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BCEC Senior Research Fellow Dr Astghik Mavisakalyan is part of a team of researchers led by Professor Siobhan Austen and including Dr Helen Hodgson and Professor Ross Taplin from the Curtin Business School that has been awarded a $326,000 grant from the Australian Research Council to fund a project which explores intra-household resource allocations of older couples.

In an ageing population where households are becoming responsible for provisioning retirement needs, understanding what happens in older couple households is important.

The project expects to influence policy by generating evidence relevant to the design of regulations governing the allocation of superannuation assets, tax incentives for alternative forms of retirement savings, asset and income tests on the Age Pension, and initiatives targeting older Australians’ financial literacy.

Dr Mavisakalyan was also successful in a grant funded under the Australia-Germany Joint Research Cooperation Scheme jointly with collaborators at the University of Goettingen in Germany.

The Australia-Germany Joint Research Cooperation Scheme supports academic exchange and collaboration between researchers in Australia and Germany, and under this scheme, Dr Anna Minasyan, a development economist from the University of Goettingen will conduct part of the project at Curtin Business School in the first half of the 2017 followed by Dr Mavisakalyan’s visit to the University of Goettingen in the second half of the year.

The project will explore the unusually high ratio of men to women in certain parts of the world – a phenomenon coined as ‘missing women’. Historically, increases in this ratio during and after wars have been observed but not consistently studied. This project will provide the first comprehensive examination of the link between wars and sex ratios.

Both projects will culminate in the release of research publications that will add valuable insights to the evidence base needed to inform good social and economic policy.
AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS

Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre wins national business and higher education award

The Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre was awarded the Ashley Goldsworthy Award for Sustained Collaboration between Business and Tertiary Education, by the Business/Higher Education Round Table (B/HERT).

The Award acknowledges long-term collaborations between universities and businesses that have achieved significant commercial, economic and/or social impact benefits.

Established in 2012, BCEC has evolved to become one of the top centres of its kind in Australia dedicated to delivering high-quality, accessible research that provides a deep understanding of the economic and social policy issues facing Western Australia and the nation.

Bankwest Head of Community Engagement Craig Spencer said he was delighted the BCEC’s efforts had been formally recognised.

“The BCEC was established with Bankwest’s support with a core mission to undertake high quality, objective research on the key economic and social issues of relevance to Western Australia.

“Through high quality, evidence-based research and analysis, their research informs policy makers and commentators of the economic challenges to achieving sustainable and equitable growth and prosperity both in Western Australia and nationally.

“Many communities in WA face significant barriers to growth which prevent them from realising their true potential. Bankwest’s ongoing relationship with, and support of, the BCEC is just one of the many ways we’re working to make a positive difference beyond our core business,” he said.

BCEC Director Professor Alan Duncan said he was tremendously proud that the Centre’s achievements have been recognised through such a prestigious national award.

“It’s fantastic that BCEC, together with Bankwest and Curtin University, have won national recognition from such an influential body as B/HERT,” Professor Duncan said.

“It demonstrates that our passionate commitment to research is making a real difference to the lives of families, communities and businesses both in WA and nationally.”

The Business/Higher Education Round Table (B/HERT) Awards were established in 1998 and winners were announced at a dinner in Melbourne on Tuesday 15 November 2016.
FOCUS ON WESTERN AUSTRALIA REPORT SERIES

Back to the future: Western Australia’s economic future after the boom

Life for West Australians after the resources boom is attracting plenty of media attention right now. The Centre’s latest publication - Back to the future - was launched in Perth on 20 October and, according to the West Australian’s Economics Editor Shane Wright, stands as a “landmark report” that paints a clear picture of the state’s economic future after the mining boom.

How has income and wealth inequality changed since the peak of the mining boom? Have prices and cost of living in WA fallen in line with incomes and wealth? Are we starting to see more industry diversification outside the resources sector? These are some of the few questions explored in the Back to the future report.

