
C Workforce participation data

There are several source of data on the workforce participation of parents including the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Labour Force Survey, the ABS Census of Population and Housing, the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey and the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC).

The Labour Force Survey provides Australia's official measure of employment and unemployment. It is also used by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in its employment databases, including its family database. For these reasons, this appendix draws more heavily on the Survey in relation to workforce participation than on other Source.

However, the Commission notes the work of others, particularly the Australian Institute of Family Studies (sub. 391) and the Department of Education (sub. 147), which report on workforce participation indicators using other Source such as the ABS Census of Population and Housing, the HILDA Survey and LSAC. This work draws many conclusions similar to those made by the Commission from the Labour Force Survey.

The appendix is in two parts: the first part reports workforce participation indicators for Australia drawing on the Labour Force Survey; the second reports workforce participation indicators for Australia compared with selected countries drawing on the OECD family database.

Three indicators of workforce participation are referred to in this appendix.

- The participation rate¹ is the proportion of persons in the population (or a given segment of the population) who are in the labour force. It captures persons who are employed and unemployed. It also reveals the proportion of the population not in the labour force. However, as it treats persons who are in part-time and full-time employment as equivalent, it is not representative of hours worked. For example, two groups of persons could have the same participation rate, but one group works fewer hours than the second group.

¹ Using data variables in the Labour Force Survey, the formula used for calculating participation rates for time period i and for persons aged over 15 years is:

$$PR_i = LF_i \div Pop_i$$

where:

$LF_i = \text{Employed Full time}_i + \text{Employed Part time}_i + \text{Unemployed Looking for Full time Work}_i + \text{Unemployed Looking for Part time Work}_i$ and $Pop_i = LF_i + \text{Not in the Labour Force}_i$

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- The part-time share of employment² is the proportion of persons who are employed who work part time. This is more reflective than the participation rate of hours worked by persons over a period of time. However, it does not include persons who are in the labour force who are unemployed looking for part-time work.
 - Another indicator of the workforce participation of parents is the employment rate. This indicator, which is reported in the OECD family database, is the proportion of persons in the population (or a given segment of the population) who are employed. The maternal employment rate, for example, is the proportion of mothers who are employed. As the employment rate does not capture persons who are unemployed, it is not as complete a measure of a person's labour force status as the participation rate. Like the participation rate, it does not account for hours of work. However, the employment rate remains useful for comparisons between Australia and other OECD countries.

C.1 Workforce participation in Australia

Participation rates

Mothers

The participation rate of mothers with a child aged under 15 years has grown substantially over the last 20 years (from 57 per cent to 67 per cent between 1994 and 2014) (figure C.1). Albeit at lower rates, this is consistent with the growth in the participation rate of all females aged 25 to 54 years — the age group typically comparable with that of mothers and including the highest fertility rates — which has grown from 68 per cent to 76 per cent between 1994 and 2014 (figure C.2).

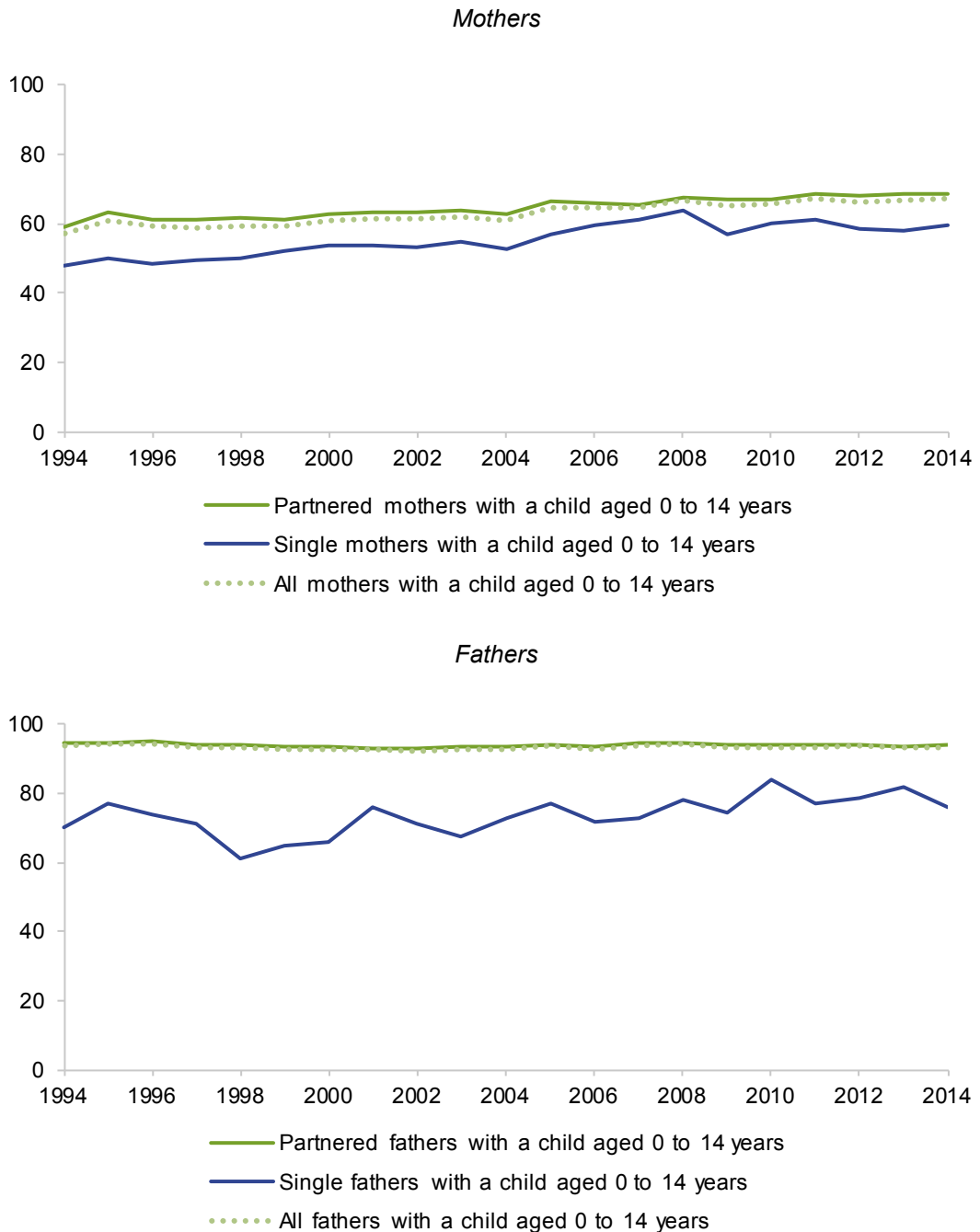
Despite the growth in maternal participation rates, the participation rate of mothers aged 25 to 54 years of children aged under 15 years remains below that of females in the same age group without children (figure C.3). In 2014, the participation rate of partnered mothers was 70 per cent compared with that of partnered females without children of 86 per cent. Similarly, the participation rate of single mothers was 63 per cent compared with that of single females without children of 81 per cent. And the participation rate of all mothers was 69 per cent compared with that of all females without children of 84 per cent.

The growth in maternal participation rates is mirrored for partnered and single mothers, as well as for mothers by different age groups of youngest child, and for mothers by numbers of children (figures C.4 and C.5).

² The formula used for calculating the part-time share of employment in period *i* is:

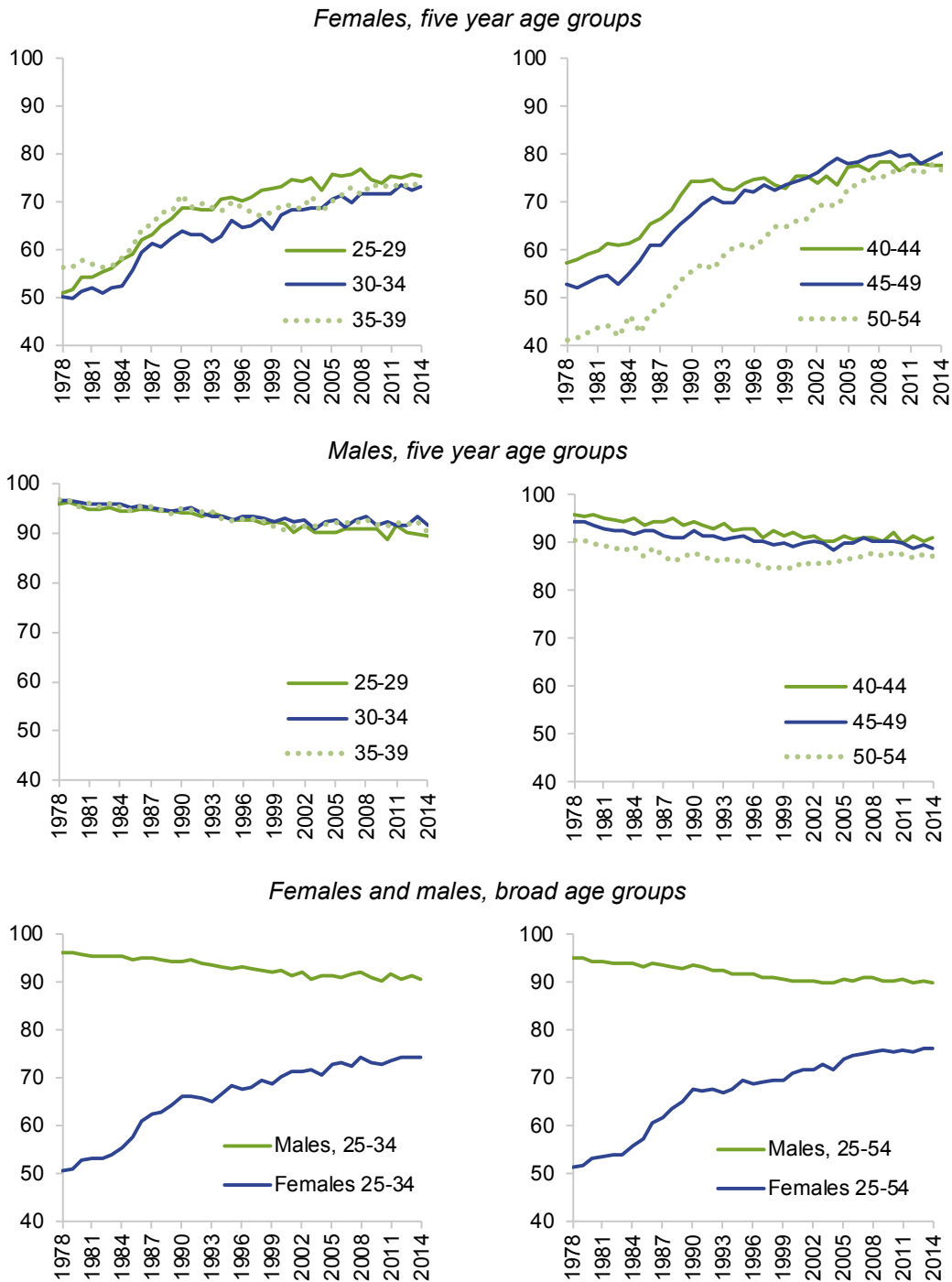
$$PT_i = \frac{\text{Employed Part time}_i}{\text{Employed Part time}_i + \text{Employed Full time}_i}$$

Figure C.1 Participation rates of parents of children aged under 15 years
Per cent



Source: Productivity Commission calculations based on ABS (2005, 2013) for 1994 to 2012, and on ABS (2014a) for 2013 and 2014.

