

Spring 2018

bankwest



Curtin University

BCEC

Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre

Newsletter

The latest news on BCEC's research activities, publications, events and people

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From the Director

The past months have been a busy period for the Centre, as we launched our latest *Focus on WA* report on the digital divide in Western Australia.

One of the more surprising findings to come from the report was that only 74 per cent of the lowest income earners in WA access the internet, 25 percentage points less than those earning the highest incomes.

While access to the internet is increasingly necessary for education, work and access to banking, there are still some within our community who simply cannot afford to remain connected on a daily basis.

In this edition, you'll also find Associate Professor Rebecca Cassells's article for *The Conversation* on women dominating employment growth in the Australian labour market. This trend is something which we have seen continue for successive BCEC Monthly Labour Market Updates, but the question remains – what sort of jobs are being created and are they providing meaningful work?

Unemployment was also a focal topic when Dr Daniel Kiely and I addressed the recent Mid West Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Mid West Economic Summit in Geraldton. Daniel and I presented on economic, social and demographic trends for the region, to an audience of local industry and government stakeholders.

The Mid West region is experiencing an ageing population, with younger and middle-aged residents leaving the region, and the number of older persons increasing. For those young people that remain, they face a high rate of youth unemployment. Finding employment opportunities for young people was an issue echoed by those in the room, and something government and policymakers continue to grapple with in the region.

BCEC's research often has a regional focus, and we look forward to discovering new opportunities to present these findings to a wide regional audience.

I thank you for your continued support of the BCEC and hope you enjoy reading about the Centre's recent research activities, events and achievements.

Professor Alan Duncan
Director,
Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre

AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

BCEC Economics and Social Policy Scholarship recipient announced

We are pleased to announce the first BCEC Economics and Social Policy Scholarship has been awarded to Ms Kim Nguyen, who is in her first year studying a Bachelor of Commerce at Curtin University.

BCEC introduced the new scholarship to support broadening access to tertiary education for those traditionally under-represented at university.

Kim says she has a growing interest and a driving passion for economics.

"I believe that good research into economic and social policy plays a key role in addressing many of the issues we face today, especially poverty," Kim said.

Kim said that growing up, she used everyday challenges to empower her rather than dampen her desire to achieve a good education.

"I chose to overcome adversity!" Kim said.

"I think our biggest challenge is to empower ourselves in our everyday lives, take better care of ourselves, increase our sense of personal power and focus on what we can control."

BCEC Director Professor Alan Duncan said he is impressed by Kim in striving to achieve a university education and working hard to overcome the challenges she has been faced with.

"Education is also the great equaliser, providing the means by which people can raise themselves out of disadvantage, and we are delighted to be able to support Kim in helping her reach her goals"

Kim demonstrates a passion for making a difference, which aligns closely with BCEC's values and mission and our commitment to making a difference to the wellbeing of West Australian families, businesses and communities", Professor Duncan said.

"We welcome Kim warmly to the Centre, joining our PhD scholars and researchers. We also look forward to welcoming future BCEC Economics and Social Policy Scholarship recipients to our team."

Undergraduate and postgraduate students with a demonstrated interest and passion for economic and social policy, and who do not have the financial means to attend university, are encouraged to apply for the 2019 scholarship, which will be open for applications in October 2018.

The BCEC Economics and Social Policy Scholarship is supported through BCEC event registration fees.



RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

New BCEC research on a WA Fruit Quality Index presented in Singapore



A team of researchers from Curtin University recently travelled to Singapore to present interim findings from their BCEC-funded project "[Safeguarding WA Produce through the Development of a Fruit Quality Index](#)".

Project researchers [Dr Billy Sung](#) and [Dr Min Teah](#) delivered the interim findings as part of an Innovation and Food Symposium held in Singapore on 10 May. The symposium was attended by representatives from food importers and exporters in Singapore, as well as researchers in the Singaporean food industry.

The BCEC-funded project explores the fruit buying behaviours of Australian consumers, in particular the quality attributes consumers value when selecting fruit.

Opening the event, the project's chief investigator [Professor Ian Phau](#), said innovation was needed to be competitive in the food industry.

"While Singapore is considered by many to be a saturated market, there are opportunities for growth in the premium produce space," Professor Phau said.

A panel discussion took place following the presentation, themed around the opportunities for bridging trade between Singapore and Australia, with a focus on WA produce.

Panellist [Ms Wendy Foo](#), Founder of Alternative Selection spoke of the opportunities that exist for WA exporters.

"There is no doubt that WA produces quality produce, but there needs to be more education or awareness on the branding, packaging and logistics aspects of their product so that it can be competitive in Singapore," Ms Woo said.

[Ms Claire Chabrieres](#), Founder of ShioxFarm agreed with the quality of produce from Australia, but remarked that the fresh food industry in Australia can improve trade by providing better systems to help businesses identify overseas partners to work with in Australia.

The panel discussion also moved to the topical issue of innovation and food.

[Mr John Catlin](#), Commissioner at the WA Trade and Investment Office in Singapore said more can be done in the innovation space.

"There are a lot of technologies out there and new types of product, but food innovation is still in its infancy, especially in the foodtech and agritech spaces, for both Australia and Singapore," Mr Catlin said.

The final report from this project is due to be released later this year.



Dr Min Teah, Senior Lecturer, School of Marketing, Curtin University (far right) introduces panellists Mr John Catlin, Commissioner, WA Trade and Investment Office in Singapore, Ms Claire Chabrieres, Founder, ShioxFarm, Ms Wendy Foo, Founder, Alternative Selection, Dr Kong Cheen Lau, Senior Lecturer at Singapore University of Social Sciences, Annette Tilbrook, Executive Director, Australia-ASEAN Chamber of Commerce

BCEC LAUNCHES DIGITAL DIVIDE IN WA REPORT



Professor Alan Duncan, Director, Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre; Di Darmody, Producer and Presenter, 720 ABC Perth; Professor Peter Klinken AC, Chief Scientist of Western Australia; Ms Pia Turcinov, Chair, Women in Technology WA (WiTWA); Mr Eddie Woo, Australia's Local Hero for 2018 and Leader, Mathematics Growth for the NSW Department of Education; Ms Marion Burchell, Acting Chief Executive and Government Chief Information Officer WA; Professor Deborah Terry AO, Vice-Chancellor, Curtin University and Dr Daniel Kiely, Senior Research Fellow, Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre.

BCEC's latest *Focus on WA* report, [Falling Through the Net](#), was launched on Thursday 2 August, and examines the magnitude and key drivers of the digital divide for WA and highlights potential solutions towards bridging the divide for the most disadvantaged groups.

Future leaders were in attendance – students from five public and private schools including Ashdale Secondary College, Thornlie Christian College, Shenton College, Morley Senior High School and Kalamunda Senior High School.

Before introducing the Hon. Michael Keenan MP, Curtin University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Deborah Terry AO talked about the importance of an inclusive digital future and how it is everyone's responsibility to ensure this happens.

"The education sector has a responsibility to ensure everyone – on their journey from kindergarten to university and through life-long learning – has the support and opportunity to have the 'know how', and government, both state and federal, also have a responsibility to work towards an inclusive digital future," Professor Terry said.