In 2014, the Centre’s first Focus on WA report - Sharing the Boom - looked at the impact of the exceptionally high growth rates enjoyed by Western Australia over the course of the mining boom during the first decade of the new millennium. This period of economic expansion gave rise to unprecedented growth in Western Australia’s economy, with the annual growth rate of WA’s gross state product (GSP) spiking at 9 per cent in 2011-12.

However, the economic outlook post-2012 is very different. By 2015, the state’s GSP growth rate had slid to 3.5 per cent and the gap between the state and nation’s economic growth rate had narrowed.

Speaking to the findings at the launch of the report, Centre Director Professor Alan Duncan said that after a prolonged period of economic growth driven by the resources boom, WA’s economic trajectory has returned to a ‘new normal’ more consistent with national economic growth rates.

The state’s economic slowdown has undoubtedly had significant impacts on the economic and social wellbeing of West Australians. There has been a shift away from full-time towards part-time employment, with underemployment on the rise, and feelings of job insecurity now more prevalent. The State has also experienced a net population outflow as the economic fortunes of the mining sector come under increased pressure.

Professor Duncan said that despite the tailing off of the resources boom, there is still a huge gap between the rich and poor in Western Australia.
Wealth inequality across WA is growing despite the end of the mining boom, a landmark report into the State economy has found while also arguing areas of potential growth are struggling to escape the shadow of the resource sector.

“The wealthiest 20 per cent of WA households hold almost two-thirds of the State’s total net household wealth. In contrast, the poorest 20 per cent of households hold a mere 0.8 per cent of the State’s household wealth,” Professor Duncan said.

The release of the Centre’s eighth report in the Focus on WA series generated much interest among the 300-strong audience that attended the breakfast event – one of the largest crowds to attend a BCEC report launch.

Professor Duncan identified challenges facing WA, and further opportunities for economic growth.

“The mining industry will remain a cornerstone of WA’s economy, and one cannot expect the State’s future growth trajectory to be driven by industries like tourism and agriculture alone.”

“In the latest State Cabinet reshuffle, WA Premier Colin Barnett indicated that changes in ministry portfolios were aimed at supporting economic diversification outside the resources sector. The spotlight has been on the tourism industry as a potential new growth sector as the mining sector slows, with the Premier himself taking on the role of Tourism Minister.

“Tourism and agriculture feature strongly in the current growth narrative, and are unquestionably important industries for the State, especially in regional WA. But the government might need to broaden these policy priorities to support the creation of economic value and secure work across a wider range of industries.”

“Despite a fall in iron ore prices, the mining industry continues to maintain its dominance in the WA economy.”

Mining contributed around 37% of the gross value added to the WA economy in 2015. By contrast, the agriculture, retail, and accommodation and food services sectors in WA collectively contributed 6.8% to the State’s in 2014-15.”

“Western Australia’s unemployment rate has traditionally remained well below the national rate, but for the first time since 2006, the State’s unemployment rate exceeded the national average.”

“During the boom the resources industry delivered record jobs and soaring wages,” Centre Deputy Director Professor Rachel Ong said.

“But by mid-2015 the unemployment rate rose above national levels for the first time in a decade, and by August grew to 6.2 per cent, compared to 5.7 per cent for the rest of Australia.”

“West Australians now face a future characterised by weaker labour market demand, rising precariousness and reduced work hours,” Professor Ong said.

Expert panelists highlighted the need for creative policy settings to drive the State’s future economic prosperity.

UnitingCare West chief executive Sue Ash, a strong advocate for people most in need, shared her perspectives into human services and said that policy levers are directly impacting on our capacity to deliver a community that is fair and just.

“We’re seeing increased income inequality, particularly for low income earners and women,” said Ms Ash.

ACIL Allen Executive Director John Nicolau said WA needs efficient, creative and imaginative policy settings for economic growth.