Figure C.2 Participation rates by typical age groups of parents of children aged under 15 years^{a,b}
Per cent

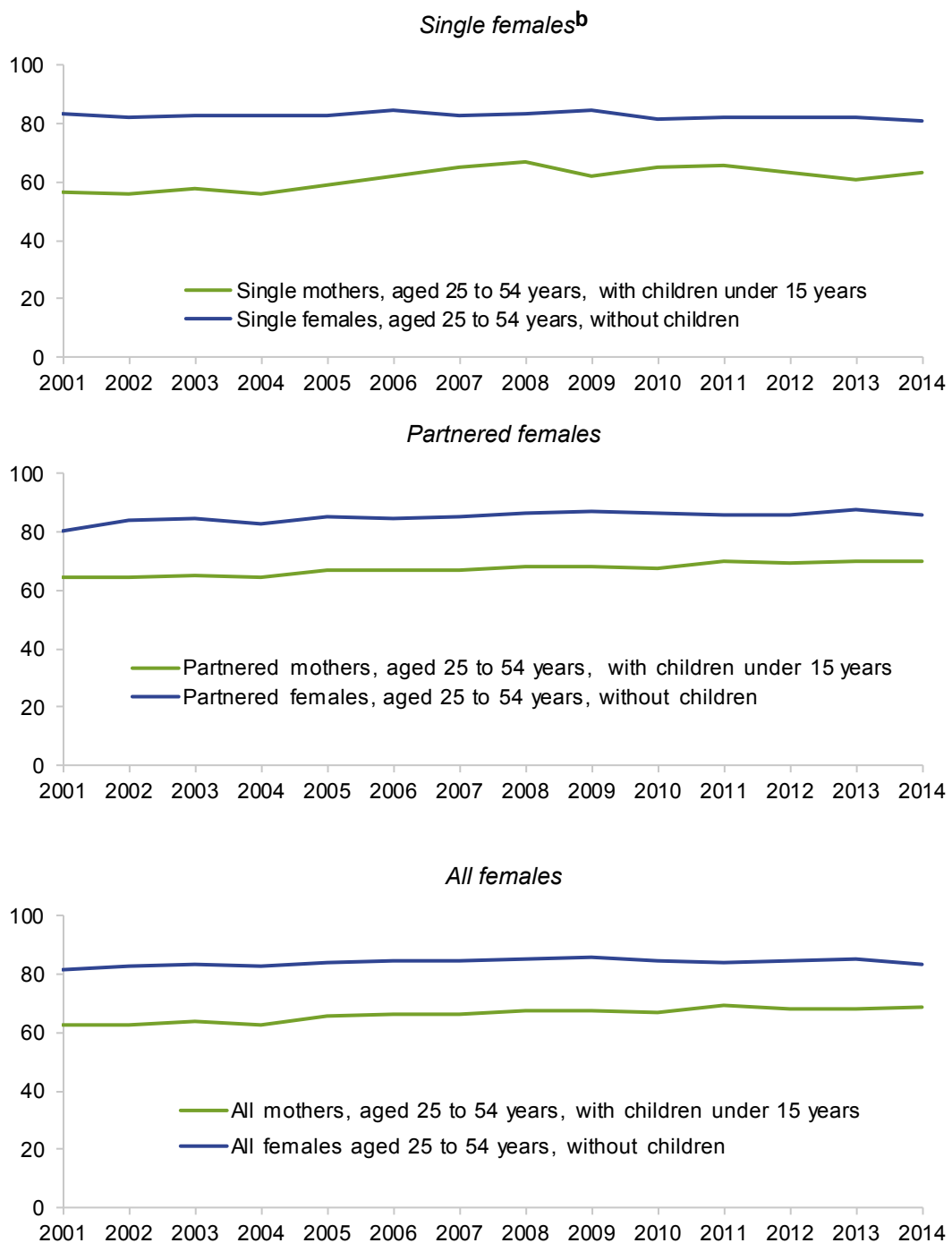


^a As at June each year. ^b Fertility rates were highest in females aged 25 to 34 years in 2012 — data supporting PC (2013).

Source: Productivity Commission calculations based on ABS (2014a).

Figure C.3 **Participation rates of females aged 25 to 54 years with and without children^a**

Per cent

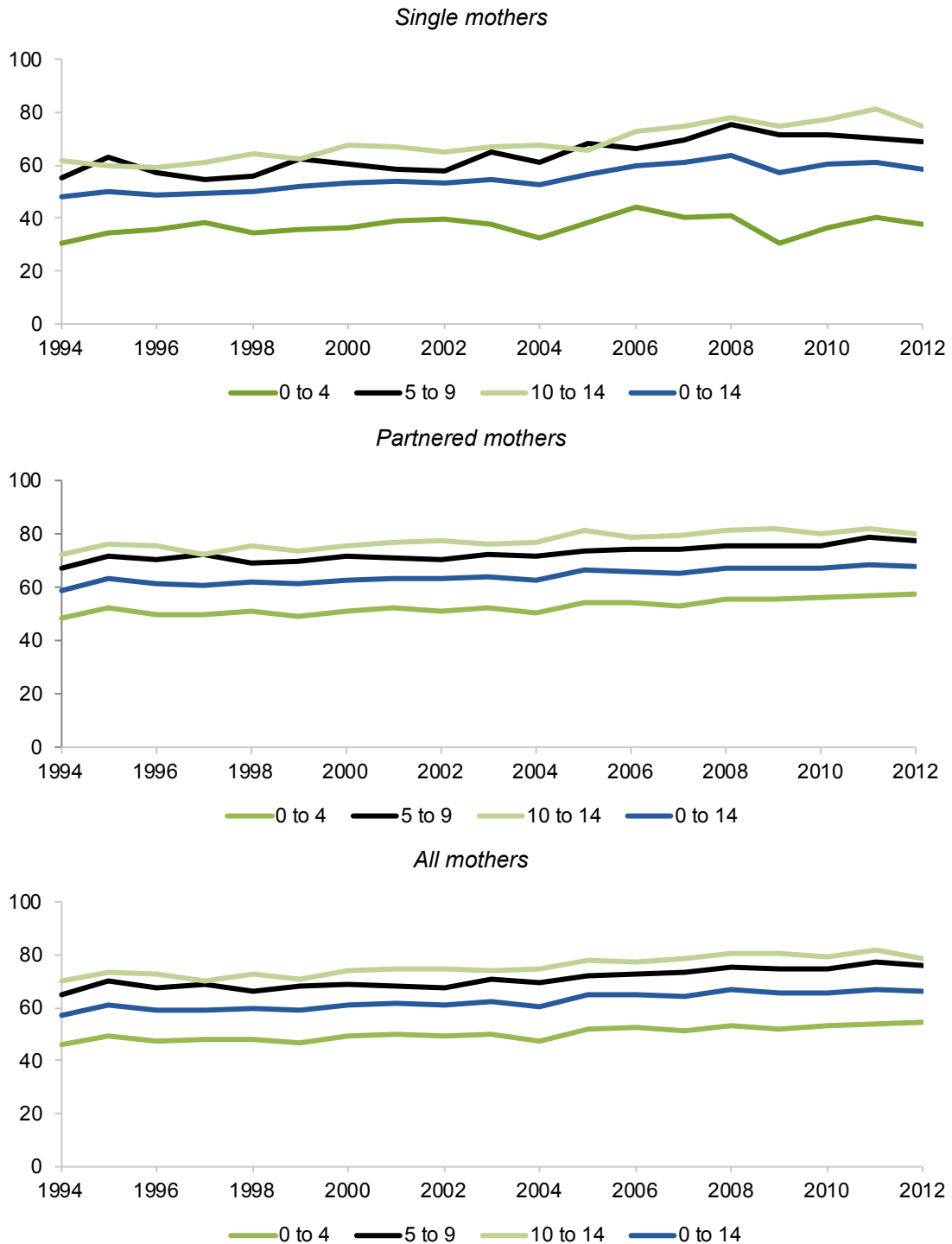


^a As at June each year. ^b Single females without children are assumed to cover 'dependent students', 'non-dependent child', 'other family person', 'person living alone', and 'non-family member not living alone'.

Source: Productivity Commission calculations based on ABS (2014a).

Figure C.4 Participation rates of mothers by age group of child^{a,b}

Per cent



^a As at June each year. ^b Age group of youngest child.

Source: Productivity Commission calculations based on ABS (2005, 2013).

However, there are notable variations in the workforce participation rates of these different groups of mothers.

- The participation rates of partnered mothers are above that for single mothers across all age groups of children and by numbers of children (figures C.4 and C.5). For example, in 2012, the participation rate of partnered mothers with a child aged under 15 years was 68 per cent compared with that for single mothers of 59 per cent. As noted later, however, single mothers' part-time shares of employment are relatively higher.
- The participation rate of mothers increases with the age group of the youngest child (figure C.4). In 2012, the participation rate of mothers with a youngest child aged 0 to 4 years was 54 per cent compared with mothers with a youngest child aged 5 to 9 years of 76 per cent and mothers with a youngest child aged 10 to 14 years of 79 per cent.
- The participation rate of mothers decreases with the number of children (figure C.5). In 2012, the participation rate of mothers with one child aged under 15 years was 69 per cent whereas the participation rate of mothers with more than two children was 65 per cent.