Hon. Michael Keenan MP, said Australians should be able to access

reasonable broadband at a reasonable price.

"While the technological changes that we're living through have vast potential to transform people's lives, it's very clear that not everyone is benefiting equally and that's why the report released today is so important, highlighting some of the areas where we can do significantly better," Minister Keenan said.

Launching the report, Centre Director and co-author, Professor Alan Duncan said while a higher share of the population is now accessing the internet, the impact on those who are not online is deepening.

"Access to the internet has increased in Australia over the past ten years, with 90 per cent of households now connected. However, as more essential services including health care, banking

and government services move online, those that are not connected face greater risk of falling on the wrong side of the digital divide," Professor Duncan said.

Report co-author and BCEC Senior Research Fellow, Dr Daniel Kiely, said the report also highlights the divide between high and low income earners.

"Only 74 per cent of the lowest income earners in Western Australia access the internet, compared to 99 per cent of the highest income earners," Dr Kiely said.

"Mobile and internet access comes at a considerable financial cost for some of our poorest households.

Using measures similar to how housing stress is calculated, we found that 10.5 per cent of single parents and 12.2 per cent of single women experience some form of digital stress."

Professor Duncan added that digital infrastructure and access is now a critical part of our economic and



Thornlie Christian College students pictured with Eddie Woo, from left to right, Rhea Castello, Audrey Chigumbu, Carissa Antonello, Hannah Gibson, Yushael Haripersad, Josiah Fok and Samuel Hodgson.

social infrastructure, and the social connections that the internet can offer older Australians cannot be ignored.

“The new digital future affords the most extraordinary set of opportunities for us all, whether in education and learning, work and job search, business, health care or in social connectedness.”

Eddie Woo, Australia’s Local Hero for 2018 and Leader, Mathematics Growth for the NSW Department of Education, spoke about the challenges, opportunities and the importance of mathematics and strong digital access for all Australia’s communities.

“We must raise awareness about why and how internet access is useful to individuals and communities around our state and country. And when it comes to lack of confidence, then it’s clear we must provide opportunities for learning through local communities,” Mr Woo said.

“The digital divide is real but there are reasons for hope and pathways to change with economic and technical barriers falling fast. We are making great progress!”

Marion Burchell, Acting Chief Executive and Government Chief Information Officer WA, discussed the role of the government in reducing the digital divide.

“I think it is important to take into account the digital infrastructure from the outset when designing the city’s infrastructure and particularly if we want smart cities,” Ms Burchell said.

Professor Peter Klinken AC, Chief Scientist of Western Australia promoted the need for a digital plan for WA inclusive of education as a key part to reducing the digital divide.

“STEM subjects should be compulsory in senior high school so students can learn the necessary critical thinking skills in preparing for the future of work,” Professor Klinken said.

Pia Turcinov, Chair, Women in Technology WA (WiTWA) said it was important to showcase SME heroes that have grasped data analytics, cyber security and digital technology for productivity in their business models.

In closing the event’s proceedings, Rowan Munchenberg, Managing Director, Bankwest agreed with Pia and said that SMEs are a massive driver of the economy and noted that not everyone is taking advantage of the digital connectivity.

“If businesses do not understand the impact, benefit and the challenges of not connecting online and not using digital appropriately, there will be future economic challenges,” Rowan said.

The report generated extensive media interest, including articles in The West Australian, Kalgoorlie Miner and Avon Valley Advocate, and a panel discussion on ABC Radio Perth’s Focus program featuring Dr Daniel Kiely and Professor Peter Klinken AC.



Chris Twomey shares what it's like to ride the wave - in the ocean and at work!



Photo credit: Surfing WA

Chris Twomey is a Senior Industry Fellow with the Bankwest Curtin Economic Centre. Outside of work, Chris is a bona fide surfer, recently winning the Over-50 Men division at the North Freo Stand Up Surf Shop WA SUP Titles in Mandurah. Chris shares with us what it's like to ride the wave – in the ocean and at work.

Tell us why you chose a career path in public policy.

I've had quite a varied career. I studied psychology then went on to work in educational video production and science communication, before becoming a national policy advisor in Canberra. One of my most powerful experiences was working in the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University in the late nineties, working alongside Rob Riley learning first-hand the impacts of past policies on The Stolen Generation – an issue I'm now returning to with my PhD studies at BCEC. My driving passion is to challenge injustice and make the world a better place, so focusing on public policy seems like the best place where my skills can make a real difference.

What key skills do you need to do your job?

As well as working at BCEC, I am also Research and Policy Development Leader at the WA Council of Social Service (WACOSS). I think the most important

skills that I use in policy development and advocacy at WACOSS come down to strategy and political judgement. It is critical to have research skills and an understanding of the key issues, and to also understand policy formation and funding processes, but the real challenge is prioritising what ideas are most likely to deliver a worthwhile outcome. The other key skill is networking – you don't have to become an expert on everything, but you need to know enough to understand and discuss the key issues with those you meet in industry.

Tell us about something interesting you are working on at the BCEC?

My PhD research is about the over-representation of Aboriginal children in the child protection system in WA. Aboriginal children are 17.5 times more likely to be removed from their families and placed in care than non-Aboriginal children. They now make up over 55 per cent of children in state care despite being only 6.5 per cent of the child population. I'm keen to learn from best practice in other states and around the world, and I am collaborating with Aboriginal community-controlled services to ensure children are safe and grow up strong in community and culture.

Your research is centrally concerned with public policy, human service reform, poverty and the cost of living. Tell us more about this.

BCEC has given me the opportunity to really extend the work we've been doing on the impacts of the cost of living in WA,

particularly in low income and vulnerable households. Late last year we were able to bring together WACOSS' cost of living model and data from the Financial Counsellors' Association of WA, with the ABS Household Expenditure Survey and HILDA data. The end result, [The Price is Right?](#) report, revealed ground breaking insight into the weekly budgets of those in financial hardship and highlighted rising housing costs as the number one driver of hardship in WA. Energy prices are also putting real pressure on some vulnerable households, and single parent families are being forced to cut back on their health and recreation expenditure just to make ends meet. For kids growing up in poverty, this creates a vicious cycle that will ultimately cost the community more in the long run, due to rising costs for chronic disease and poor life outcomes.

When you worked on the Price is Right? report, what was the key learning for you?

There is a myth that the cost of living has been rising equally for everyone. Often it can feel that way, because we notice when the cost of essential goods and services go up, but when we get a wage rise we feel like that's something we've earned. While it's true that wage growth has stayed pretty flat over the last few years, the average household has still seen their incomes going up faster than their living costs. This is not true for those on low incomes relying on low-skilled work, facing under-employment and uncertain hours, and relying on some combination

of income support. They are the ones who have really been falling behind.

What support do you have to enable the success of your research?

I was fortunate to receive an industry fellowship by BCEC which has enabled me to take the time out of my job at WACOSS to undertake research and dig deeper into some really important social issues. Having access to good data is really critical, as is the opportunity to collaborate with researchers with different skill sets, knowledge and experience. The other key source of support is the trust and engagement of Aboriginal elders, community leaders and service providers who've come together with WACOSS' support to form the Noongar Child Protection Council to advocate for the research in other states and countries.