“Long-term trends showed a move from a blue to a white-collar workforce. The trend emerging in Australia, as with other advanced economies, is one of growth in the services sector. Skills that allow Australia’s future workforce to work alongside technology-driven production would be much in demand.”

Toro Energy Managing Director and CEO Vanessa Guthrie said that, as someone who had weathered seven boom-bust cycles and had herself faced periods of unemployment along the way, she viewed the precariousness of employment in WA as an opportunity.

“Mining is and will remain an essential feature of the WA economy ... 37 per cent is a big number we should not walk away from,” she said.

Professor Duncan said the report suggested governments need to be creative in laying down new policies to help grow the State.

“When looking at Western Australia’s recent economic trends and future prospects, we should remember that the State is returning from an exceptional period of economic growth driven by the mining boom,” he said.

“WA’s economic trajectory has returned to a ‘new normal’ more consistent with national economic growth rates.”

“A key consideration is whether we have the right policy settings in place to develop strength in depth across the State’s industry sectors, and provide future jobs growth in a marketplace that has become increasingly precarious.”
Housing affordability in WA has improved — just not for those who need it most, according to Professor Rachel Ong, Deputy Director of the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre.

Speaking at a WestBusiness / Curtin University Outlook Series roundtable event, Professor Ong said despite the centre's 2016 Housing Affordability report finding that housing affordability improved for average WA households between 2012 and 2014, further analysis had revealed a "very limited" trickle-down effect for low-income earners and those living in the regions.

Expert panellists included Colin Holt, National MP and parliamentary secretary to the Minister for Housing; Fran Logan, Labor MP and Shadow Housing Minister; John Wood National Lifestyle Villages Managing Director; John Percudani, Realmark Managing Director; John Gelavis, WA Housing Industry Association Executive Director; Tony Pritchett, Plunkett Homes Chief Executive; Warwick Hemsley, QWest Paterson chairman; Rowan Hemsley, QWest Paterson Director and Mark Fitzpatrick, St Vincent de Paul Society Chief Executive Officer.

Professor Ong highlighted that "one in five older renters are living in housing stress and the "proportion of renters paying more than 50 per cent of income in rent has doubled from 5 per cent to 10 per cent in the past decade."

Professor Ong identified the State’s love affair with standalone housing on a suburban block, or lack of diversity, as one of the key issues. This meant more than 40 per cent of older West Australians who wanted to downsize could not because there were no suitable options in the areas where they wanted to live, she said.

Expert panellists singled out local councils, poor planning and delays, distorted tax signals and lack of housing choice, saying each contributed to pointless inefficiencies that added to housing costs.

Realmark managing director John Percudani said there were affordability issues at the bottom end of the market, the young end of the market and the older end of the market.

"We have a real challenge because there is just not the diversity in the housing market where it needs to be," Mr Percudani said.

St Vincent de Paul Society WA chief executive Mark Fitzpatrick said community housing, a distinct market from ownership and rental, was being overlooked despite the 20,000 people on State waiting lists, which he said was the highest in Australia.

“We have one of the lowest levels of institutional investment in residential housing (in the OECD and I would like to see) investment in housing that provides for very long-term leases,” Mr Fitzpatrick said.

Colin Holt, a Nationals MP and parliamentary secretary to the Minister for Housing, and Labor shadow minister for housing Fran Logan highlighted the WA Government's Keystart program, which helps West Australians with small deposits into the housing market, as a "fabulous tool."

Mr Logan said there were substantial under-used parcels of land around train stations in established areas "where you can have density of housing, different forms of housing that are far more affordable."

QWest Paterson chairman Warwick Hemsley said there was no land
We’re proud to report that the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre has won two prizes at the recent 2016 Curtin Media Awards.

Associate Professor Rebecca Cassells, BCEC’s Head of Research Impact and Engagement Strategy, was awarded the 2016 prize for the Most Prolific New Media Commentator in Curtin Business School (CBS).

The award recognises Rebecca’s outstanding contribution to media engagement and expert commentary for the Centre and CBS.