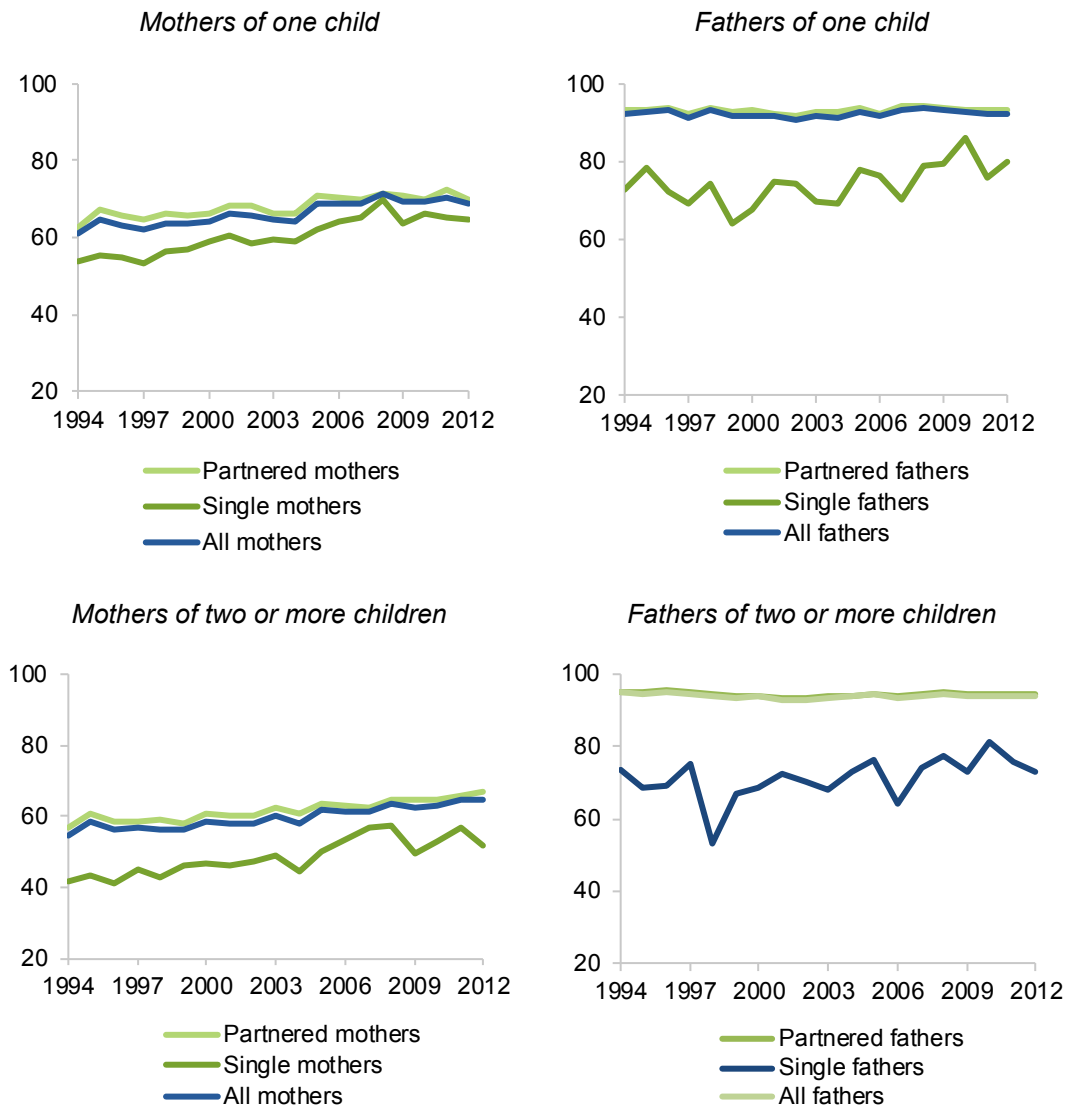
Fathers

Unlike the growth in the workforce participation rates of mothers, the workforce participation rates of fathers (particularly, partnered fathers) with a child aged under 15 years has remained largely unchanged in the last 20 years (sitting at around 93 per cent in 2014) (figure C.1). By comparison, there has been a slight decline in the workforce participation rate of males aged 25 to 54 years (from 92 per cent in 1994 to 90 per cent in 2014) (figure C.2).

At 93 per cent in 2014, the participation rate of fathers is much higher than that of mothers and slightly above that of males aged 25 to 54 years. Unlike mothers, whose participation rate increases with the age of the youngest child, the participation rate of fathers falls slightly (figure C.6). Moreover, unlike mothers whose participation rate falls with the number of children, the participation rate of fathers increases slightly (figure C.5).

Figure C.5 Participation rates of mothers and fathers by number of children aged under 15 years^a

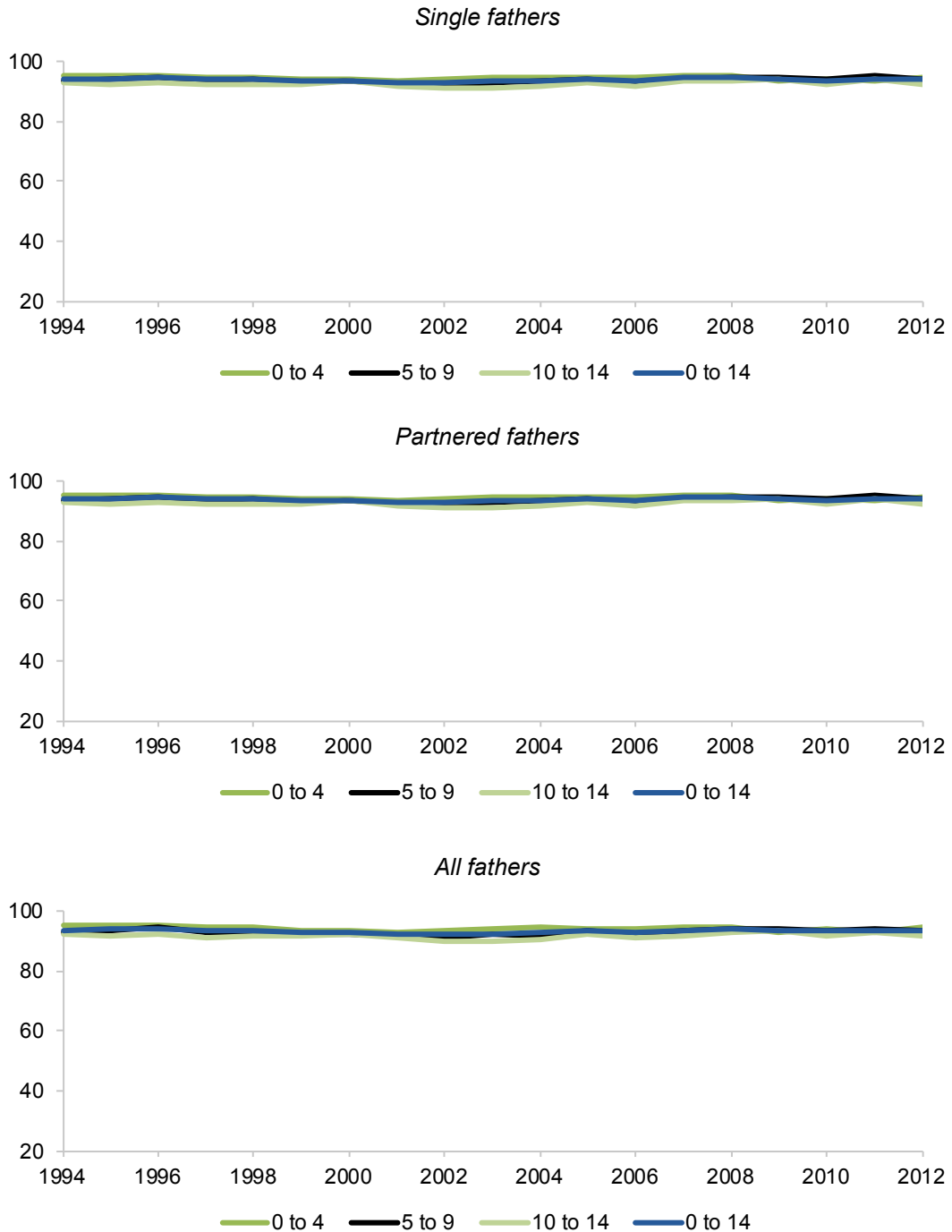
Per cent



^a As at June each year.

Source: Productivity Commission calculations based on ABS (2005, 2013).

Figure C.6 Participation rates of fathers by age group of child^{a,b,c}
Per cent



^a As at June each year. ^b Some of the rates need to be treated with caution as the data on the components that are used to calculate them have relative standard errors exceeding 25 per cent, which the ABS considers may be subject to sampling variability too high for practical purposes. This particularly applies to rates for: single fathers with a youngest child aged 0 to 4 years in 1994, 1998, 1999, 2001 and 2006. ^c Age group of youngest child.

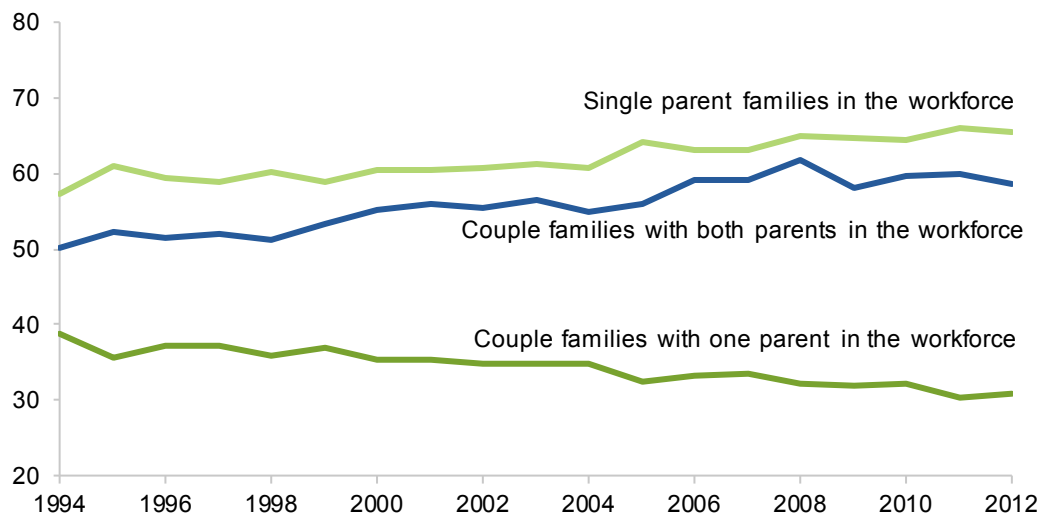
Source: Productivity Commission calculations based on ABS (2005, 2013).

Family types

In 2012, around 84 per cent of families with a youngest child under 15 years had a parent in the workforce, a fall from around 88 per cent of families in 1994. Over the period, there:

- was a fall in the proportion of couple families with only one parent in the workforce
- were increases in the proportion of single parent families with a parent in the workforce and of couple families with both parents in the workforce (figure C.7).

Figure C.7 Participant rates by family types, with a child aged under 15 years^{a,b}
Per cent



^a As at June each year. ^b Participation rates by family types are measured as follows: single parent families — the number of single parent families in the workforce as a proportion of all single parent families; couple families — the number of couple families with one or both parents in the workforce as proportions of all couple families.

Source: Productivity Commission calculations based on ABS (2005, 2013).

Part-time employment

Mothers

The participation rates estimated above do not account for hours of work. More employed mothers work part time than full time largely irrespective of the age group of their youngest child or the number of children they have (figures C.8, C.9 and C.10). There has been little growth over the past two decades in the proportion of mothers with a child aged 15 years working part time, despite the strong growth in their participation rates.

The part-time share of employment of mothers with a child aged under 15 years (58 per cent in 2014, figure C.8) is much higher than for all females aged 25 to 54 years (41 per cent in 2014, figure C.11). The part-time share of employment of mothers aged 25 to 54 years was also well above females in the same age group without children (in 2014, 58 per cent compared with 24 per cent) (figure C.12).

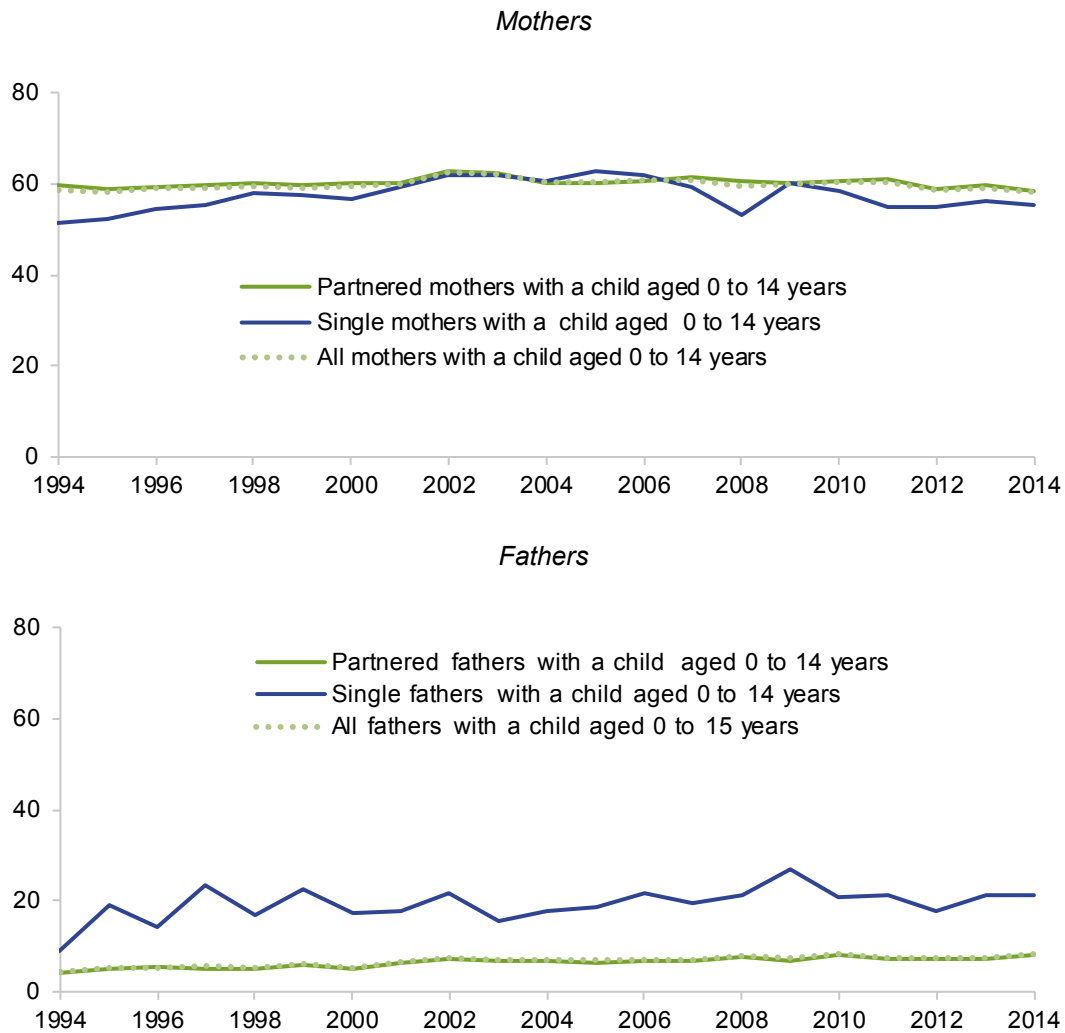
Further, partnered mothers with a child aged under 15 years and with two children or more have a higher part-time share of employment than single mothers (figure C.10). This suggests that partnered mothers' working hours are co-related to the workforce participation of the fathers in couple families.