What's the toughest challenge/ biggest battle you face?

Sometimes the biggest battle is finding the time and headspace to think about the big picture and work on some of the underlying and systemic challenges. In public policy, there are demands on our time with public

consultations, submissions and inquiries, or the latest political crisis to respond to. It's easy to get caught up in being reactive. The challenge is to realise you can't do everything and to focus your efforts strategically on a few issues where you think you can have the most impact.

How do you manage to juggle everything and manage the stress?

It's been tough trying to reduce my full-time job at WACOSS to three days a week, as the demands and expectations on the role remain the same – and inquiries, Ministerial briefings and advisory committee meetings inevitably get booked when I'm usually at BCEC. Keeping fit and healthy is critical to managing my stress levels and maintaining good mental health. For me, that means surfing, or stand up paddle-boarding when the waves aren't there. I've never been great at repetitive exercise, but when the waves are good, I can go flat out for hours. Competing gives me that extra motivation to get my strength up and to try harder when the surf isn't that great. The recent SUP Titles competition in Mandurah was a

massive weekend of waves and weather. To claim the state title ahead of some quality opposition is a truly great feeling and I look forward to the challenge of the Australian SUP Titles in Queensland.

What advice or words of wisdom would you share with others interested in working within academia?

Follow your passion! For me, academia provides some fantastic opportunities to look below the surface and build a deeper understanding of our most critical social challenges. However I'd also say it is important to keep connected and engaged. For me, that means having one foot in research, and the other working with frontline services and undertaking political advocacy. I'm always thinking about the impact and practical implementation of my work, making sure it correlates to the lived experience of the vulnerable and disadvantaged people we work with. I believe research has to add value and reward people for their contribution, and to improve the lives of community members facing particular challenges.



Photo credit: Surfing WA



Professor Lyn Bezley AO, Ambassador of AASQA, Professor Deborah Terry AO, Vice-Chancellor, Curtin University, Professor Tele Tan, AASQA Founder and Director, Julian Coyne, Chair, AASQA Advisory Board, The Honourable Kim Bezley AC, Governor of Western Australia, Professor Alan Duncan, Director, Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre, Adjunct Professor Jim Ellis OAM, Inaugural Chair, AASQA and Professor Tony Watson Australian Computer Society Foundation.

BCEC FEATURE SERIES

BCEC launches special report: A strength-based program for adolescents with autism

BCEC's latest Feature report, [*A strength-based program for adolescents with autism*](#), was launched at the annual Autism Academy for Software Quality Assurance (AASQA) Awards ceremony on 11 September 2018.

AASQA aims to help young individuals on the spectrum find employment in software testing and Professor Tele Tan said the awards acknowledged the special talents and dedication of young people living with autism over the last 12 months.

The event was well attended, with His Excellency the Honourable Kim Bezley AC, Governor of Western Australia, Curtin University Vice-Chancellor Professor Deborah Terry AO, members of the Perth business community and award winners' family and friends present.

The result of a BCEC-funded project, the report was led by AASQA Founder and Director, Professor Tele Tan from the School of Civil and Mechanical Engineering at Curtin University, and examines the features that should be included in strength-based programs in order to deliver the most effective

outcomes for young people living with autism.

The study observed and interviewed facilitators, parents and participants from three strength-based programs delivered by AASQA CoderDojo at Curtin University, Autism West and Firetech Camp Australia.

Launching the report, Professor Tan said the latest data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics suggested only 40.8 per cent of working aged individuals with autism participated in the labour force, compared to 83.2 per cent of people without disability.

"Many individuals with autism have abilities well suited to work in the information technology sector and developing programs that focus on these skills in a safe environment outside the classroom may assist in increasing

employment rates of people with autism," Professor Tan said.

"Our research found program facilitators played a large role in the experiences of the people taking part in the program, so program coordinators should place a strong emphasis on recruiting facilitators with shared interests to participants, such as coding and playing video games.

"We also found programs should take a multi-disciplinary approach to sourcing facilitators, bringing together individuals from the science, technology, engineering and health discipline areas, for example."

Strength-based programs allow facilitators to tailor activities to individuals, and provide a higher level of autonomy for participants to complete activities.

"The programs we studied supported the existing strengths of adolescents



with autism, while making allowances or alterations for specific health needs,” Professor Tan said.

“These approaches can both celebrate diversity and help to build better futures for young people with autism.”

Report co-author Mr Matthew Jones, PhD Candidate at the School of Occupational Therapy, Social Work and Speech Pathology at Curtin University, said the report also highlights the benefits that come from peer mentoring and providing a space for participants to share their successes.

“Peer mentoring emerged as a way participants could teach each other new skills, resulting in mentors building their own confidence and socialisation skills, and mentees learning new techniques,” Mr Jones said.

“We also observed that participants had a high level of anxiety when starting a new program, and this could be managed by providing clear expectations for the program, providing autonomy, reducing noise levels and providing plenty of physical space. Accommodating the individual needs of adolescents with autism was essential for creating a safe space and reducing anxiety.

“Once completing a program, participants were armed with the hard skills they may require for a career in information technology, coupled with the soft skills they would need in order to work with a diverse team within a structured workplace.”

BCEC has funded two research projects in the space of autism, which have explored ways we can increase the rate of employment of people with autism.

BCEC Director Professor Alan Duncan said the Centre was proud to support research into programs that aim to benefit the lives of people living with autism, in line with the Centre’s mission to deliver research that improves the lives of West Australians and communities.

“Employment is a fundamental right for everyone and programs such as these give adolescents with autism the confidence they need to develop skills to excel at school, through to entry into the workforce,” Professor Duncan said.

“In exploring the features that should be included in such strength-based programs, the research finds that the unique strengths of adolescents with autism should be the focus, in order to deliver the most effective outcomes for young people living with autism.”



AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

BCEC STAFF ELECTED TO ESA'S WA BRANCH COUNCIL

BCEC Senior Research Fellow [Dr Astghik Mavisakalyan](#) and Research Fellow [Dr Silvia Salazar](#) have been appointed to the Economic Society of Australia’s (ESA) WA Branch Council, at the Council’s recent Annual General Meeting.

The Council provides advice on the strategic direction of the ESA, as well as coordinating local functions and engagement opportunities within Western Australia.

Astghik is also a member of the ESA’s Women in Economics Network WA Branch Committee, which aims to promote and support the careers of female economists in Australia.

The two researchers join fellow BCEC researchers Dr Yashar Tarverdi and Associate Professor Mike Dockery on the ESA WA Branch Council.