Together with BCEC Director, Professor Alan Duncan and Deputy Director Professor Rachel Ong, Rebecca also received the Most Outstanding Curtin Research News Story award for the Gender Equity Insights 2016: Inside Australia’s Gender Pay Gap report.

The report achieved the greatest coverage of any Curtin Business School news story during the year.

Curtin’s Annual Media Awards are designed to recognise academic staff who have made an outstanding contribution to raising Curtin University’s share of positive media coverage over the past 12 months.
The launch of a new BCEC report on the performance and prospects for Western Australia’s International Education Sector found that WA’s international student market is at a crossroads as WA lags behind other states and territories in international student demand.

The report highlights WA’s falling share of international students over the last decade, with growth in the value of international education for the State lagging substantially behind other states and territories.

The report prepared jointly by the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre and the John Curtin Institute of Public Policy (JCIPP), and supported by the Western Australian Private Education and Training Industry Association (WAPETIA) looks at the trends and future scenarios in international student enrolments across all education sectors, and considers future scenarios that could serve to reverse the current decline in WA’s share of international student enrolments.

Speaking to the findings at the report launch in Perth on Friday 18 November, BCEC Director Professor Alan Duncan said that international education is an important industry for Western Australia despite WA’s declining share of Australia’s international education market.

While WA had a record 50,500 international onshore student enrolments in 2015, its current share of the Australian onshore international education market has declined from 9.9 per cent in 2002 to 7.8 per cent in 2015. This trend is particularly evident in WA’s higher education sector, which has declined from over 11 per cent to under 7 per cent over the same period.

In figure 4 you will see that WA’s schools sector has also fallen significantly since 2002, when it contributed 8 per cent to WA’s international student enrolments.

This now lies at 1.8 per cent. On a more positive note, the VET sector has increased its share of the national market to over 9 per cent, driven primarily by private providers.

The decline in higher education is particularly concerning, given that 65 per cent of WA’s international student expenditure on goods and services and on fees are attributed to the higher education sector.

WA’s declining share of Australia’s international education market stems in part from a failure to capitalise on growth in student numbers in both the higher education sector and from China.

“Our findings suggest ‘selling’ Perth and WA as a desirable study destination is an important priority in developing the State’s future international education strategy,” Professor Duncan said.

“The attractiveness of Western Australia as a study destination for international students could be enhanced with streamlined access to courses, and by enhancing the student experience in WA. This would serve both to attract students to the State and to create future cohorts of advocates for study in WA.”

The report also found the distance between the home country and WA, and alignment of time zones, are important positive factors in growing the State’s international student base.

“There is great potential for WA to exploit its proximity to Asia to increase the market share of international students choosing to enrol in the WA education sector,” Professor Duncan said.

Figure 22 shows WA’s top source countries by region in 2015 and compares those enrolments to 2002 figures. Despite WA not securing its share of growth from Australia’s largest source country – China, WA has a large geographical footprint in the international education sector, with enrolments from over 140 countries.

Coupled with our proximity to Asian markets, which account for 68 per cent of enrolments in WA in 2015, this provides a strong base from which the sector can grow.

A scenario in which WA achieves its population share of international student enrolments by 2020 would see total enrolments increasing by 80 per cent to 91,200. This would see revenue reach $2.6bn – growing by $1.2bn, with an additional 8,000 jobs added to the economy, across various sectors including education, food, drink and accommodation, tourism, transport and retail, amongst others.
"However, realising this potential will require a coordinated and inclusive State strategy, and will almost certainly require additional resources," Professor John Phillimore, Director of the JCIPP, said.

"International education is an important part of WA’s economic strategy. It is therefore important that the State sharpens the focus and resources being applied to international education and the governance surrounding its promotion and development," Professor Phillimore said.

Four expert panellists were invited to present at the report launch and agreed that Western Australia is well positioned to reverse the decline in the market share if we all work together and there is greater investment in the sector.

