuals have to choose their JobNetwork provider. Secondly, many respondents reported that the JobNetwork providers were unable to assist workers in their situation. All Mitsubishi workers facing redundancy were fast tracked on to the Intensive Support Customised Assistance (ISCA) scheme as part of the Federal government funding for the Mitsubishi Labour Adjustment Package. This meant that Mitsubishi workers facing redundancy were entitled to the same assistance that long-term unemployed individuals receive. This was in many ways inappropriate as these were not long-term unemployed individuals but rather skilled workers. Many respondents reported that the JobNetwork providers did not know how to deal with them, as they were used to dealing with unemployed and relatively unskilled individuals. Many respondents reported that the JobNetwork providers did not put forward any jobs at all for them, while others reported frustration and disappointment that the only jobs the JobNetworks providers put forward were for unskilled and lowly paid positions. It would appear that the Labour Adjustment Package has not been an effective policy response or an effective means of assisting these men gain re-employment, as many respondents did not use a JobNetwork provider at all. JobNetwork providers needed more training in how to deal with this category of skilled workers, compared with the clients they usually engage with. We recommend that the funding of LAPs, which have been used to assist both Mitsubishi and Holden workers made redundant in 2004 and 2005 be reviewed. This funding could perhaps be redirected to provide further training or re-skilling opportunities to redundant workers.
- Providing on-going financial counselling to those individuals who have set up their own business, who have joint a partnership or taken out a franchise. There are two issues to consider here:
 - first, many of those who have set up their own business report that they are working longer hours for less secure income when compared with their time with MMAL. Financial counselling may help their businesses become more successful and help the individuals achieve a healthy balance between work and other dimensions of life;
 - second, it is important to recognise that economic development planning for the southern region of Adelaide in the wake the MMAL job losses has emphasised small business formation (Southern Regional Economic Development

Blueprint 2006) and it is therefore important to have policies in place that support individuals starting their own business.

9.3 Changes in Income and Health Status: Potential for Increased Inequality

As noted previously, most workers expect to earn less in the future than they had with MMAL with median wages expected to fall from approximately \$35,000 per annum to \$25,000 per annum. This is an important issue because even if all workers find employment in the manufacturing sector, regional incomes will fall as individuals earn less for the same quantum of labour. Moreover, roughly one in eight workers had left the labour market at the Stage 1 interview and we anticipate this level will rise in the subsequent waves. There are potential implications for future economic growth and demand in services, which are of particular concern given the extent to which the southern region economy remains dependent upon employment in the manufacturing sector.

The risks to the southern region's economy with respect to incomes has important implications for population health as places with lower incomes and greater income inequality have poorer health when compared with more well-off places and those with more equal incomes. In other words, the potential reduction in regional income for southern Adelaide could result in a decline in the health status of the population. The policy implications for the DOH include:

- The need to boost existing programs that address health inequalities in the southern region of Adelaide. This could include bringing together health providers, community groups, NGOs and local government agencies through regional workshops to develop a regional response to community development. Such an initiative would allow key local government and regional organisations to examine how they could address the long-term health implications of economic change in the Southern Region. The DOH could provide funding for a series of workshops on the theme of regional community development in the South;
- Consideration could be given to using the southern region as a pilot when developing new programs that address health inequalities;
- Increased demand for government-provided health services in the southern region of Adelaide.
- Our findings suggest there is a group of ex-MMAL workers who are particularly at risk due to more social isolation. Many of these individuals are men who have not returned to the workforce since leaving Mitsubishi and have limited social networks or family support. In many cases the only social networks for these men centred on Mitsubishi. These men pose a significant challenge to policy makers and health providers as they are unlikely to engage with traditional health services. The key policy question for DOH is how to engage with these individuals at risk as they are unlikely to access health and welfare services. We recommend that a compulsory counselling session for all redundant workers, as part of the 'exiting' process would be an important way of identifying individuals who may be at risk. We recommend that these counselling services be called '*Transitions: Getting More out of the Redundancy Process*', as for many of these men there is a stigma attached to seeking counselling or professional health services. Such counselling sessions should be compulsory for all workers as part of the exiting process, and would be part of a universal policy. Many interviewees expressed the need to discuss the issues surrounding their retrenchment and the stress involved in the transition