Silvia Salazar



Astghik Mavisakalyan

POSTCARDS FROM GERALDTON: BCEC JOINS THE MID WEST ECONOMIC SUMMIT

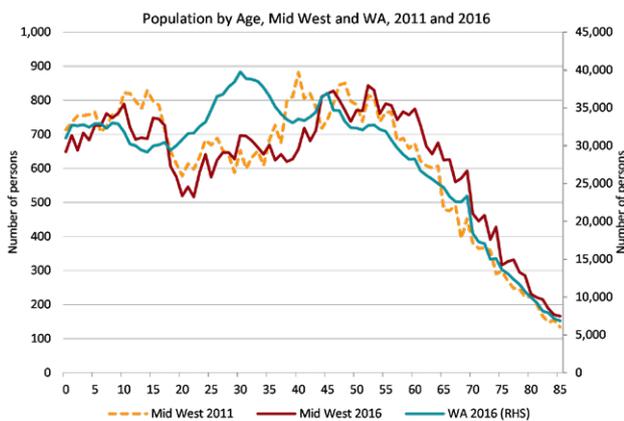


On invitation from the Mid West Chamber of Commerce and Industry, BCEC Director [Professor Alan Duncan](#) and Senior Research Fellow [Dr Daniel Kiely](#) recently presented at the successful Mid West Economic Summit - 'Building Better Business'.

Alan and Daniel provided a detailed analysis of the economic, social and demographic trends for the Mid West and took part in a lively panel discussion on the economic outlook for the Mid West region, alongside Rick Newnham, Chief Economist at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA; Peter Duplex, Senior Projects Engineer at the Mid West Ports Authority and Courtney Ackland, Operations Manager at Iluka Resources.

Alan provided an overview of recent demographic changes in the Mid West, with the region recording a slight increase in population of just over 300 people between the 2011 and 2016 Census. By age (see Figure 1), the Mid West has seen a decrease in younger and middle aged cohorts to 2016, with an increase in older age groups since 2011.

Figure 1: Mid West age profile, 2011 and 2016

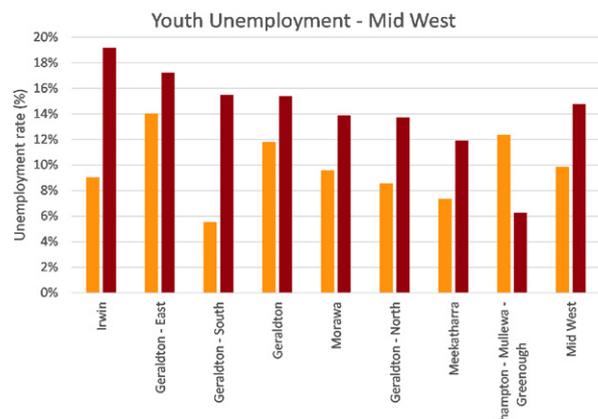


Source: Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre | ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2011 and 2016

While the Mid West economy provides over 23,300 jobs and a value added contribution of \$49bn to the WA economy,

Alan explained that a particular challenge facing the Mid West (along with other WA regions) was the high rate of youth unemployment, which increased from almost 10 per cent in 2011 to over 14 per cent in 2016 (Figure 2). While this is slightly lower than the WA average, it is the third highest rate amongst the 10 regions of WA. Youth unemployment is particularly high in the Mid West district of Irwin, standing at 19 per cent.

Figure 2: Youth unemployment in the Mid West, 2011 and 2016



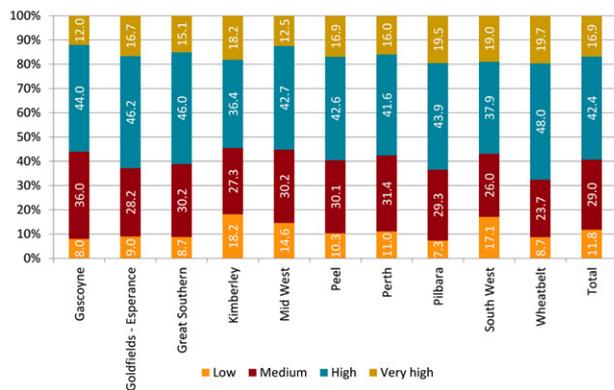
Source: Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre | ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2011 and 2016

Daniel discussed the opportunities and challenges facing small businesses in the Mid West, and the case of the digital divide for business and the broader community. He explained that while small businesses accounted for over 97 per cent of businesses in the Mid West region, there was a decline of 7.2 per cent in the number of small businesses between 2011 and 2016 - representing a drop of over 400 businesses (from 5,300 to 4,900).



Daniel went on to present findings from the BCEC Small Business Survey 2017, which showed that over 55 per cent of small businesses in the Mid West had high levels of stress, impacting negatively on physical and mental health as well as personal and business relationships. He discussed the important role of business and local community organisations in providing support for business owners, who are faced with multiple roles and responsibilities, long working hours and cashflow pressures.

Figure 3: Self-reported levels of stress among small business owners across WA

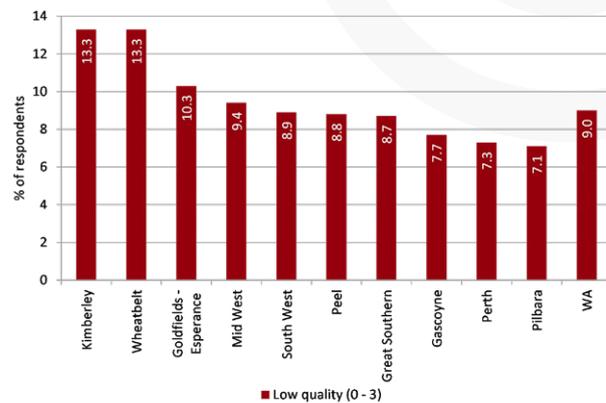


Source: Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre | Small Business Survey 2017

Daniel showed that over 30 per cent of small business owners intended to exit their business within the next five years. This presents opportunities for younger cohorts, but also indicates the need for appropriate succession plans to ensure smooth transition over the coming years.

Daniel then turned attention to the digital divide in WA, drawing on BCEC's recently released Focus on WA report *Falling Through the Net: The Digital Divide in Western Australia*. He explained that four of the top thirty areas across WA with the lowest levels of household internet access lay in the Mid West. The BCEC Small Business Survey 2017 highlighted that almost one in ten small businesses in the Mid West have both poor mobile phone and internet service (Figure 4). Daniel welcomed therefore, recent government announcements to provide additional funding towards bridging this divide in regional and remote areas.

Figure 4: Poor internet and mobile phone service, by region, WA



Source: Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre | Small Business Survey 2017

The Summit was very well attended and provided excellent networking opportunities, with attendees including Ian Blayney MLA (Member for Geraldton), Shane Love MLA (Member for Moore), Trish Palmonari (Economic Development Manager, City of Geraldton), Gavin Treasure (CEO, Mid West Regional Development Commission) and host Glen Whistler-Carr (CEO, Mid West CCI). Further details of the event, including speaker presentations can be found here: www.midwestsummit.com.au/news/

After the event, Alan and Daniel had an opportunity to visit some of the fantastic sights Greater Geraldton has to offer, including the Museum of Geraldton, where Daniel took particular interest in the archaeological riches from the Batavia shipwreck. On visiting the HMAS Sydney memorial, located on top of Mount Scott, Alan was proud to learn that the Sydney had been built in Wallsend-on-Tyne in his native home of Newcastle, UK.