Vice-Chancellor for Curtin University, Professor Deborah Terry AO said there are significant opportunities for Perth to be the destination of choice for international students. "The rest of the world needs to realise what an amazing place Perth is to study, and they will."

"We have the capacity for international education to be a key economic driver here as WA has a strong higher education sector with strengths in major areas of demand including energy, data science, biodiversity, geosciences and cybersecurity. Study opportunities here in WA will help deliver the industry links, global partnerships and innovation capacity that will underpin our future economic and social prosperity."

"Our offshore activity should not be disregarded and our proximity to Asia is a huge asset," Deputy Vice-Chancellor International of Murdoch University, Professor Lyn Karstadt said.

Professor Lyn Beazley AO, Chair of StudyPerth called for an integrated marketing approach between WA’s education and tourism sectors. "Western Australia is well positioned to reverse the decline in market share if we all work together and there is investment in the sector," Professor Beazley said.

Ms Karen Ho, Executive Director Service Delivery of the Department of Training and Workforce Development said the VET sector is crucial to the Australian economy; both for the development of the national workforce and as a major export industry. "It is also an important contributor to pathways into university for international students."

Professor John Phillimore said WA was in the process of drafting a much needed strategy for the international education sector. "WA requires a focussed, coordinated and inclusive State strategy to capture its fair share of international student enrolments into the future."
The Centre launched the ‘From Paddock to Plate: WA’s Potential in Agriculture and Agribusiness’ report at a well-attended event at the Hyatt Regency in Perth on 23 September 2016. BCEC Director Professor Alan Duncan and researcher Dr Ken Leong presented key findings from the report.

Speaking to the findings at the launch of the report, Professor Alan Duncan began with a look at contributions to the economy from agriculture. The $8 billion industry, categorised into broadacre production, livestock and horticulture, comprises wheat, barley, beef, wool and a variety of produce and floriculture as main contributors.

“The much talked about growth in avocado production testifies to new markets in health and lifestyle foods, matched by grapes for both wine and direct consumption in value terms at 10% of total horticulture production,” Professor Duncan said.

WA employed over 52,000 agriculture workers in 2005, but has since declined at a faster rate than several other states, to 31,000 as at May 2016. Professor Duncan highlighted several reasons for this, in particular the adoption of new technologies and innovation, resulting in higher productivity. With the changing composition of the workforce, he also sees a rising share of part time workers.

Dr Leong examined the top earners for WA, where cereal crops form the largest percentage. This comes from wheat, canola and barley. Wool is also a high value export, as is crayfish. In tracking WA’s export of canola, where the European market is as important as Asia, an interesting observation is that export to the Netherlands has dwindled to almost nothing following previous strong exports. The reason is that canola is a key feedstock for biofuel and recent EU policies set on reducing reliance on oilseeds grown on agriculture land has significantly reduced our export to the Dutch biofuel industry.

Dr Leong also highlighted one of the more striking trends in our analysis relating to crayfish. “Seemingly out of nowhere WA’s export to Vietnam has gone off the charts. In 2015, almost all the $350 million value goes to Vietnam. Digging deeper, the reality is most of the rock lobster is indirectly exported to China via Vietnam given the recent blockage by the Chinese administration of the so-called grey trade routes.”

Professor Duncan addressed barriers to innovation, saying that incentivising the industry and putting in place conditions that allow firms to enter the market efficiently are critical if we are to take advantage of growing export opportunities. “Regulations, compliance and costs of development have all been cited by businesses as impediments to innovation. So too does uncertainty about long-term tenure rights discourage investment in agricultural land, production and infrastructure. Addressing tenure security will be a critical step to incentivise and de-risk future investment,” he added.
Dr Leong then presented the findings on a fascinating piece of work looking at changing dietary patterns. He began with two observations. “First, as per capita income increases, consumption increases. Second, though countries approach different saturation levels there is a convergence towards 3,000 to 3,500 calories per day.”

