

From the Managing Editor

Welcome to the first issue the *Australian Journal of Labour Economics* (AJLE) for 2023. In this issue we have, as usual, a range of articles which will be of interest to our readers covering a range of labour market issues and using a variety of approaches to research. But first we have a paper in an occasional series covering a topic of general interest to readers. Andrew Leigh, well-known labour economist formerly from ANU but now an MP and Assistant Minister for Competition, Charities and Treasury, presents an overview of monopsony power in the Australian labour market in a paper entitled 'How uncompetitive markets hurt workers'. Monopsony is a somewhat neglected area of labour economics in Australia so this contribution is most welcome and hopefully will stir interest to readers and possibly suggest a research agenda for academics and practitioners.

The second paper, by Mike Dockery, Curtin University and Sandra Buchler, Goethe-University Frankfurt am Main, 'Women's work: myth or reality? Occupational feminisation and women's job satisfaction in Australia' examines the well-established phenomenon of concentration of women in particular occupation, often referred to as 'feminisation'. The paper provides evidence on the nature of occupational segregation and its role in shaping differential labour market outcomes for men and women using data from the HILDA survey. In their paper the authors have sought to explore the notion of 'women's work' as a factor contributing to occupational segregation – the idea that certain occupations are highly feminised because women have a strong preference for the type of work done in those occupations. The results are in contrast to much of the existing literature on the topic. A particularly interesting result is that the evidence indicates that this notion of 'women's work' applies primarily to mothers.

The paper by Junran Cao and Anu Rammohan, The University of Western Australia, 'Relocation choices of Australian General Practitioners', contributes to the understanding of shortages of rural GPs. The aim of this paper is to use the longitudinal *Medicine in Australia: Balancing Employment and Life* (MABEL) dataset to examine the relocation choices of General Practitioners (GPs) in Australia, focusing on the role of household-related factors, specifically children's education, partner's employment and housing prices. The results suggest that the channel through which individual and professional circumstances lead to relocations is more nuanced than simply changes in earnings or workload. They also demonstrate that individual-level factors play a smaller role on relocation decisions relative to changes in the overall attractiveness of the location in question. This is because rarely are such decisions made in isolation; instead, relocation choices are typically made as a family such that the impacts on one's spouse or children are also non-negligible determinants. The findings have implications for policy since previous policy initiatives to improve rural doctor shortages have sought to design tailored incentive packages focusing on profession and individual-specific characteristics.

The final paper, 'How Australia's employment services system fails jobseekers: Insights from self-determination theory' by Cheryl Sykes of Curtin University, adopts an approach to examine the role and performance of active labour market programs (ALMP) quite different to that which has mostly been undertaken in labour economics. Little, if any, research in labour markets has considered the degree to which the motivation and mental health of unemployed people might be impacted by ALMPs more generally, and in particular, the Australian employment services system. In this paper a self-determination theory perspective is adopted, with analysis of longitudinal survey data of a sample of jobseekers in the 'jobactive' program examining how mental health was impacted as a consequence of their mandatory engagement with the frontline employees of employment services providers. The paper concludes that unemployed people experience the employment services system as unhelpful and ineffective in assisting them to secure employment, and that engagement with the system is more likely than not to have an adverse effect on their mental health. The results have important implications for policy.

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