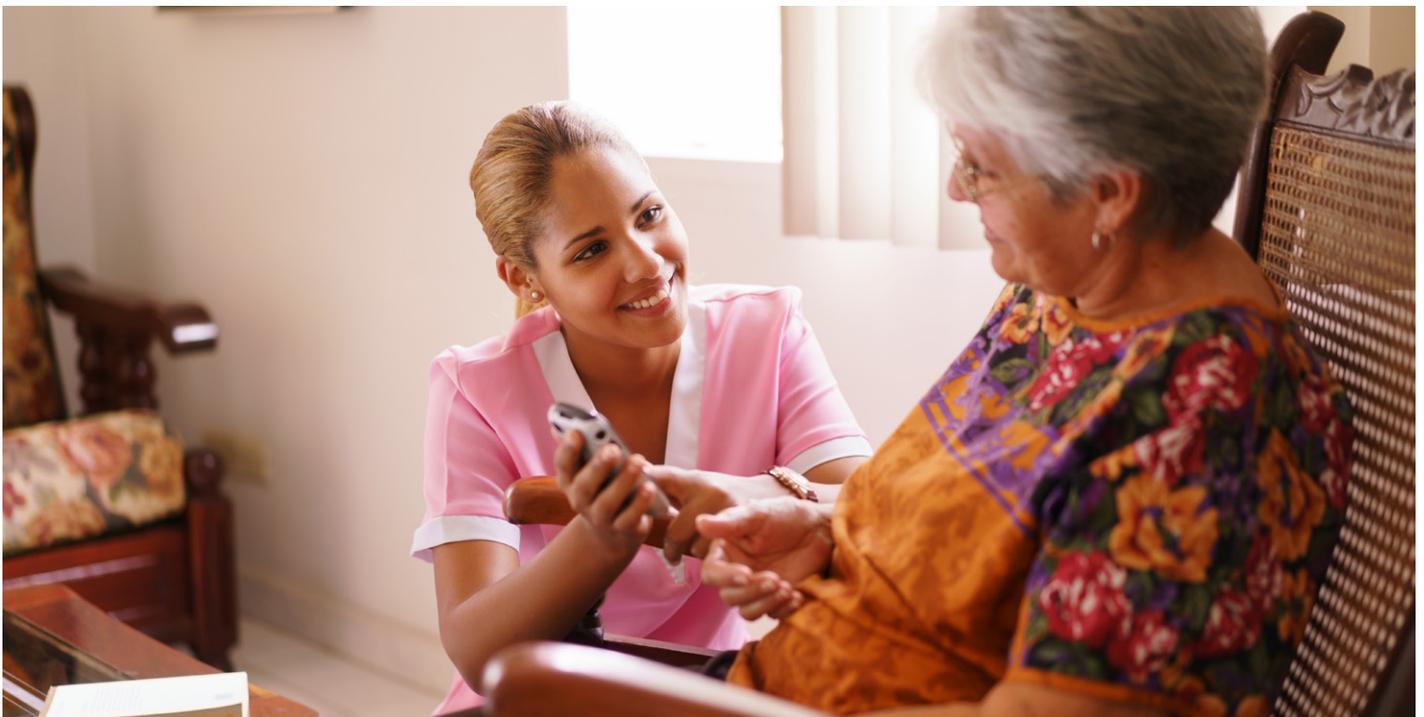


BCEC IN THE CONVERSATION

THE CONVERSATION

Women are dominating employment growth, but what sort of jobs are we talking about?

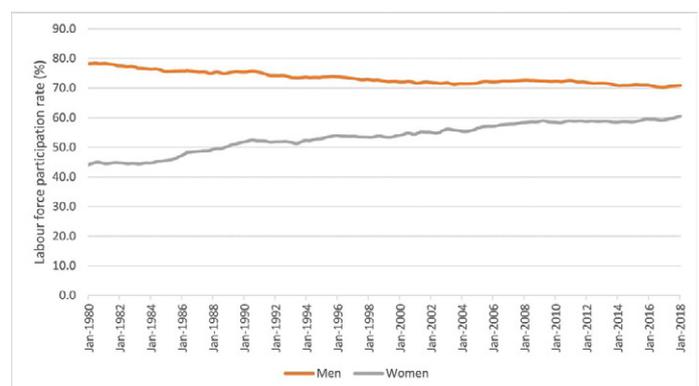
By [Rebecca Cassells](#), Principal Research Fellow, Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre



One of the biggest transformations we have seen in advanced economies is the increased participation of women in the paid workforce. In recent Australian labour force trends, female participation is growing at nine times the rate of men's. Women are dominating both full and part-time employment growth in Australia.

Why do changes in participation matter? Participation in the paid workforce – either being in employment or looking for work – is a key indicator of the overall health of any economy. It measures how much labour is being supplied relative to the population that we think should be engaged in the labour force – typically those aged 15-64 years.

Over the past three decades female participation rates in Australia have increased dramatically – from around 40% to 60% – while male participation rates have fallen from 80% to 70%.



Labour force participation rate – men and women. ABS Cat No.6202.0, Labour Force, Australia

What is driving the increase for women? Gains in educational attainment, increased support through child care for women to engage in the paid workforce, and growth in female-dominated service sectors, such as health and education, are all strong contributors to these patterns.

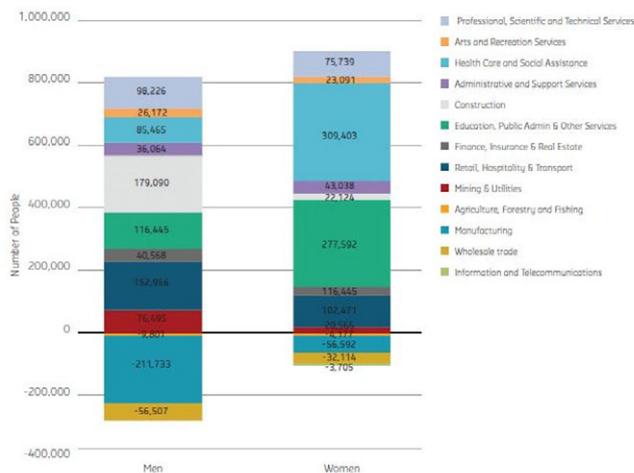
On the other hand, several factors are likely to be contributing to the overall decline in male participation. These include a greater propensity to engage in post-school qualifications rather than go straight into the workforce, slower growth in traditional male-dominated sectors, such as manufacturing and wholesale trade, together with increased retirement support through the aged pension and superannuation.

These patterns are likely to continue. That means male and female labour force participation rates are likely to converge in the next 10-15 years.

Women have dominated job market growth

Job creation in the female-dominated health and education service sectors is driving both full-time and part-time employment growth in Australia.

Analysis of the latest Census data reveal an increase of around 400,000 jobs in each sector. Most of these have gone to women.



