

From the Managing Editor

Welcome to the first issue of the *Australian Journal of Labour Economics* for 2020. As I announced in the last issue of 2019, we have now moved to producing two issues of the *AJLE* per year to ensure more timely publication. As it happens this has been particularly appropriate given the rapidly changing labour market, industrial relations and education in Australia at this time. Our next issue of *AJLE* will contain articles by labour market scholars on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on these and other aspects of interest to our readers. No doubt, the effects of the crisis and its aftermath will continue to be the subject of research for some time yet and the *AJLE* will provide quality articles on this as well as other issues in labour economics, economics of education and industrial relations.

As always, this issue of *AJLE* contains articles of interest to scholars and practitioners on a variety of topics but all have important implications for policy. The paper by Andrew Wright and Brian Dollery of the University of New England examines the extent to which financial penalties affect the compliance of the unemployed with requirements for unemployment benefits. They find that higher financial penalties for non-attendance at provider appointments do increase attendance.

The article by Jee Young Lee and myself, from the University of Canberra, provides an analysis of the labour market outcomes of graduates holding a Creative Arts degree. The principle finding is that despite a much greater increase in the number of people graduating with Creative Arts degrees, their labour market prospects are generally good, although the returns are less than for most other degrees. A number of policy issues arising from the findings of the paper are discussed.

Leonora Risse, of RMIT University and Harvard University, has contributed a very interesting paper on the relationship between women's self-confidence and their career advancement. This is important given the widespread advice commonly given to women to show more confidence to advance themselves and narrow the gender gap. She tests the hypothesis that higher confidence is linked to higher likelihood of job promotion but finds this only to be the case for men! Readers will find this paper very interesting and relevant in the debate over closing the gender gap.

The final paper is by Robert Breunig and Diana Hourani of the Australian National University, Sasan Bakhtiari of the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, and Elisabetta Magnani of Macquarie University. It looks at the relationship between the financial constraints facing firms and the workforce composition of firms with respect to employment of casual and non-casual workers. The findings are that firms which are relatively unconstrained (have better access to credit and equity) are more likely to increase the proportion of casuals in their growing workforce. Financially constrained firms are more likely to use existing workers more intensively rather than expand employment. The results are interesting in that they draw attention to the role of finance in the employment decisions of firms.

I hope you enjoy reading the articles in this issue and we look forward to bringing you the next issue shortly.

Phil Lewis
Managing Editor