The part-time share of employment of mothers falls with increases in the age group of the youngest child (figure C.9) and increases with the number of children (figure C.10).

Fathers

Although fathers with a child aged under 15 years have a much lower part-time share of employment than mothers (in 2014, 9 per cent compared with 58 per cent), their part-time share of employment has grown substantially from 4 per cent in 1994 (figure C.8).

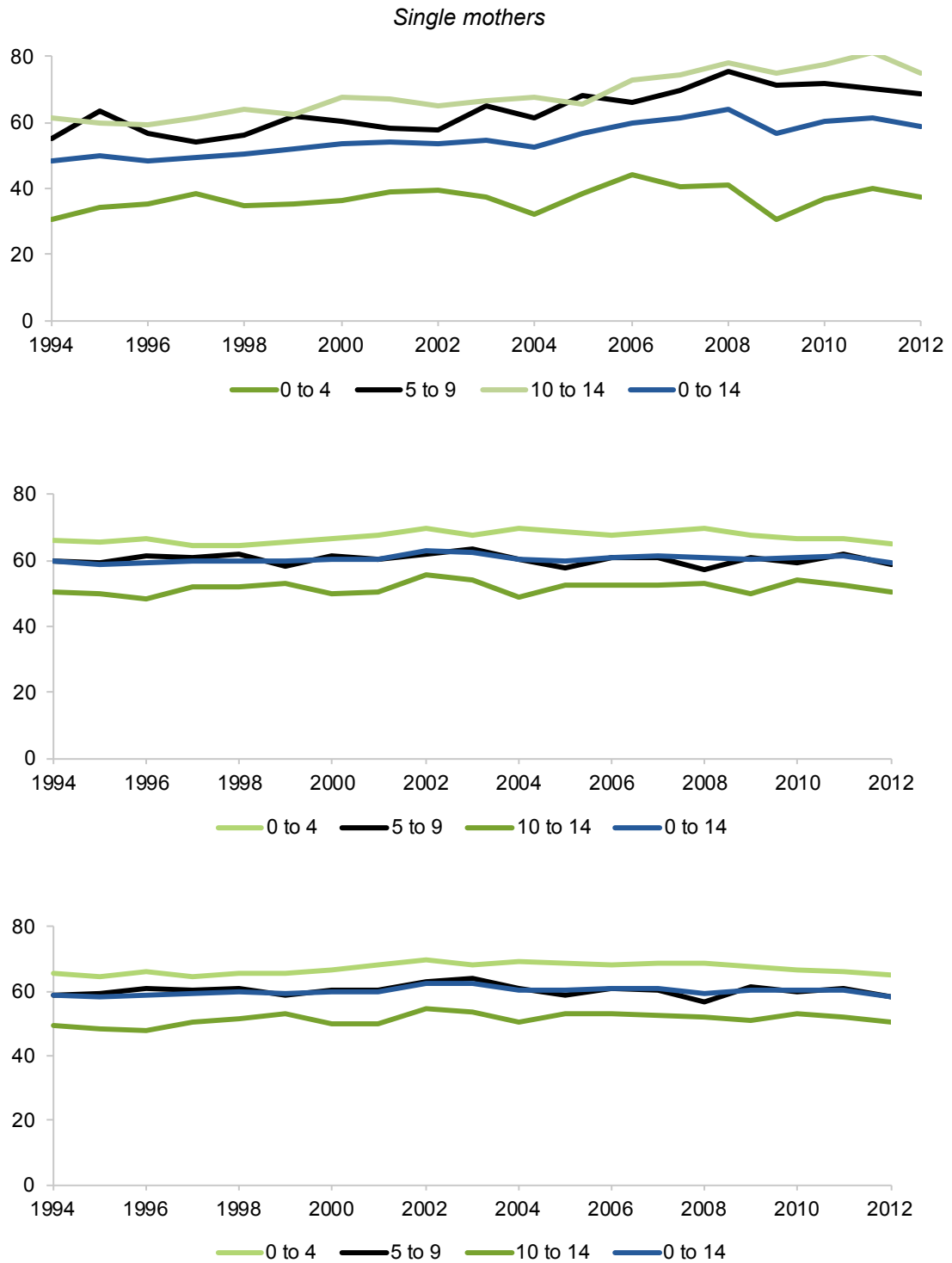
Figure C.8 Part-time shares of employment of parents of children aged under 15 years^a
Per cent



^a As at June each year.

Source: Productivity Commission calculations based on ABS (2005, 2013) for 1994 to 2012 and on ABS (2014a) for 2013 and 2014.

Figure C.9 **Part-time shares of employment of mothers by age group of child^{a,b}**
Per cent

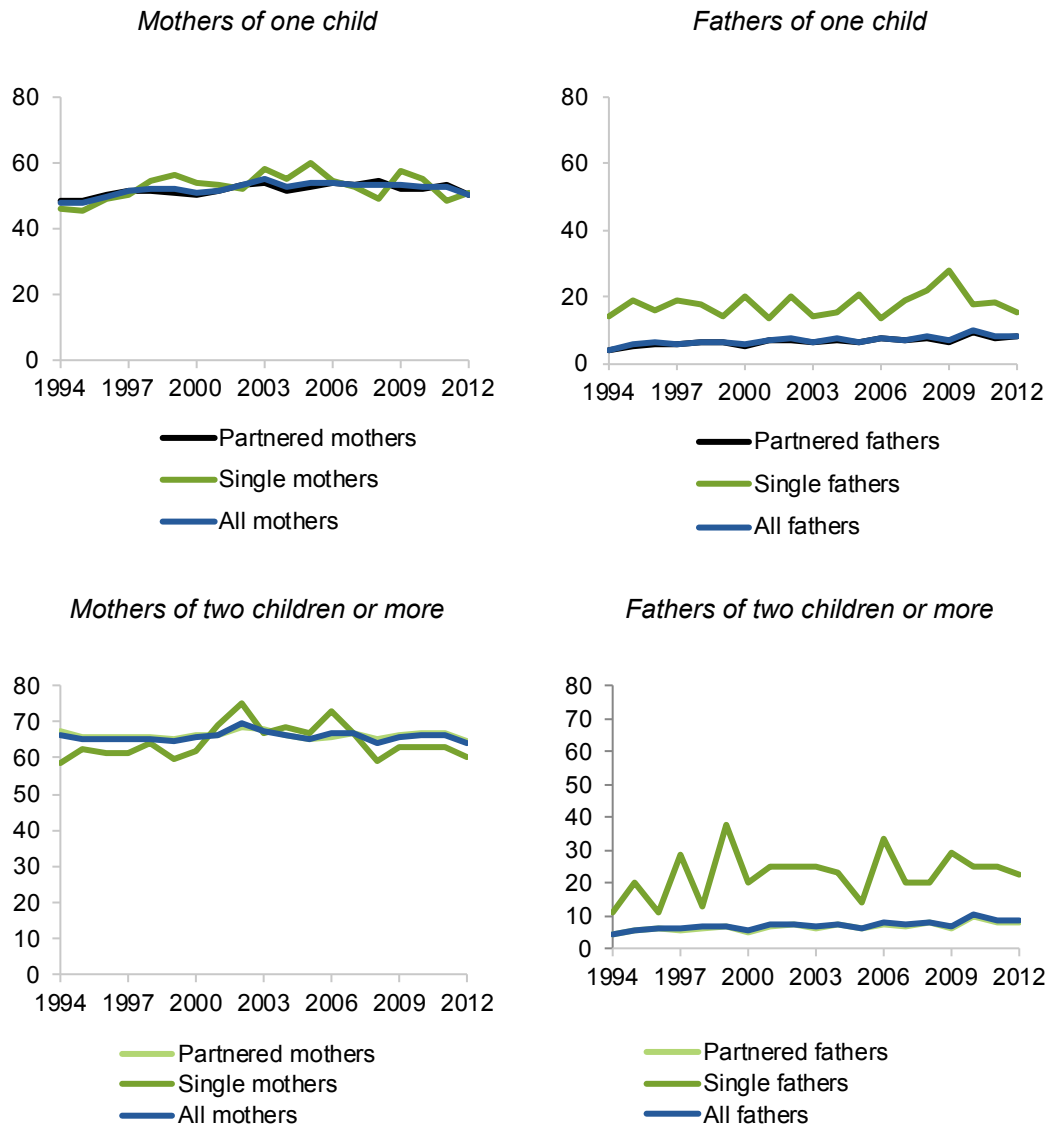


^a As at June each year. ^b Age group of youngest child.

Source: Productivity Commission calculations based on ABS (2005, 2013).