Note: Census counts differ from those ascertained from the ABS Labour Force Survey at similar timeframes. The ABS labour force survey estimates of job losses for the Manufacturing sector are considerably lower than those extracted from Census data. These differences could be due to differences between employee and employer industry classification and survey sampling error. Census data has been selected as it is population level data and does not suffer from sampling errors that are inherent in the ABS labour force survey. Changes to the Census question about industry of employment over time may have resulted in an over- or under-count of employment in particular industries. This change has been the removal of tick boxes for industry of employment in the 2016 Census.

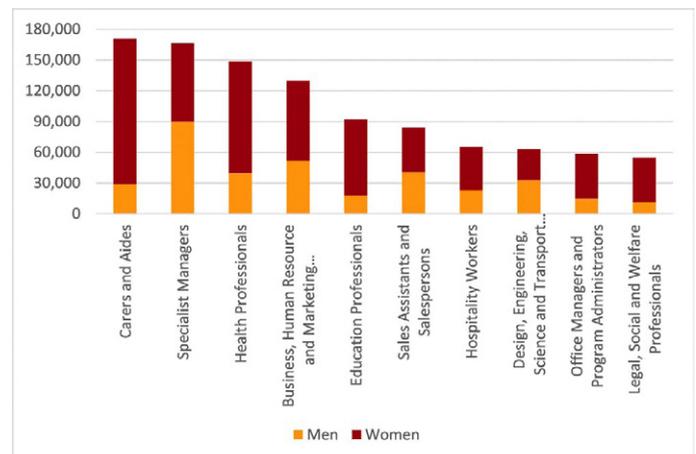
Source: Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre | Authors' calculations from Census Tablebuilder.

Job losses and gains by sector, men and women, 2006 to 2016.

Reflecting the large growth in the health care and social assistance sector, around 170,000 more carers and aides are employed than there were ten years ago. And 150,000 of these workers are women.

Australia's ageing and ailing population is no doubt playing a key role in this trend, with aged care and disability workers falling within this occupation category. This category also includes childcare workers.

The number of health professionals has also increased substantially – by around 150,000 workers in the ten years to 2016. Again, the majority of these extra workers are women.



Top ten growth occupations (volume), 2006 to 2016. Author's calculations from Census Tablebuilder

However, the way in which men and women engage in the paid labour force is very different. Women continue to dominate caring responsibilities and hence the part-time workforce. They typically use this employment arrangement as a means to balance work and family.

But we are seeing some changes on this front too. The rate of part-time employment is growing faster for men than for women. Male part-time work increased almost fourfold from 5% to 18% in the last four decades.

And both men and women are more likely to cite a preference for part-time work as the main reason for working part-time than they were ten years ago.

Where is the labour market headed?

The strength of the Australian labour market is currently founded in service sectors that are generally dominated by women.

This pattern will continue for the foreseeable future and beyond. Demand for "caring" occupations is unlikely to subside and automation is unlikely to produce any substantive substitute. Mining and construction booms may come and go, but these caring jobs are here to stay.

Many of these jobs are low-paying, however. This means that while we're creating the jobs that are needed, we may not be assigning the appropriate value.

And while the future of work for the most part appears to be more "female" than "male", this doesn't necessarily mean men are unable to access these jobs, nor does it mean women are faring better overall in the labour market than men.

This article first appeared in [The Conversation](#) on July 25, 2018.



Ms Zorana Soldat, PhD Candidate, School of Marketing, Associate Professor Vanessa Quintal, School of Marketing, Dr Michael Volgger, Senior Research Fellow, School of Marketing, Associate Professor Christof Pforr, School of Marketing, Mr Yan Lyu, Liaison Officer, Bunbury – Jiaxing Business Office, Professor Kirsten Holmes, Dean Research, Faculty of Business and Law, Dr Lesley Crowe-Delaney, Research Fellow, CUSP Institute, Associate Professor Jianhong (Cecilia) Xia, School of Earth and Planetary Sciences, Professor Dr Wolfgang Georg Arlt, Director, China Outbound Tourism Research Institute, Germany and Professor Alan Duncan, Director, Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre.

BCEC and TRC host the 'Growing the Asian market for tourism in WA' symposium

BCEC recently partnered with the Curtin University's Tourism Research Cluster (TRC) to host a symposium on growing the Asian market for tourism in Western Australia.

The symposium was officially opened by the Minister for Tourism, the Hon. Paul Papalia MLA who acknowledged the important work being done by TRC and BCEC to promote international tourism, particularly in the Chinese tourism market.

The event was well attended by tourism industry representatives and policy makers, who gathered for the launch of a BCEC-funded report *Are we China Ready? Chinese Tourism in WA* authored by Associate Professor Jianhong (Cecilia) Xia from the School of Earth and Planetary Sciences and her cross-disciplinary team at Curtin University.

The report examines the travel experiences of Chinese tourists in WA and suggests policy changes the WA Government can make to capture this growing market, including the extension of retail trading hours.

Associate Professor Xia said small changes could make WA more 'China-ready' for tourists.

"Our analysis shows 75 per cent of Chinese visitors to Western Australia are aged 20 to 40 years, and we know these travellers are generally looking to purchase luxury goods. In fact, Chinese visitors spend an average almost \$500 per night when they stay in Australia," Associate Professor Xia said.

The symposium also provided researchers with a forum to present and discuss innovative research exploring ways to grow international tourism to Western Australia from the diverse Asian market.

Professor Dr. Wolfgang Georg Arlt from the China Outbound Tourism Research Institute in Germany delivered a compelling keynote, sharing his extensive research and expertise working with China's tourism industry.

Professor Dr. Arlt said there is strong growth potential in China's outbound tourism industry.

"75 per cent of Chinese tourists believe travelling is a vital factor for improving their quality of life and happiness, however only 10 per cent of Chinese citizens own passports, so there is a much bigger market to tap into."

Dr Michael Volgger and Associate Professor Christof Pforr from Curtin's School of Marketing shared preliminary findings from their research into tourism product development for Asian markets, emphasising a need for tailored product adaptation and development for the Asian market.

Dr Lesley Crowe-Delaney from the Curtin University Sustainability Policy Institute talked about Japanese tourist culture and its importance in Western Australian tourism.

Associate Professor Vanessa Quintal and Ms Zorana Soldat from Curtin's School of Marketing shared their research into the binge travelling behaviour of Asian tourists who visit Western Australia for luxury vacations, suggesting the tourism industry should customise services to satisfy this market.

The symposium also brought together representatives from the tourism industry to share their perspectives, and help frame a conversation on how best to grow the Asian market for tourism in WA.

BCEC Director Professor Alan Duncan chaired the discussion with panellists Professor Dr. Arlt, Associate Professor Xia, Ms Lisa Shreeve and Mr Yan Lyu.

Lisa Shreeve, Chief Executive Officer, Busselton Jetty, shared her experience in the tourism industry and broached the question, "why don't Asian visitors come to Western Australia?"

Ms Shreeve said while there is extensive research and data collected from the Asian visitors that come to WA, there needs to be more focus on why Asian visitors do not come to WA to ensure we have a coordinated approach to promote WA abroad.

She also went on to share how Busselton Jetty is a great example of a WA tourism product attracting the Asian market through innovative ideas and strategies.