We can gain a better perspective by looking at various food groups. As economies get richer, grain consumption falls and meat rises. Demand for produce remains fairly constant as countries experience growth. For dairy and eggs there are two distinct groups. The western societies - Germany, US, UK and Australia - consume proportionately more butter and cream in their diet, and Asia, with less use of cream and butter and higher prevalence of lactose intolerance. There is a strong tendency for sugar and fat consumption to increase as economies develop. It is mostly higher for western societies but developing Asia is fast catching up.

Given the interest in the beef industry by business leaders and investors, we analysed consumer preferences in China and the potential upsides.

The Chinese are changing their pattern of meat consumption. While pork and poultry remain important, we expect beef consumption to increase with income. China currently only imports 8% of its beef. As demand exceeds local supply we should see import share grow. Australia currently exports 150,000 tonnes to China and recently, with the influx of cheaper frozen beef from South America, Australia has lost a bit of our share. We know from market research that Chinese consumers have a high preference for Australian beef, and we can aim to increase our share back towards the highs in 2013, at around 45% of all beef imported into China. If we are able to achieve that, our current 1 billion dollar beef export industry into China could well exceed $4 billion by 2030.

Expert panellists highlighted the challenges and prospects of WA agribusiness futures. Elizabeth Brennan (Australian Women in Agriculture) made an impact on the audience referencing the ‘Better Together’ theme in the report, stating “we need to stop being poised and move to collective action.” Elizabeth also challenged stereotypes of Australia farming, in that women play an increasingly important role and the face of Australian farming, as typically represented by middle-age Anglo-Saxon men, may no longer represent the workforce diversity.

Ralph Addis (Department of Regional Development) said the report gives an excellent and clear picture of what is happening in agribusiness and discussed the Department’s plans to lift WA’s productivity and infrastructure, and explained some of the challenges to streamline processes.

Andrew Crane (CBH Group) explored technology and innovation and said it’s important to invest in mobile broadband to improve the growth of WA agribusiness. He discussed the need to fix the data drought as technology is the key to lift productivity and keep communities sustainable. Furthermore, Mr Crane said the report provides great insight but also asks “what’s next, and what are we going to do to make it happen?”

To cap off a successful launch Professor Duncan reflected “overall, WA’s agriculture industry has outstanding natural endowments, and a strong innovation base from which to capitalise on increased global demand and export opportunities.”
Whenever the gender pay gap is mentioned there are always those who argue it doesn’t exist, either because of differences in the way men and women work, choices women make or legislation prohibiting it. Whatever the reason, this confused rhetoric stems from a couple of sources.

The first is the belief that the gender pay gap is a synonym for direct discrimination. And the second is a more general misunderstanding around what the gender pay gap can tell us about overall inequality in the Australian labour market.

It’s time to clear up how we think about the gender pay gap and what it can tell us about the current and future economic security of women and the lost opportunity in human capital investment and potential.

The importance of a consistent measure

The gender pay gap is the difference between men and women’s pay. It can be measured a number of ways, but a common metric is the difference between the average wages of men and women working full-time. This is a useful metric as it accounts (to some extent) for differences in the number of hours men and women work each week and provides a good basis for changes to be monitored over time.

Over the last few decades Australia has seen a considerable increase in women’s labour force participation, levels of education, greater support to working families through child care, paid parental leave and flexible working arrangements. Key pieces of legislation have also been introduced in order to combat workplace inequalities. However, across that same period, the full-time gender pay gap has barely shifted.

The full-time gender pay gap currently stands at 16.2%, on par with the long-term average over the past twenty years. Women working full-time currently earn, on average, 84% of a man’s pay.

When there is a structural shift in the labour market, where women are as likely to hold higher paying jobs as men and women’s work is valued as highly, and other biases are eliminated, the full-time gender pay gap will decrease considerably and permanently. This is in contrast to the cyclical movements we can see in headline indicators at the moment.
Because of the highly segregated workforce, gender pay gaps tend to increase when the economy is booming and contract during economic downturns.