Figure C.10 Part-time shares of employment of mothers and fathers by number of children under 15 years^{a, b}

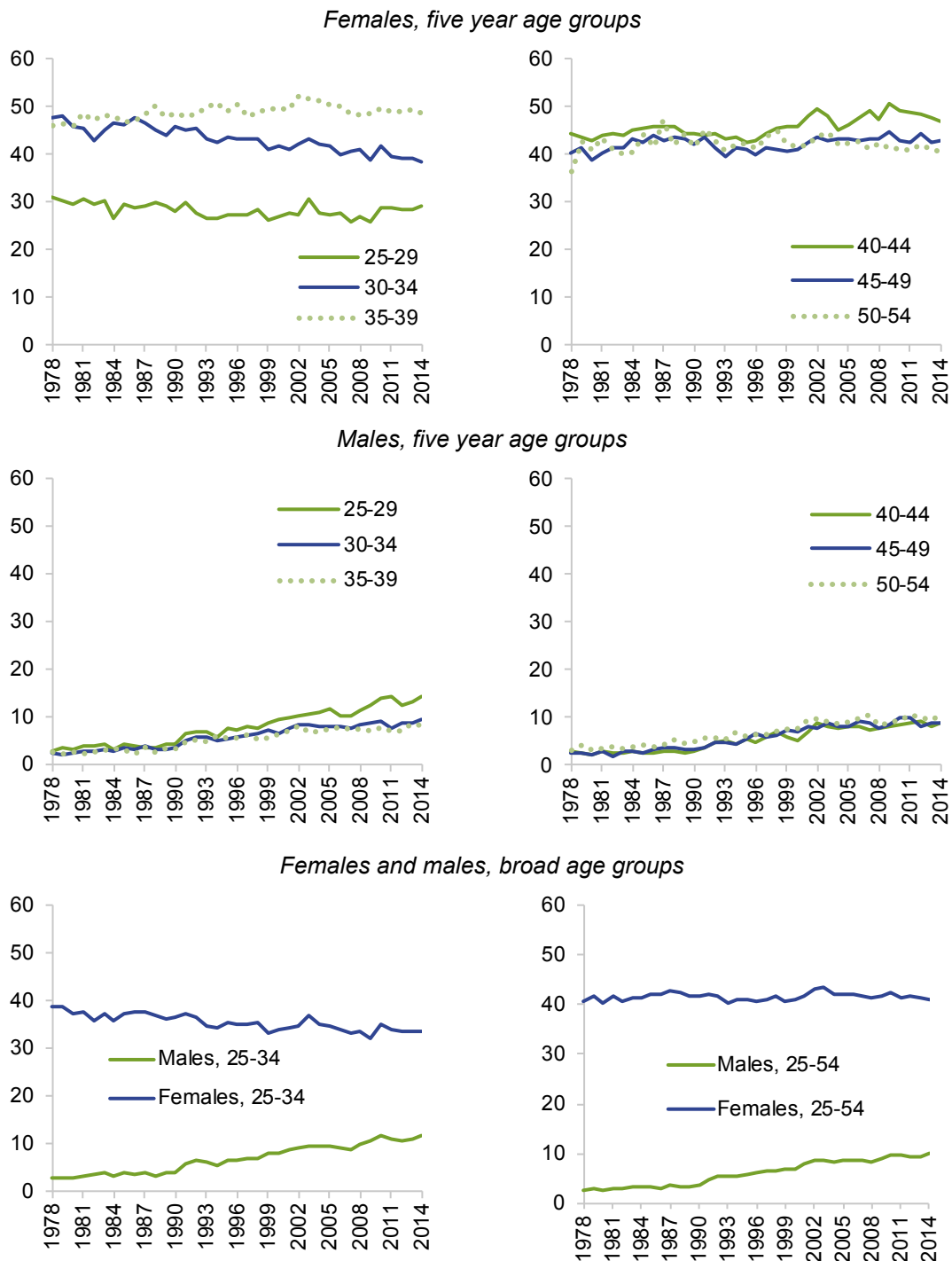
Per cent



^a As at June each year. ^b Some of the rates need to be treated with caution as the data on the components that are used to calculate them have relative standard errors exceeding 25 per cent, which the ABS considers may be subject to sampling variability too high for practical purposes. This particularly applies to rates for: single fathers with one child (1994 to 2001, 2003 to 2004, 2006) and with two or more children (1994 to 2005, 2007 to 2008, 2012).

Source: Productivity Commission calculations based on ABS (2005, 2013).

Figure C.11 Female and male part-time shares of employment by typical age groups of parents of children aged under 15 years^{a, b}
Per cent

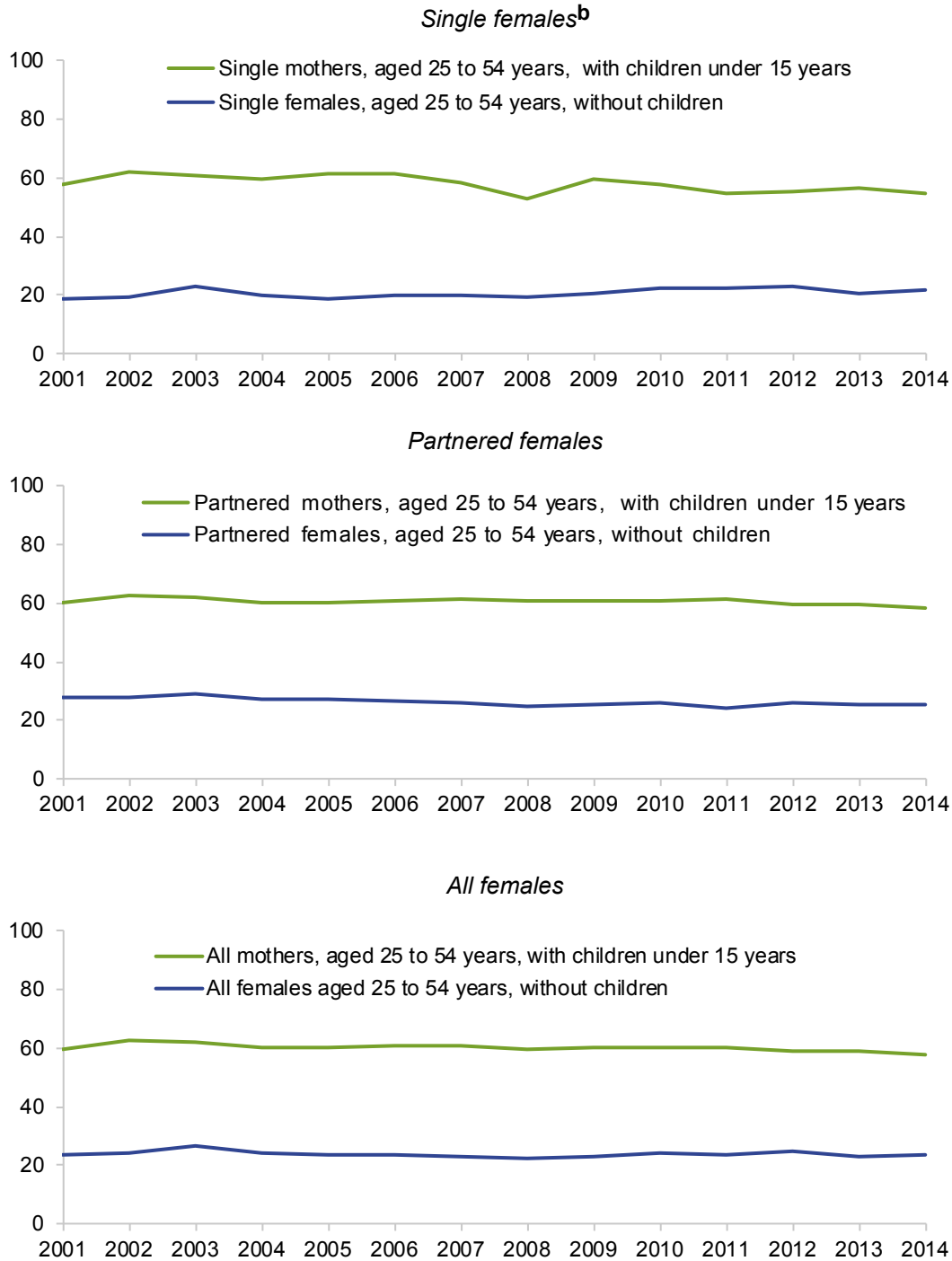


^a As at June each year. ^b Fertility rates were highest in females aged 25 to 34 years in 2012 — data supporting PC (2013).

Source: Productivity Commission calculations based on ABS (2014a).

Figure C.12 **Part-time shares of employment of females aged 25 to 54 years with and without children^a**

Per cent

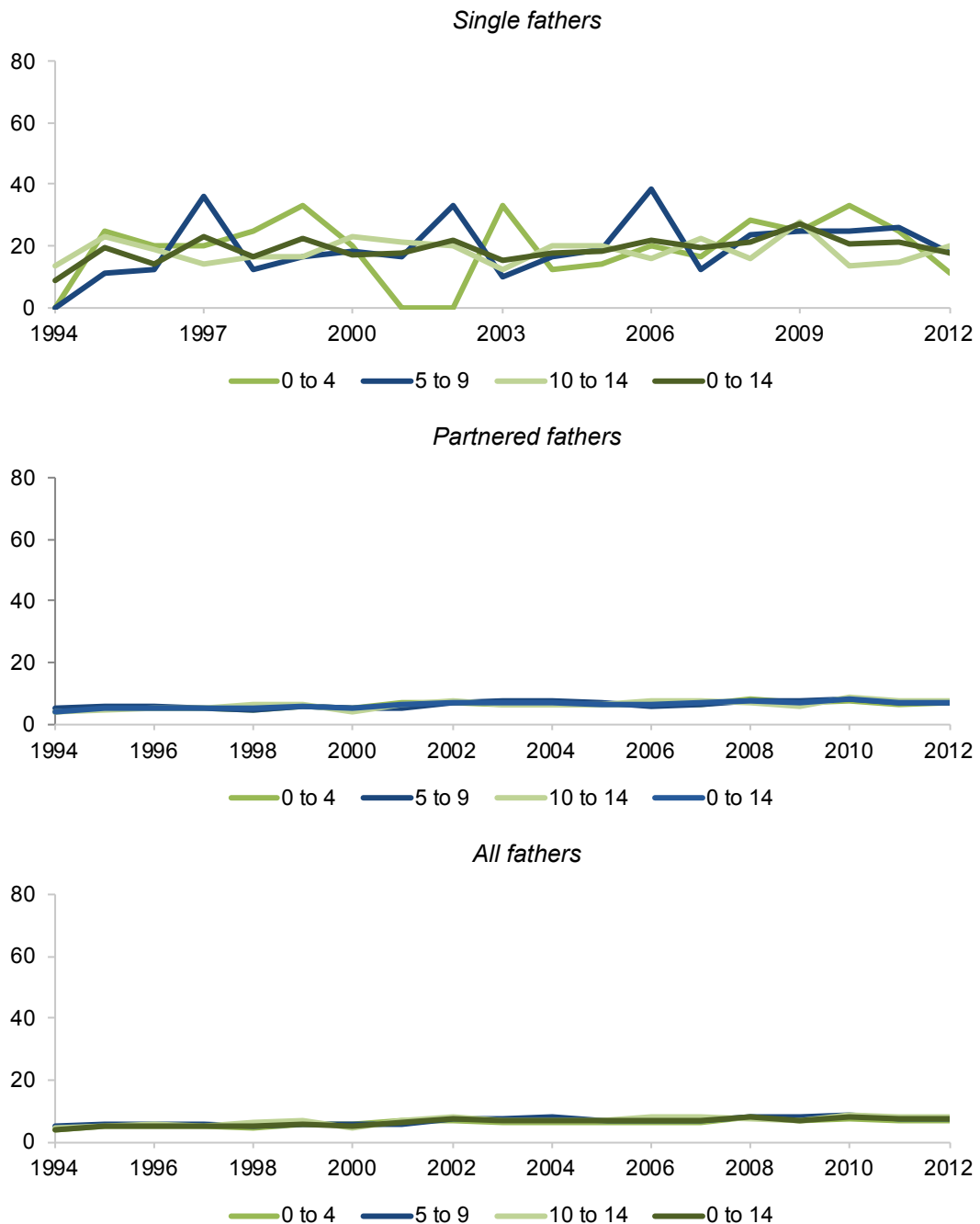


^a As at June each year. ^b Single females without children are assumed to cover 'dependent students', 'non-dependent child', 'other family person', 'person living alone', and 'non-family member not living alone'.

Source: Productivity Commission calculations based on ABS (2014a).