Mr Yan Lyn, Liaison Officer at the Bunbury-Jiaxing Business Office shared his insights into understanding the importance of Chinese business practices, etiquette and customs when tailoring tourism packages for the Asian market.

Professor Dr. Arlt closed the event with the launch of TRC's book 'Food, Wine and China' edited by Professors Christof Pforr and Ian Phau at Curtin's School of Marketing. The book includes findings from a BCEC-funded project titled 'WA wine exports: Building an economic future with China'.

Professor Duncan said collaborative research projects, such as Associate Professor Xia's report, continue to be a key priority for the Centre.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Australia's Private Rental Market: Quality, Security and Affordability

When: Tuesday 9 October 2018
8.30am to 12.30pm

Where: Bankwest Place
Level 1, 300 Murray Street, Perth

This BCEC workshop will discuss housing rental affordability in Western Australia with guest speaker, the [Hon Peter Tinley AM, MLA](#) Minister for Housing; Veterans Issues; Youth.

The workshop will examine how effectively Australia's private rental market is delivering the housing necessary to meet the diverse needs of households – from young people in shared housing through to older renters living on their own.

Using a nationally representative survey of 3,600 households, combined with qualitative data, the workshop first provides an overview of the sector before focusing on a growing area of policy concern: housing security for older renters in Western Australia.

The workshop will include a special panel discussion on the topic 'Is the WA private rental sector delivering quality and secure housing for all?' with industry and policy representatives from the Department of Communities, Shelter WA, Council on the Ageing WA and Curtin University.



Australia's South West for Asian markets: Promoting tourism product development

When: Tuesday 23 October 2018
9.30am to 1.00pm

Where: Abbey Beach Resort
595 Bussell Hwy, Busselton

The Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre together with the [South West Development Commission](#) and [Australia's South West](#) invite you to the launch of a new report in the BCEC *Feature* report series, 'Australia's South West for Asian markets: Promoting tourism product development'.

Attracting tourists from Asian source markets and providing them with a satisfying experience is a strategic priority for Australia's South West tourism region. This report explores Asian tourists' motivations to visit the South West and suggests a number of product development initiatives to further improve the attractiveness of the region for Asian visitors.

To explore ways on how best to promote tailored product adaptation and development for Asian markets in Australia's South West, a panel of key stakeholders will also discuss potential implications of this research for industry and government, followed by a Q&A session.

REGISTER

To express your interest to attend these events, email bcec@curtin.edu.au or phone 08 9266 2873.





BCEC IN THE CONVERSATION

THE CONVERSATION

Co-working spaces are part of the new economy, so town planners better get with the times

By Courtney Babb, Lecturer in Urban & Regional Planning, Curtin University
Carey Curtis, Professor of City Planning and Transport, Curtin University, and
Sam McLeod, Urban Planning Researcher, Curtin University

Cities are seeing a growing number of shared working, or co-working, spaces. They include spaces where individuals and businesses can flexibly rent desks or rooms, or do shared work in “third spaces” such as libraries and cafes.

Co-working spaces offer a range of benefits and risks to the local economy. Our research looked at the role policy-makers, regulators and city planners can play in ensuring that these spaces make a positive contribution to our cities.

We found shared work spaces emerging in regulatory voids left by outdated policy frameworks. To exist, they are relying on the forward thinking of local innovators seeking to revitalise urban centres.

Types of spaces

Shared work spaces vary by the type of work they facilitate, from knowledge work (such as IT and professional services) to small-scale

manufacturing. Some are purpose-built for co-working, whereas others (such as cafes) are informally used as such.

Some also target particular markets by offering additional services such as a crèche for childcare, seminars for professional development and events for networking.

Shared working spaces also differ in their models of ownership. These range from privately owned and managed, to government subsidised and cooperatively managed community resource centres.

The ownership and funding of individual co-working spaces may also change through time, as they may receive new sources of government funding, attract new types of clients or relocate to new facilities.

What are the benefits?

There are many potential benefits for sharing a working space, including access

to common spaces, equipment, tools, and technologies. Some people may only need a space for a few hours a day or on one occasion for a special project, so they can hire spaces in desirable locations without high rental charges.

Shared working spaces also offer social benefits through greater opportunities to interact, network and collaborate with like-minded workers.

A co-working space can be a good use of unused spaces in buildings and be birthing places of new enterprises. They can also support local businesses by hosting large groups of potential customers.

And they may afford people a place to work closer from home, reducing the need for long commutes.



A similar scale of disruption may be on the horizon with the rapid growth of big players in co-working spaces such as WeWork. These could threaten existing shared work spaces by absorbing customers and competitively leasing out available buildings.

What we found

We analysed planning and economic development policy and interviewed founders and users of shared working spaces in Western Australia.

We identified around 20 shared work spaces in Perth and regional Western Australia. Many were in retrofitted older and under-used buildings such as an old department store, maternity hospital or converted office space.

Most founders told us that shared working spaces needed to be accessible to be viable. Many also identified the quality and intensity of activities around the area as essential to attracting workers to their space.

But founders identified regulatory frameworks, including land use permission controls, as significant barriers to establishing these spaces. For instance, a

shared work space where people repair furniture or make jewellery could be considered as being used for manufacturing.

This type of activity may not be permitted in a disused department store that falls within a retail zone.

We found that often, local councillors and economic developers, have thrown their hat in the ring to help establish shared work spaces in their area. They would do so by helping founders secure required approvals, such as building accessibility certifications and emergency management plans.

Knowing the potential contribution of such spaces to the economy, they've also helped founders navigate regulations and planning controls intended for more permanent use of spaces.

But we found that town planners were rarely engaged in early conversations with shared work space founders. Planners generally didn't identify or facilitate opportunities to host shared working spaces in unused buildings.

Planning policy documents and city planning departments didn't actively recognise co-working spaces as a major new way people use buildings in cities.

Sharing spaces better

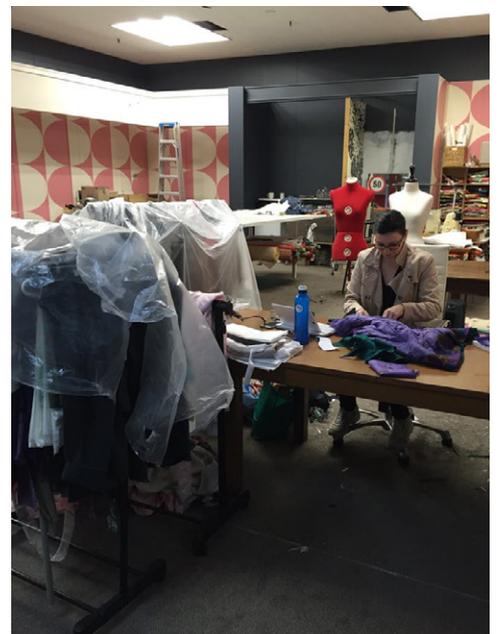
Technologies are creating new ways to match a mobile and flexible workforce with work spaces. This is leaving regulators to manage the impacts from the temporary uses of many shared work spaces.

City planners should be prepared to recognise and plan for the benefits these spaces bring, while minimising possible negative impacts on users, neighbours, and the broader community.