period, but were unwilling to seek formal counselling. We also recommend that a program be established specifically targeting those individuals identified as being at risk. This should bring together local community service providers, NGOs and counsellors. On-going appointments should be made with the individuals at risk. The focus of these counselling sessions should be on building social networks. For instance, one of our respondents who was on DSP and had admitted to having suicidal thoughts, was also an avid musician. A programme whereby counsellors, community service providers and NGOs established a tailored program of assistance would be of considerable value. Volunteer work could also be encouraged, in this particular case the individual was seeking a venue to play his music, counsellors working together with local community workers could help establish volunteer work that might include this individual playing music at local community events.

9.4 Workforce Skills and Developing the Regional Economy

The southern part of Adelaide is at risk of losing the substantial and valuable manufacturing skills of MMAL workers as a result of reduced income prospects and the reality that most manufacturing jobs are in the north of Adelaide. Many respondents recognised that their best chance of securing employment in the manufacturing sector was in the northern region of Adelaide, however many were unwilling to commute given the time and cost involved. The potential loss of skills is an important issue both for the economic future of the southern region (SREDB 2006) and the health of its population. An unskilled labour force will make the south a less attractive location for inward investment and may retard the expansion of existing businesses. This could contribute to lower regional wages in the medium to long term, thereby depressing the health of the population. At a state level, there is a risk of the absolute loss of skills at a time when many employers are critical of staff and skill shortages.

The actions that arise from this policy issue do not necessarily fall within the sphere of the DOH, though DOH does have a direct influence in any strategies that contribute to regional – and State – well being. Such actions embrace:

- Individuals facing redundancy could be encouraged to take employment opportunities in the Northern areas of Adelaide through offering a travel subsidy. This was a policy measure adopted by Government in the UK to assist redundant workers made redundant by the closure of the Rover plant at Longbridge. Many of these workers had to travel a considerable distance to get to work. The rationale was that Government wanted to retain the valuable manufacturing skills these workers had (MG Rover Task Force 2005). We recommend that such a policy response would also be appropriate for ex-Mitsubishi workers. Most of the former Mitsubishi workers we interviewed lived in close proximity to the Lonsdale site and while they recognised most job opportunities were in the north they were unwilling to pursue these employment opportunities because of the increased cost and time to travel to work. Rising petrol prices were of particular concern. We believe many of these respondents could be encouraged to accept work in the north if offered a travel subsidy. Indeed there were respondents who reported that they had chosen to drop out of the labour force because they were unprepared to pay the costs associated with travelling to the northern side of the city where they believed most of the job opportunities existed. Such a policy would assist the State Governments priority of addressing the skills shortage in the area of manufacturing and help retain the skills base the state has in this sector.

- The South Australian government could emulate the MG Rover experience where regional and central government sought to avoid the potential loss of manufacturing and engineering expertise as a result of the plant closure. A major part of this policy response involved the establishment of the Manufacturing and Engineering Hub or ‘Skills Hub’ which provided:
 - a travel subsidy up to £75/week for up to 20 weeks;
 - minimum National Vocational Qualification Level 2 training for each employee plus one other from host employer;
 - a wage induction subsidy to employer £50/wk for 12 weeks.

The ‘Skills Hub’ provided not just travel subsidies but established a skills matching service where by employers could register vacant positions they were trying to fill and the ‘Skills Hub’ would endeavour to find suitably qualified ex-Rover workers for the position. Importantly, employers who took on ex-Rover workers were provided with not just a wage subsidy but training for the ex-Rover worker and significantly one other existing employee. The MG Rover Task Force reported that this service had a significant impact in helping ex-MG Rover workers obtain new employment, and immediate job offers with training. Of the 6,000 MG Rover workers made redundant, 751 individuals gained new jobs through the Hub. Seventy five per cent of these people are receiving training and/or travel support. In addition, almost 2,000 of the 6,000 workers made redundant were offered some form of training. We recommend the establishment of such a ‘Skills Hub’ should further large scale redundancies occur, as it is an important way to bring together local businesses and redundant workers, offering training and up-skilling not just to redundant workers but to other employees.