Running out of excuses

The Australian labour market is highly segregated, meaning some of the overall gender pay gap is driven by the differences in the way men and women work. Men tend to dominate industries that have higher pay such as mining and construction and women dominate health care and education.

In fact, even taking into account for differences in occupation and industry, gender pay gaps exist, especially in the managerial levels as shown by new data reported to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.

Let’s take three examples – the male dominated mining industry, female dominated health care industry and the mixed retail trade sector.

Mining has an overall gender pay gap of 18%, but digging down into occupations within that industry, there is considerable variation. Among machinery operators and drivers, the gender pay gap is 7% in the mining sector, but increases to 17% when comparing top-tier managers.

The female dominated health care and social assistance sector also has an overall gender pay gap of 18% and again variation exists when examining occupations within the industry.

Lower occupation levels tend to have smaller gender pay gaps – but as the level of seniority increases, so does the pay gap. It reaches 25% for key management personnel in the health care sector.

This is especially the case for the retail trade sector, where workers’ pay and conditions for lower occupation levels are guided heavily by awards and agreements. However, as seniority increases and pay becomes more discretionary, so does the gender pay gap.

Experience and education

Experience and education will also influence how much pay one receives and it will also explain some of the gender pay gap. There are high hopes for younger generations that the gender pay gap will disappear.

Younger age groups do face a lower gender pay gap than older age groups, however, this has not changed substantially in the ten years between 2003 and 2013.

In fact women in their twenties working full-time in 2003 could expect to take home around 8% less in weekly wages than their male counterparts. By 2013, this had increased to just over 15%.

The important point is that gender pay gaps are real and haven’t really made any huge ground over time.

Some of the gap can be explained by differences in how men and women work, their education and experience.

If we can explain these differences, then this is really useful because we can then address it. But, numerous studies show that once we do account for all the possible drivers of the gender pay gap we are left with a large portion we just can’t explain.

Which gender pay gap should we really be interested in?

There is no single answer to this question – it depends on the objective.

Headline indicators across the workforce are useful because they illustrate the lack of structural change in the labour market that is needed to bring men and women’s average wages on par.

To understand and address the gender pay gap for the next generation of workers in the labour market, we will need a different lens to those we use for understanding the gender pay gap for top tier managers.

The important point is that there are a number of ways to look at the gender pay gap and its drivers. Each has its place and more importantly, each can inform the policies and initiatives needed to eliminate it.

The original version of this article first appeared in The Conversation on September 8 2016.
Congratulations to Rachel on her promotion to Professor

Rachel Ong is the Deputy Director for the Centre and was recently promoted to Professor. Rachel oversees the Centre’s Focus on Western Australia report series and WA in the Spotlight workshop series.

Rachel’s research addresses a range of housing policy issues, including the role of housing assets in supporting welfare throughout the life course, intergenerational housing concerns, the dynamics of housing affordability, housing pathways in the 21st century, and the links between housing and the economy. She has long-standing expertise in the evaluation of housing tax-transfer reforms.

Rachel also has an established research record in the area of population ageing. She has conducted extensive research into the work disincentives and employment decisions of mature age workers, as well as workforce vulnerabilities in mid to late life.

Steven’s research focuses on the economics of innovation

Steven is a Research Fellow at the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre, Curtin University, contributing to original research and BCEC’s marquee reports.

His research has been presented at international conferences in Europe, Asia, Australia and the United States on international trade, macroeconomics, regional science and economic geography, as well as in seminars at the University of Cambridge and the London School of Economics.

Prior to joining BCEC, Steven has been in a number of government, corporate and consulting roles providing economic advice to government departments, regulators and stakeholders.

Steven’s research focuses on the economics of innovation and aims to embed the micro-foundations of innovation within economic growth models in order to develop policy recommendations for sustainable and inclusive growth. His research has connected location and innovation in order to better understand industry clustering and its impact on growth as well as examining the impact of barriers to entry on innovative effort and growth.