Planning strategies that seek to regenerate urban places and provide economic and social opportunities in urban growth areas will need to prompt more engagement with shared work space proponents, users, neighbouring businesses and residents, and local government divisions.

Shared work spaces have a positive role to play in Australian cities and regional centres. However, it seems planners are at risk of missing the boat when it comes to using shared work space to achieve more socially and economically viable planning outcomes.

This article first appeared in [The Conversation](#) on July 11, 2018.





Rebecca Cassells
Principal Research Fellow
Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre

TAKES RESEARCH IMPACT AND ENGAGEMENT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

As BCEC's Head of Research Impact and Engagement Strategy, Rebecca is responsible for making sure that the research the Centre produces is as visible and accessible as possible. This ensures that our research has the best chance of making a difference and can inform better policy and decision making.

Rebecca has been with the Centre since it began five years ago and has led and introduced a number of initiatives that have seen the Centre deliver on its core mission – delivering high quality, accessible evidence-based research that will enhance our understanding of key economic and

social issues that contribute to the wellbeing of West Australian families, businesses and communities.

Her principal areas of research expertise focuses on economic and social issues that encompass aspects of inequality and disadvantage, particularly in relation to gender, where her work has been influential in driving public debates and influencing policy and legislation.

Rebecca has two daughters who are making their way through high school and university and is passionate about making sure the workforce they enter is an equitable one.



Steven Bond-Smith
Research Fellow
Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre

AS PRIMARY CARER FOR SON LEANDER, STEVEN SAYS IT'S A PRIVILEGE TO WATCH HIM GROW!

Steven is a Research Fellow with the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre and is interested in the economics of innovation, growth and regional economics.

As the primary carer for his son, Leander, Steven says that being a parent is wonderful, but the huge responsibility and time commitment can also be exhausting. Leander changes so quickly and Steven is so grateful for the privilege to watch him grow.

Being a parent has also revealed to Steven some of the drivers of the gender pay gap

some of his colleagues research at BCEC. In particular, if the parenting commitment is not accounted for, this is reflected in subsequent career opportunities, even when those commitments reduce as children grow. This demonstrates to Steven that if we do not have flexible and supportive workplaces and labour markets, that there is a lot of human capital in parents, particularly mothers, that could be lost. This suggests to Steven that there are very real economic benefits of reducing the gender pay gap.



Silvia Salazar
Research Fellow
Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre

BCEC'S NEWEST RESEARCH FELLOW COMES FROM A FAMILY OF ECONOMISTS

Silvia is a Research Fellow with the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre. Originally from Colombia, Silvia comes from a family of economists. Silvia laughs when she explains that her mother, father, brother and sister specialise in economics, everyone except the family dog! Silvia completed her studies in France including her PhD at the Paris School of Economics.

Silvia's latest paper, which is published in the 'Review of Economics of the Household' journal, explores at which point can time substitute money in the

household domestic production. She is currently working on an AHURI project that looks at the superannuation and mortgage stress among retired people. Silvia co-authored BCEC's most recent publication, [*Falling through the Net: The digital divide in WA*](#) where she contributed to the social and expenditure aspect of the digital divide.

In her spare time, Silvia enjoys the Perth lifestyle, riding the waves, and surfing and sailing with the wind whenever she has the opportunity.



LATEST RESEARCH

Publications

Accessing BCEC's Publications

Visit bcec.edu.au to view the Centre's published reports, journal articles and working papers, along with presentations, newsletters and government inquiry submissions prepared by BCEC.



Gender and climate change: Do female parliamentarians make difference?

Astghik Mavisakalyan, Yashar Tarverdi
European Journal of Political Economy

This paper investigates whether female political representation in national parliaments influences climate change policy outcomes. Based on data from a large sample of countries, we demonstrate that female representation leads countries to adopt more stringent climate change policies. We exploit a combination of full and partial identification approaches to suggest that this relationship is likely to be causal. Moreover, we show that through its effect on the stringency of climate change policies, the representation of females in parliament results in lower carbon dioxide emissions. Female political representation may be an underutilized tool for addressing climate change.



The impact of intergenerational financial transfers on health and wellbeing outcomes: A longitudinal study

Rachel Ong ViforJ, Toan Nguyen, Garth Kendall
Social Science & Medicine

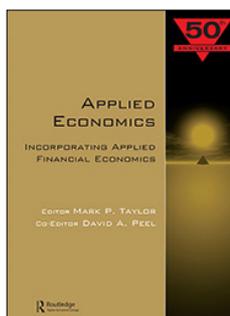
This paper estimates the impacts of intergenerational financial transfers on the physical health, mental health and perceived financial security of Australian males and females. We distinguish between two key sources of intergenerational financial transfers – inheritances and inter vivos parental cash transfers. From a two-stage modelling strategy that controls for potential bias, we do not find systematic evidence of a causal link between receipt of intergenerational financial transfers and health and wellbeing outcomes. This applies to both inheritances and inter vivos parental cash transfers, and for both males and females.



Pathways to housing tax reform

Richard Eccleston, Julia Verdouw, Kathleen Flanagan, Neil Warren, Alan Duncan, Rachel Ong ViforJ, Stephen Whelan, Kadir Atalay
Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute

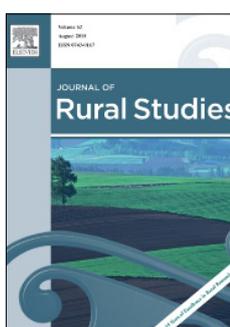
Despite widespread agreement that housing tax reform would lead to better housing outcomes and improved economic efficiency, the politics and ideology around housing tax policy remain a deterrent for change. This report, funded by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI), uses innovative economic modelling to reveal a practical way to overcome these hurdles, and lays out a comprehensive pathway to housing tax reform which will deliver long-term dividends while minimising short-term impacts on budgets, households and housing markets.



Alcohol consumption, censorship and misjudgement

Kenneth Clements, Haiyan Liu, Yashar Tarverdi
Applied Economics

In the study of the economic determinants of alcohol consumption, there is an under-appreciated issue of sample selectivity as consumption is often not fully observed. Sample selectivity involves ignoring consumption below a censorship cut-off level. This article estimates a demand system for beer, wine and spirits with and without allowance for selectivity. Then using a simulation approach, it examines the impact of misjudgement in the censorship level on the estimated demand parameters. A mean squared error criterion is suggested for determining the appropriate censorship level.



Who are the future volunteers in rural places?

Amanda Davies, Leonie A. Lockstone-Binney, Kirsten Holmes
Journal of Rural Studies

This paper examines the demographic characteristics of the current pool of volunteers for rural areas and how volunteering relates to individuals' rural background, sense of community connection and plans to remain in the community. The study revealed that an important volunteer cohort was planning to leave their community within a few years, mainly due to the lack of essential services in rural towns. We conclude that if governments wish to maintain or enhance the utilisation of local volunteers in rural areas, attention must be given to better supporting the existing rural volunteer workforce and to addressing the underlying causes of rural outmigration.



Let's keep in touch

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