9.5 Assisting Workers Back Into Employment Through Training and Re-Skilling

A key finding of our research was the large number of individuals who wished to pursue further training after leaving Mitsubishi. Fifty nine per cent of all respondents in the Stage 1 MMAL survey indicated that they had plans for further training which may assist their future employment. There was a clear role for government intervention in this area to provide training and/or re-skilling to redundant workers, with a clear VET demand for those workers who had not completed high school but who intended to pursue job-related training. Steps should be taken to assist the displaced workers in achieving this goal, including:

- Liaison with TAFE, universities and other relevant education providers to develop appropriate skills and training packages. As a first measure this would involve bringing together relevant education providers and local and state government representatives to determine what areas the southern region is suffering a skills shortage in and focus training courses offered to redundant workers in those areas. This should also include strategies aimed at marketing the courses to affected workers;
- The development of an education and skills forum specifically focussed on the needs of displaced workers. While this could embrace workers in the south, it could also cover workers made redundant in other parts of Adelaide;
- Providing training for redundant workers requires considerable funding. When MG Rover closed in 2005 in Birmingham the central Government provided 50 million pounds for training and re-skilling workers. This resulted in over 2,000 of the 6,000 redundant workers taking up training opportunities. Both federal and state governments need to commit adequate funds for the training and re-skilling of redundant workers. Despite the considerable Labour Adjustment Fund from the federal and state

government, none of the money was put aside for training or re-skilling.

9.6 Meeting Chronic and Acute Health Care Needs

Relatively few interviewees at the Stage 1 interview were in receipt of a Disability Support Pension (DSP) but we anticipate this number will grow as many workers had not left Mitsubishi at the time of their interview or were waiting to meet Centrelink qualifications. Former MMAL workers who go onto a DSP are of particular policy concern because redundant workers are more socially isolated than those still in paid work; they are likely to have a significant demand for community and health services; and, the reduction in household earnings resulting from a statutory income may further depress their health and the health of other members of their household. We would suggest actions are needed that set out to engage this group with the broader community and, where possible, encourage them to participate in paid or unpaid work. Key actions could include:

- Encouraging DSP recipients to volunteer for community activities and to participate in the work of NGOs;
- Working with NGOs to identify paid work that would be suitable for DSP recipients;
- Health promotion activities that encourage people to take a positive view of their health and participate fully in society.

Finally it is important to note that the Mitsubishi workers facing redundancy had lower mental health than the metropolitan Adelaide average. It is not clear whether the lower mental health status of this group is a reflection of the trauma and uncertainty of forced redundancy (that is, being forced to leave MMAL), is an outcome of being unemployed (ie a function of experience since leaving MMAL) or reflects the prior mental health status of this group. Alternatively, it could be an outcome of combined processes. To a certain degree, the answer to this question will be provided in the latter two waves of interviews within this research. In addition, and as discussed previously, the current round of redundancies at MMAL has been accompanied by the engagement of 'personal development and community transition' consultants for displaced workers. This step may address the mental anguish of many of this group. It is important that we do not ignore the qualitative evidence of the extent of depth of this problem. A number of actions should be taken up by the DOH:

- Research needs to be undertaken on the contribution of the 'personal development and community consultation' consultants vis-à-vis mental health. Put simply, DOH needs to know if this step improves the mental health of workers facing employment loss and helps them move forward with their life;
- There needs to be a protocol developed for dealing with displaced workers whose mental health is at risk. This protocol needs to step beyond the conventional forms of service delivery and chart a new way of identifying individuals at risk. Measures such as those outlined in the policy recommendations should form part of this protocol. This could also include appointing DOH staff to follow up and visit with displaced workers who are perceived to be at risk.

9.7 Factors Mitigating Against the Effects of Redundancy

It is worth noting that a number of factors have mitigated against the effects of redundancy for these ex-MMAL workers. Firstly, the generous payout that redundant workers received has in many cases alleviated some of the stress and financial insecurity of redundancy. Many of the respondents we interviewed used their payout to either pay off or significantly reduce their mortgage. This has protected the ex-MMAL workers from the financial impact of having to accept lower paid employment. In some circumstances it enabled respondents to change careers paths, entering into full-time study or taking on employment in another area that was lower paid but provided more satisfaction to the respondent. Secondly, the age profile of the ex-MMAL workers meant that many of these individuals had already paid off their mortgage and were able to use the payout to provide further financial security through increased investment in shares or a rental investment property. Thirdly, the redundant Mitsubishi workers have been fortunate that their redundancy occurred at a time when the South Australia labour market is particularly buoyant, with unemployment rates the lowest in thirty years.