Figure C.13 **Part-time shares of employment of fathers by age group of child^{a,b,c}**

Per cent



a As at June each year. **b** Some of the rates need to be treated with caution as the data on the components that are used to calculate them have relative standard errors exceeding 25 per cent, which the ABS considers may be subject to sampling variability too high for practical purposes. This particularly applies to rates for single fathers with a youngest child aged: 0 to 4 years in 1994 to 2012; 5 to 9 years in all years apart from 2006; 10 to 14 years in 1994 to 2012; 0 to 14 years in 1994, 1996, 1998. **c** Age group of youngest child.

Source: Productivity Commission calculations based on ABS (2005, 2013).

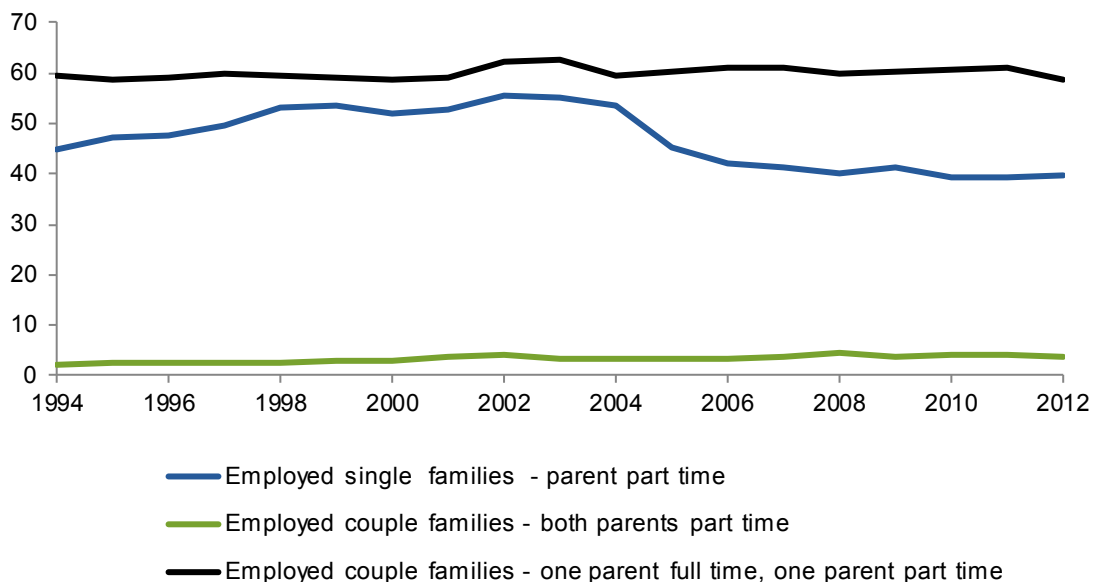
Family types

Around 56 per cent of all employed families with a child aged under 15 years worked part time in 2012, a fall from 59 per cent in 1994.

Of the couple families who were employed in 2012, 59 per cent involved one parent working full time and one parent working part time (a slight decrease from 60 per cent in 1994), and 4 per cent involved both parents working part time (a slight increase from 2 per cent in 1994) (figure C.14). Around 40 per cent of employed single parent families worked part time in 2012, a drop from 45 per cent in 1994.

Figure C.14 Part-time shares of employment by family types, with youngest child aged under 15 years^a

Per cent



^a As at June each year.

Source: Productivity Commission calculations based on ABS (2005, 2013).

Other patterns and trends

More women are becoming self-employed

Several participants and other parties (for example, AWCCI, sub. 336; AIFS, sub. 391; Baird 2013; Bankwest 2013) noted an emerging trend of women and mothers moving into self-employment. AWCCI (sub. 336 p. 11) considered that women were doing so with the aim of creating greater flexibility.

Bankwest (2013, p. 15) reported ABS data that showed that over the past ten years, the number of women ‘running their own business’ had grown by 5 per cent, whereas the number of men running their own business had dropped by 9 per cent. This group was made up of ‘own account workers’ (person who operate their own unincorporated economic enterprise or engage independently in a profession or trade and has no employees) and ‘employers’ (persons who operate their own unincorporated economic enterprises or engage independently in a profession or trade and hires one or more employees). While the number of female (and male) employers dropped over the ten year period by 22 per cent (20 per cent), the number of female ‘own account workers’ increased by 14 per cent while the corresponding figure for males was a decrease of 5 per cent.

Baird (2013, pp. 10–12) noted the emerging shift towards ‘mumpreneurs’.

- There has been a 25 per cent increase in the proportion of women in self-employment between 2002 and 2012, compared with just a 1 per cent increase for men. Around 9 per cent of women compared with 13 per cent of men now run their own businesses or are sole traders.
- A study, based on a small sample of 60 women in self-employment, found that the main elements driving these women to self-employment related to their role as mothers and the desire to continue in paid work. It suggested that the lack of flexibility and autonomy, and the (explicit or implicit) expectations of organisational employment, combined with ‘good mother’ demands prevalent in our society, acted as ‘push factors’ for many women.

More women are becoming the primary breadwinners in families

The trend towards women becoming the primary breadwinners in couple families has been noted by Baird (2013), Cassells et al. (2013), and Wooden and Hahn (2014). For example, Cassells et al. (2013, pp. 26–29) noted the following from their examination of HILDA data.

- Households with breadwinners who were women increased from 22 per cent in 2001 to 24 per cent in 2011.
- While men predominantly take on the role of breadwinner in dual-earner couples, families on very low and middle combined incomes are relatively more reliant on women as breadwinners. In around 27 per cent of families in the lowest decile of household earnings and 25 per cent of middle income families, the breadwinner was a woman. As families became more affluent the proportion of female breadwinners dropped to 17 per cent for families with earnings in the highest decile of household earnings.
- There appeared to be a distinction between families with and without children. Female breadwinner households are more likely to occur within couple only households — 52 per cent compared with 39 per cent for male breadwinner households. Male

breadwinner households are more likely to comprise couples with dependent children — 55 per cent compared with 42 per cent for female breadwinner households.

- The role of women as breadwinners also appears to take on a dynamic U-shape — with younger age households (typically before children) more likely to have female breadwinners, but during the childbearing and rearing years the proportion of female breadwinner households declines, and then increases again as women age.

C.2 Workforce participation in Australia compared with other OECD countries

The OECD family database contains estimates of employment rates for parents from data drawn from national labour force surveys across OECD countries. These estimates are largely available for mothers rather than for fathers, and are presented for 2009 or the most recent year available.

Three groups of countries are the focus of comparison with Australia:

- ‘English-speaking countries’ with a similar cultural and socioeconomic background — Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- ‘Nordic countries’ — Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Sweden.³
- ‘Other European countries’ — Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands.

While the OECD family data base enables broad international comparisons among countries, each country’s data may not be consistently collected in their national labour force surveys. Each national survey can differ in a number of aspects such as: the time periods to which they refer, meaning that the data are not always temporally consistent; their treatment of residents who are military personnel; the minimum ages of persons covered; and their treatment of persons on maternity (or paternity) leave as being in, or outside of, the labour force (table C.1).

For example, in all OECD countries under comparison, women on maternity leave are counted as employed, as are most parents on parental leave with duration of a few months. However, persons on parental leave of prolonged duration are treated differently across countries. These aspects need to be considered when assessing differences between Australia and other countries’ employment rates.

³ Estimates of employment rates for parents in Norway, however, are not available.

Table C.1 Key differences in labour force data collected in selected OECD countries

| <i>Country</i> | <i>Coverage</i> | <i>Treatment of persons on maternity leave, paternity leave and on long absences from a job</i> |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Australia | Resident civilian population (excluding members of the permanent defence forces, diplomatic personnel, members of non-Australian defence forces and their families stationed in Australia) aged 15 years and over living in private households or sampled separately in collective households (i.e. hotels, motels, hostels, religious and educational institutions including college residences, prisons, boarding houses and private hotels, Aboriginal settlements, short term caravan parks and camping grounds). Also excludes overseas residents in Australia. | Persons are considered as employed if they are away from work for more than four weeks up to the end of the reference week and received pay for some or all of the four week period to the end of the reference week. |
| Austria | Resident population aged 15 years and over living in private households including all armed forces and excluding conscripts (as of 2004). | People on maternity leave are considered in employment. People in full-time parental leave considered as a case of long term absence from work. Persons away from work for more than 3 months are considered to have a job if continuing to receive 50 per cent of their wage or salary from the employer. |
| Belgium | Resident population aged 15 years and over living in private households. | People on maternity leave are considered in employment. People in full-time parental leave considered as a case of long term absence from work. Persons away from work for more than 3 months are considered to have a job if continuing to receive 50 per cent of their wage or salary from the employer. |
| Canada | Civilian resident non-institutional population aged 15 years and over living in private households and in collective households via their parents, including non-permanent residents. | Considered as employed if they have a job to go back to. |
| Denmark | Resident population aged 15 years and over living in private households or collective households. | People on maternity leave are considered in employment. People in full-time parental leave considered as a case of long term absence from work. Persons away from work for more than 3 months are considered to have a job if continuing to receive 50 per cent of their wage or salary from the employer. |

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Table C.1 (continued)

| <i>Country</i> | <i>Coverage</i> | <i>Treatment of persons on maternity leave, paternity leave and on long absences from a job</i> |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Finland | Persons aged 15 to 74 who are permanent residents of Finland. The data for labour force and employed includes career military and conscripts. | Parents on maternity, paternity or parental leave are classified as employed. During child homecare leave (until the child reaches age 3), parents are classified as not in the labour force. After 2008, persons away from work for more than 3 months are considered to have a job if continuing to receive 50 per cent of their wage or salary from the employer. |
| France | Resident population aged 15 years and over living in private households in metropolitan France. | People on maternity leave are considered in employment. Persons on parental leave or on long absence from work is considered employed if they have a job to go back to and the total absence from work does not exceed 12 months for sick leave or 3 months for parental leave. |
| Germany | Resident population aged 15 years and over living in private or collective households (excluding those living in military barracks). It is based on the total labour force including the armed forces. | People on maternity leave are considered in employment. Persons on parental leave or on long absence from work is considered employed if the total absence from work does not exceed 3 months. Absences due to illness, accident or medical rehabilitation are also considered in employment if absent 3 months and longer. |
| Iceland | Resident population aged 16 to 74 years living in private and collective households, including all armed forces. | Information not available. |
| Netherlands | Resident non-institutional population aged 15 years and over living in private households, including all armed forces. | Persons on maternity leave or parental leave or on a long absence away from work belong to the employed labour force. |
| New Zealand | Civilian resident non-institutional population aged 15 years and over living in private households since second quarter 1998 and collective households (all non-private dwellings are included in scope but not sample, since Q2 1995). | Currently has no specific rules in place for how to treat those respondents who are on paid parental leave, maternity leave or on other long absences. These respondents are most likely considered to be 'not in the labour force' but to a certain extent it would be defined by the respondent themselves. They may respond that last week they had a job but were away because of sickness, holidays or another reason. In this situation they would be counted as 'employed.' |

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Table C.1 (continued)