Jaslin’s experience with BCEC is challenging, yet rewarding!

Jaslin is a PhD scholar at the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre. She completed her honours in 2011 and was awarded as the top economics graduate by the Economics Society of Australia for her research on ‘Elephant Poaching and Ivory Trafficking in Sub-Saharan Africa’. Jaslin has subsequently been interested in social issues including gender inequality.

In July 2014, she was named a UN Global Champion for Women’s Economic Empowerment. She is a co-founder of the successful UN Women’s Empower Women ‘I am (wo)man’ social media campaign. Since, she has also supported the Red Elephant Foundation with policy research and helped compile reports on Philanthropic Organizations for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Jaslin’s PhD research will provide an Australian perspective on Intra-household Entitlement and Gender Inequality. The study develops an empirical gendered analysis of household entitlements between Australian men and women in couple relationships. Her project will address the factors, internal and external to a household, that affect the entitlements of members of households in Australia. She will study the extent to which these individual factors have different effects on household entitlements according to whether they pertain to Australian men or women. Furthermore her study will uncover how Australian institutional contexts affect within household entitlements.
LATEST RESEARCH

Publications

Western Australia’s International Education Sector: Performance and Prospects

*Alan Duncan, Daniel Kiely, Kenneth Leong, John Philimore, Richard Seymour*

This report outlines the performance and prospects for WA’s international education sector. We analyse trends in international student enrolments across the main sectors including higher education, VET, ELICOS, schools and non-award. Key source countries for WA are reported on, and we compare WA’s source country concentrations to that of other States. The value-added contribution of international education to WA is presented, and scenario analysis explores potential future growth trajectories.

Sole-parent work schedules and adolescent wellbeing

*Michael Dockery, Jianghong Li, Garth Kendall*

Extensive evidence has shown that working nonstandard hours, such as evening or night shifts, impacts negatively on workers’ own health, and a growing literature suggests such impacts extend to the health of workers’ children. Using matched parent and child data from a large Australian panel survey this paper explores the effects of parental work schedules on the mental and physical health of adolescents aged 15–20 in sole-parent families. Parental weekend schedules are particularly detrimental to adolescent physical health.

Does private schooling pay? Evidence and equity implications for Australia

*Michael Dockery*

How effectively different schools prepare young people for future social and economic engagement has important implications for education practice, funding allocations and social equity, as well as for parental decision making. This paper uses data from waves 2001-2014 of the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey to analyse the returns to having attended a Catholic or Independent private school as opposed to a government school.

Aspects of Governance and CO₂ Emissions: A Non-linear Panel Data Analysis

*Yashar Tarverdi*

The reduction of CO₂ emissions has been at the centre of worldwide debates on environmental issues, though its inclusion as one of the millennium development goals (MDGs) by the United Nations has changed the focus of relative literature. Among many, one of the World Bank’s “recipes” to achieve a higher position toward MDGs has been to undertake reforms for a better governance. While, the majority of researchers’ focus has been on one single aspect and its relationship with the environment, some studies, have simultaneously considered two governance dimensions. In this paper, we focus on the role of several aspects of governance on CO₂ emissions.

Assessing the Significance of Internal Migration in Drought Affected Areas: A Case Study of the Murray Darling Basin

*Yogi Vidyattama, Rebecca Cassells, Jinjing Li, Annie Abello*

The Murray-Darling Basin is the heart of Australia’s agricultural industry, representing 14 per cent of all agricultural output and housing almost 40 per cent of Australia’s farmers. The area is also one of the biggest consumers of Australia’s scarce water resources and was subject to a severe drought over the period from 1997-2009. The drought years placed intense pressure on agricultural communities and industries within the Basin. The drought and its effects have placed additional pressures on rural communities, with population growth in some areas decreasing or non-existent.