10. Conclusion

The closure of the MMAL plant at Lonsdale and the loss of employment at the Tonsley Park plant represents a significant shock to the economy and community of southern Adelaide. It is relatively straight forward to calculate the economic cost of the job losses, with the two Mitsubishi plants contributing just \$1 billion to Gross Regional Product in 2001, with approximately one-third of that total attributable to the Lonsdale facility. The impact on the community – and the health of displaced workers – is, however, more difficult to assess. Many of the health and community impacts either have not emerged at this point in time or are only beginning to become evident. There are already indicators of a community and a population under stress with a significant number of interviewees reporting that job loss had affected their family life and sense of well being; some workers falling out of the labour market, expressed concerns about housing costs – rental or home ownership; and, less secure and well remunerated employment for those able to find jobs. In many ways we should be surprised that the impacts of job loss at MMAL have not been more severe. This reflects the relative generosity of the redundancy package provided to departing workers and the general level of prosperity nationally and in this state.

This Report is, of necessity, an interim statement on the health, housing and labour market impacts of the loss of employment at MMAL. It has provided insights into the impacts of redundancy based on the first of three waves of quantitative data collection, as well as from one wave of qualitative interviews. We have found significant changes in the lives of affected workers – some positive and some negative – and there are strong indications of more fundamental developments to come. We anticipate, for example, a higher level of take up of Disability Support Pension in Stages 2 and 3, as well as higher rates of re-employment. It is also likely that the many of the workers who have established their own business will experience significant changes in their lives.

It is important to note that some workers – their health and their social interactions – have benefited from their employment loss. MMAL was a responsible employer that paid well and provided a generous redundancy package. Some workers found that leaving MMAL has provided them with financial security for the remainder of their lives and has also given

them time to spend with friends and family, as well as the pursuit of sport and recreational activities. But not all retrenched workers are in this fortunate position. In some ways older workers have been better placed to take advantage of employment loss because they have fewer financial commitments – children, mortgages et cetera; their redundancy package was larger; and in some instances they have been able to move into early retirement. The advantaged position of this group is reflected in the good health status of the MMAL workers aged over 60 when compared with the metropolitan average for their peers. Some other groups, however, are not as fortunate and both the qualitative and quantitative data demonstrates that some individuals have become isolated and socially excluded. The data on social interaction and community connectedness shows that while many workers have maintained their links with the broader community the social networks and bonding that was such a strong feature of working life at MMAL has, in large measure, evaporated. While some workers continue to play sport or socialising with their former work colleagues, the majority of those interviewed had lost contact with such people and mourned that loss. MMAL had been an important feature of their working and social life, with approximately half employed at Lonsdale or Tonsley Park for twenty years or more. The severing of these ties has had a substantial impact on some workers, and especially those pre-disposed to be socially isolated.

A greater level of alienation amongst some former MMAL workers is expected to contribute to a greater demand for health and social supports in the southern region of Adelaide in the longer-term. The full impact of the redundancies is unlikely to be felt for a number of years as individuals may become vulnerable to depression, adopt a more sedentary lifestyle, have lower incomes, interact with fewer people and need to cope with a greater level of stress within their lives. Even at this stage the MMAL workers (with the exception of the over 65 year olds) were reporting worse mental health than a representative sample of Adelaide's population. The fact that it is not possible to make definitive statements about the full effects of the redundancies based on other Australian studies highlights the importance of this piece of research, and the DOH initiative in sponsoring the work. At a fundamental level the preliminary results presented in this Report have emphasised how important it is to assess the impacts of large scale job losses and to undertake detailed longitudinal analysis. Without research of this nature the impacts of the closure would disappear from view and simply be part of a broader downward trend in health status amongst the population as a whole. Economic restructuring will remain a feature of the Australian economy for the foreseeable future and an enhanced evidence base is needed to better inform policy development and program applications. This Report is a first step towards developing that enhanced body of knowledge.

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