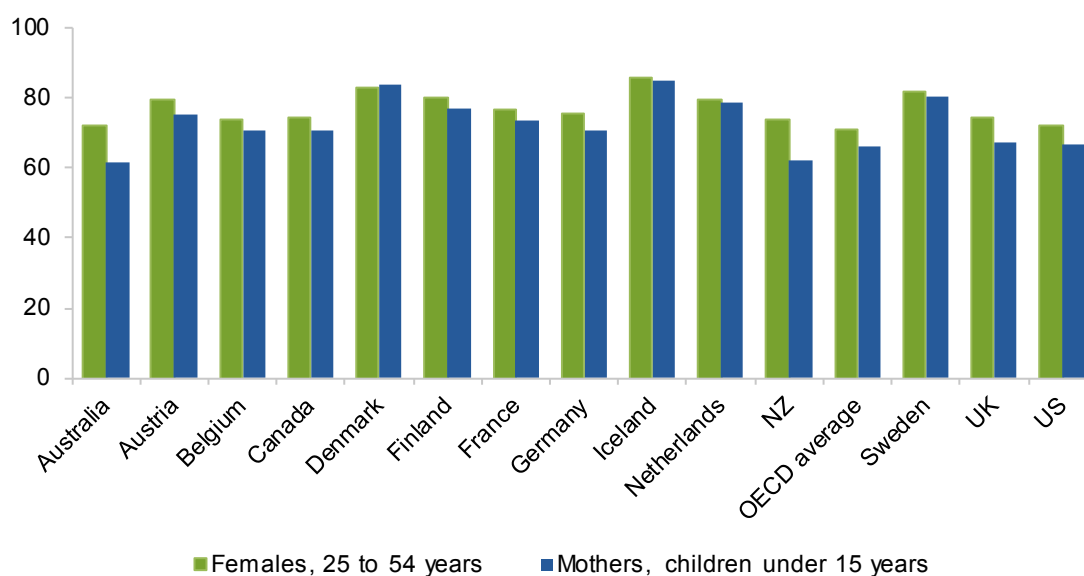
| <i>Country</i> | <i>Coverage</i> | <i>Treatment of persons on maternity leave, paternity leave and on long absences from a job</i> |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sweden | All inhabitants of Sweden on the civil register including all armed forces and from 2009 aged 15 to 74. Earlier the population was 16-74 years. As from April 2005 persons registered in population records but employed abroad are included in the labour force. | The respondent has a job when he/she has an agreement with the employer to work after a schedule or to work a certain number of hours. The job must be regular. As long as the respondent has a job, he/she may have long periods of absence by example due to paid parental leave in conjunction with birth of child/adoption (parental benefit days, paternity leave) or other paid parental leave. There is no upper limit how long time the absence can be. |
| United Kingdom | Resident non-institutional population aged 16 years and over living in private households, including career military and excluding conscripts. | Respondents on special period of maternity or paternity leave that is allowed by law are considered as employed. Persons on long absences from work are considered as employed if at least one hour of paid work in the week prior to their LFS interview or if the person has a job that she/he is temporarily away from. |
| United States | Civilian resident non-institutional (excluding penal and mental facilities, and homes for the aged) population aged 16 years and over living in private households and in collective households (non-transient hotels, rooming and boarding houses, etc.) sampled separately. | Classified as employed. More specifically, they are classified as 'with a job, not at work.' As long as the absence from the job is temporary, regardless of whether or not the person is being paid during the absence, they person is still considered employed. |

Source: Australia — ABS (2014b, p. 40); other countries — OECD (2013a).

Mothers compared with females aged 25 to 54 years

For Australia and all countries under comparison (other than Denmark), employment rates for mothers with a youngest child aged under 15 years were below that for females aged 25 to 54 years (figure C.15).

Figure C.15 **Employment rates of females aged 25 to 54 years and of mothers, in selected OECD countries^{a,b,c}**
2009, per cent



^a Some of the data underpinning the employment rates refer to different time periods: 2010 for Denmark; 2005 for the United States; 2002 for Iceland; 2001 for Canada. ^b Employment rates for mothers draw on data for children under 16 for Canada, Denmark, Iceland, and the United States; and dependent children under 25 for Denmark, Finland, and Sweden. ^c The OECD average covers the following countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States.

Source: OECD (2013b).

Australia's employment rate for mothers (62 per cent) was below the OECD average (66 per cent) and below all other countries under comparison. The Nordic countries of Iceland, Denmark, and Sweden had the highest maternal employment rates of all countries under comparison, with all exceeding 80 per cent. Canada's maternal employment rate of 71 per cent was the highest of the English-speaking countries.

Employment rates of mothers of children under 15 years compared with total fertility rates

The total fertility rate in a specific year is the number of children that would be born to each woman if she were to live to the end of her childbearing years and if the likelihood of her giving birth to children at each age was the current prevailing age-specific fertility rates. It is generally estimated by summing up the age-specific fertility rates defined over a five year interval.

The relationship between the total fertility rate and female employment rates in OECD countries has changed over the past 30 years (OECD 2013e, p. 5). In 1980, there was a clear negative correlation between the two. In recent years, apart from the general increase in female employment, OECD countries with higher employment rates also had relatively high fertility rates.

For some countries under review, such as Austria, Denmark, and Germany there is a negative correlation between the total fertility rate and the employment rate of mothers with a child aged under 15 years (figure C.16). High (or low) employment rates occur with low (or high) total fertility rates of females. However, this pattern is not evident for other countries such as Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States, suggesting that high total fertility rates and high employment rates can co-exist.

Employment rates of mothers by age group of youngest child

The OECD family database reports employment rates of mothers by age group of youngest child — under 3 years, 3 to 5 years, and 6 to 14 years (figure C.17).

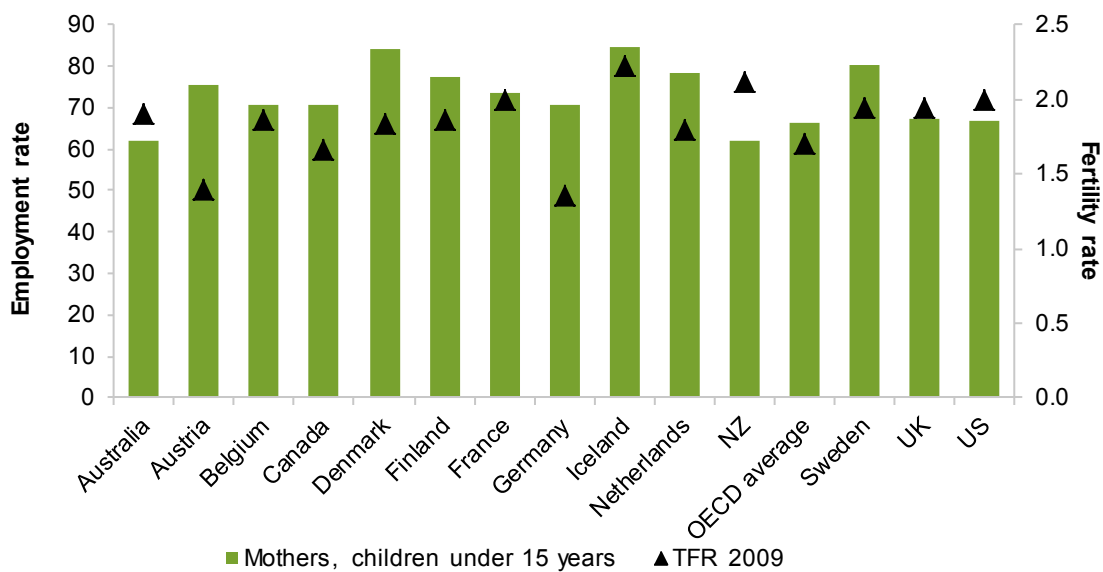
Unfortunately, the reported employment rate for Australia (along with that for Iceland) is for the 0 to 5 age group therefore affecting country comparability for the under 3 year and 3 to 5 year age groups.

Information supplied to the Commission by the Department of Social Services (DSS 2013) using 2011 Census data to adjust the employment rates by age group of youngest child has been incorporated into figure C.17. Based on this information, Australia's adjusted employment rate for mothers with a youngest child aged under 3 years (50 per cent) was just below the OECD average of 51 per cent. The countries with the highest employment rates were the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark, all exceeding 70 per cent. New Zealand had the lowest employment rate (42 per cent) of the countries under comparison.

The adjusted employment rate for Australia for mothers with a youngest child aged 3 to 5 years (60 per cent) was below the OECD average rate of 64 per cent and that of all countries under comparison. Denmark and the Netherlands had the highest employment rates, all exceeding 77 per cent.

Australia's adjusted employment rate of mothers with a youngest child aged 6 to 14 years (74 per cent) slightly exceeded the OECD average rate of 73 per cent. However, it was below those for some countries under comparison such as Iceland, Austria, France, the Netherlands, and New Zealand, which had rates exceeding 78 per cent. Canada had the lowest employment rate (71 per cent) of all countries under comparison.

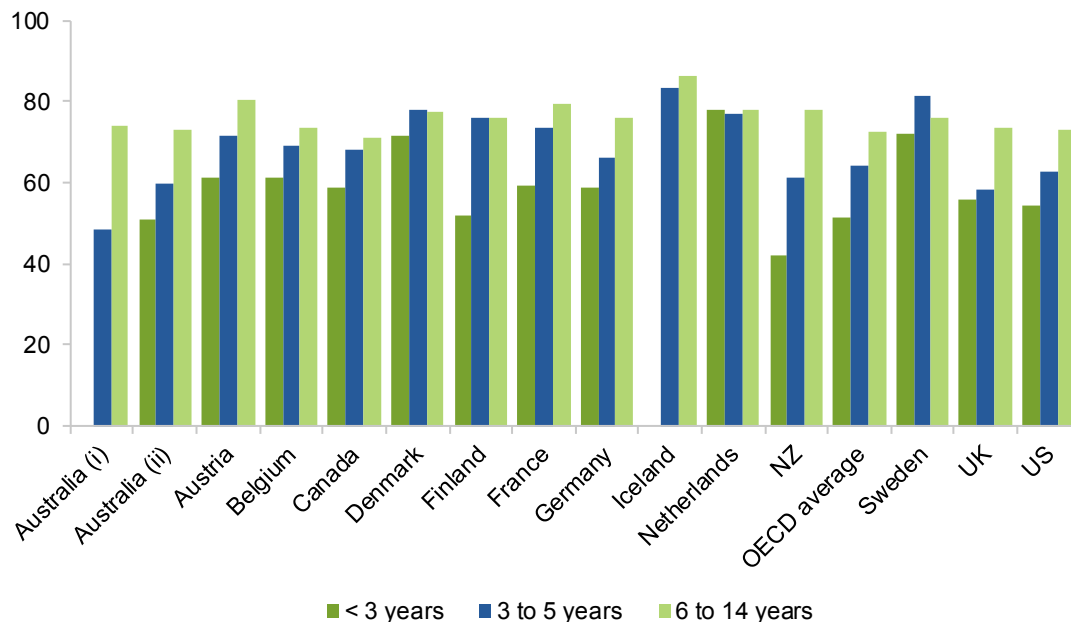
Figure C.16 Employment rates of mothers and total fertility rates (TFRs) in selected OECD countries^{a,b,c}
2009, per cent



^a Some of the data underpinning the employment rates refer to different time periods: 2010 for Denmark; 2005 for the United States; 2002 for Iceland; 2001 for Canada. ^b Employment rates for mothers draw on data for children under 16 for Canada, Denmark, Iceland, and the United States; and dependent children under 25 for Denmark, Finland, and Sweden. ^c The OECD average for employment rates covers the following countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States. In contrast, the OECD average for the total fertility rate covers 30 OECD countries, including many of the above.

Source: OECD (2013b, 2013e).

Figure C.17 **Employment rates of mothers by age of child in selected OECD countries^{a,b,c}**
2009, per cent



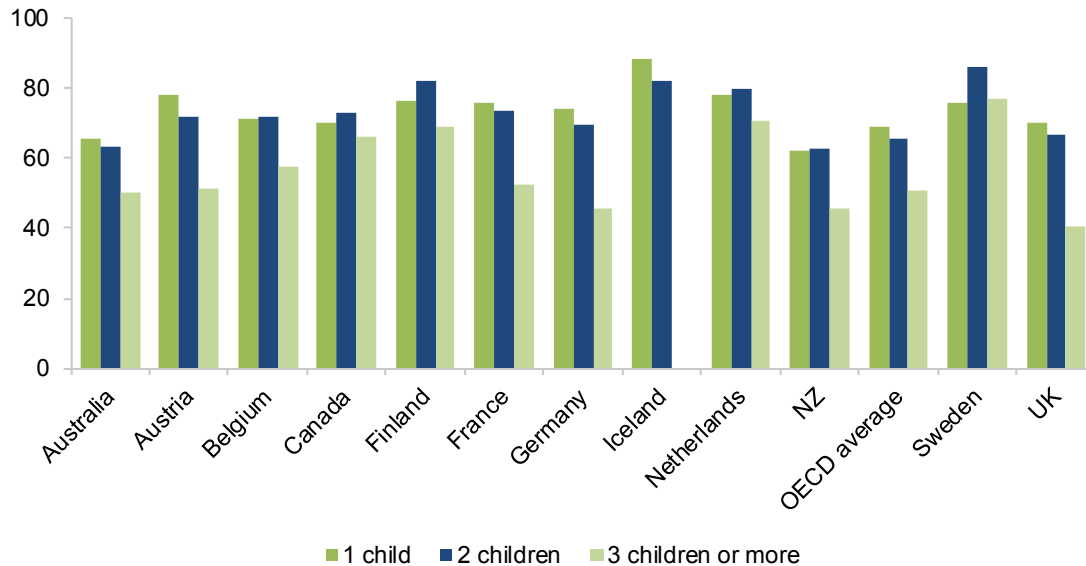
^a Some of the data underpinning the employment rates refer to different time periods: 2011 for Australia (ii) 2007 for Sweden; 2005 for the United States; 2002 for Iceland; 2001 for Canada; 1999 for Denmark. ^b Some of the data underpinning employment rates refer to different ages of children: data for Australia(i) and Iceland refer to mothers with a child aged less than 5; data for Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Sweden, and the United States refer to mothers with a child aged between 6 and 16. ^c The OECD average covers Australia (i), Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States.

Source: Australia (i) and all other countries — OECD (2013b); Australia (ii) — DSS (2013).

Employment rates of mothers by number of children

Consistent with the pattern in most other countries under comparison, Australia's employment rate for mothers in 2009 declines with the number of children aged under 15 years (figure C.18). But its level is below the OECD average and the rates for most other countries under comparison (apart from New Zealand for all numbers of children, and Germany and the United Kingdom in respect of three children or more).

Figure C.18 Employment rates of mothers by number of children aged under 15 years in selected OECD countries^{a,b,c,d}
2009, per cent



^a Some of the data underpinning the employment rates refer to different time periods: 2007 for Sweden; 2002 for Iceland; 2001 for Canada. ^b Estimates were not available for the United States or Denmark. ^c Data for Iceland refer to 2 or more children. ^d The OECD average covers the following countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom.

Source: OECD (2013b).

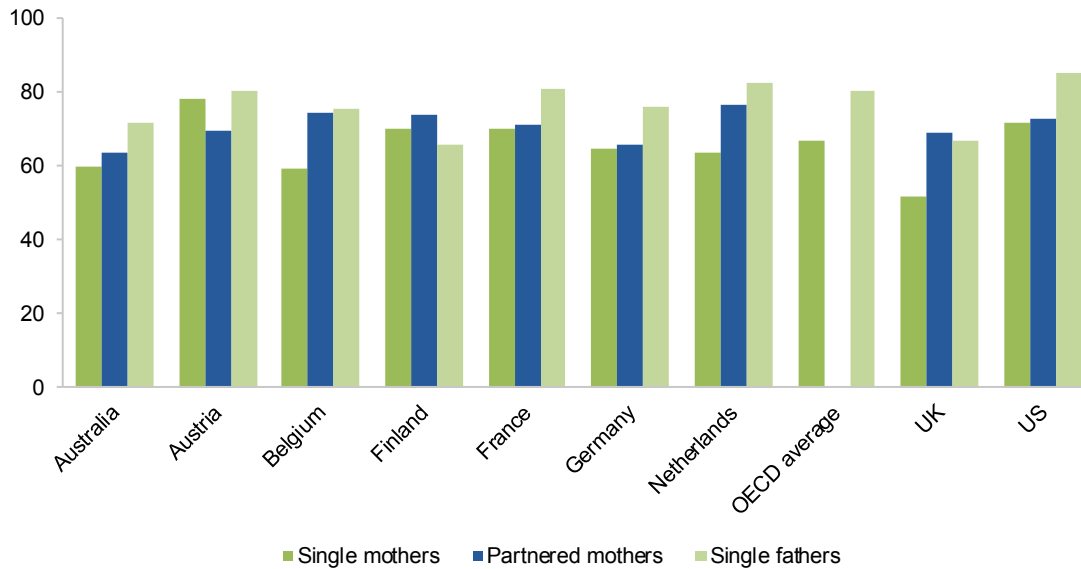
Employment rates of partnered and single mothers, and single fathers

For Australia and most countries under comparison (apart from Austria and Finland), the proportion of single mothers in employment in 2009 was below that of partnered mothers and single fathers (figure C.19).

The employment rate differential between single and partnered mothers is particularly high for the United Kingdom (17 percentage points), Belgium (16 percentage points) and the Netherlands (13 percentage points).

The employment rate differentials between single mothers and fathers are also particularly high for Belgium (16 percentage points), the United Kingdom (15 percentage points), the United States (13 percentage points) and Australia (12 percentage points).

Figure C.19 **Employment rates of single and partnered mothers and single fathers in selected OECD countries,^{a,b,c,d}**
2009, per cent



^a Single and partnered mothers and single fathers aged 15 to 64 years with dependent children. ^b Data refer to 2009 except for Australia where they refer to 2006. ^c In European countries, the data refer to dependent children aged 0 to 14 years, whereas in the United States, the data refer to at least one child under 18 years. ^d The OECD average covers Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States. OECD average not reported for partnered mothers.

Source: OECD (2013c).

Employment rates by hours of work and by family structure

Single parent families

Australia's proportion of single parent families with a child aged under 15 years that work full time (27 per cent) is well below the OECD average (51 per cent) (figure C.20). Of the countries under comparison, the Netherlands has the lowest share of single parent families working full time (16 per cent) and France the highest (52 per cent).

The proportion of single parent families working part time in Australia (29 per cent) is above the OECD average (17 per cent). Of the countries under comparison, Finland has the lowest proportion of single parent families working part time (9 per cent) and the Netherlands the highest (50 per cent).

Australia's proportion of single parent families not working is above the OECD average (43 per cent compared with 33 per cent). Countries with a higher share of single parent families not working are the United Kingdom (47 per cent) followed by New Zealand (44 per cent). Austria has the lowest share of single parent families not working (22 per cent).

The proportion of single parent families working full time or part time increases with the age of the youngest child. For the countries under comparison, the proportion of single parent families with youngest child aged 3 to 5 years is between 20 per cent and 85 per cent as high as the proportion of single parent families with youngest child aged 0 to 2 years.

Australia's proportions of single parent families in employment (whether full time or part time) by the two age groups of youngest child — 0 to 2 age group and 3 to 5 age group — are well below the OECD averages. For example, the proportion of single parent families with a youngest child aged 0 to 2 years in Australia is 29 per cent compared with the OECD average of 42 per cent.

Couple families

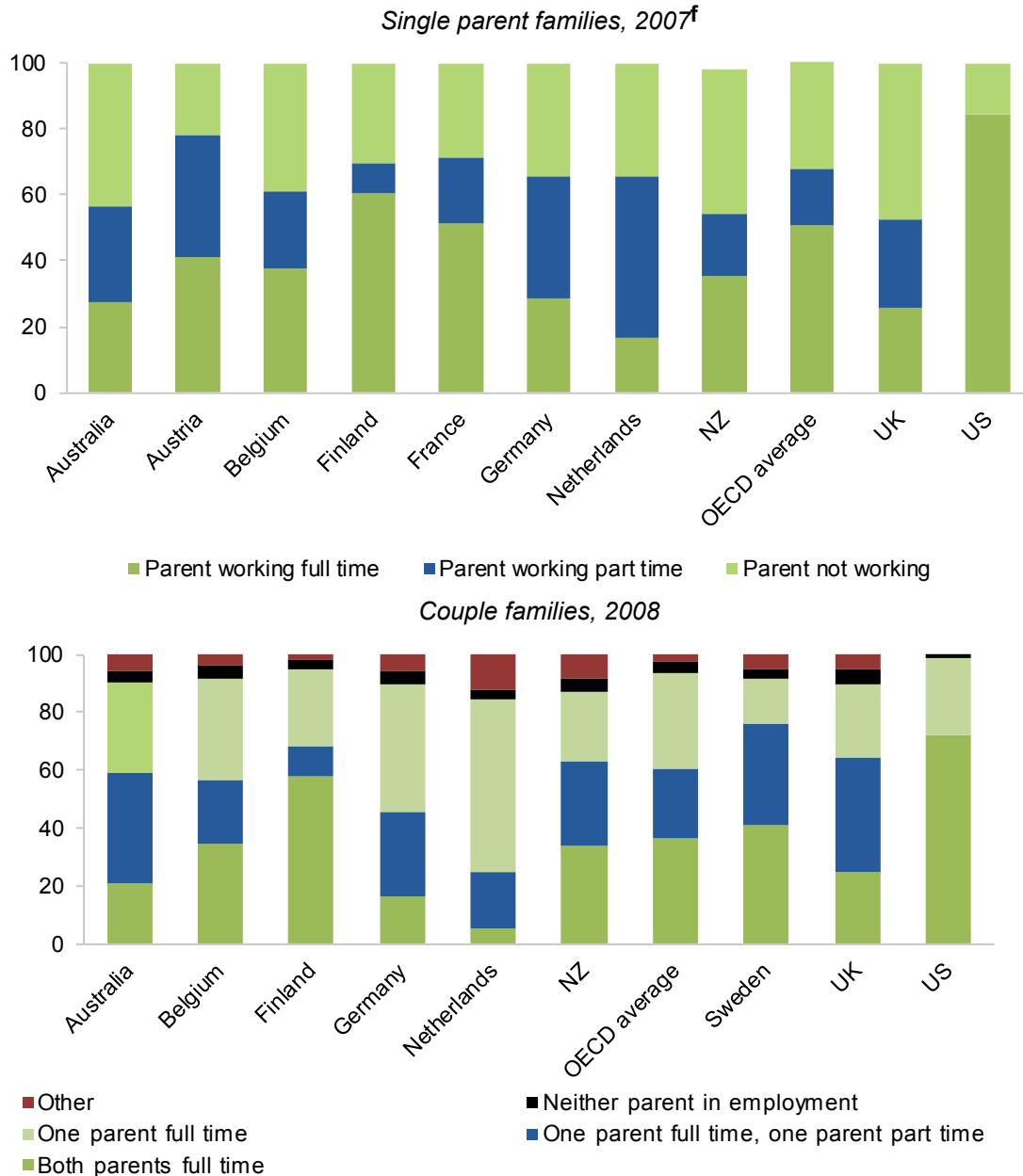
In Australia and the countries under comparison, it is common for both parents in couple families to be in employment (figure C.20). After the United Kingdom (40 per cent), Australia has the highest share of couple families (38 per cent) with one parent working full time and the other working part time, which is well above the OECD average (24 per cent). In relation to the proportion of couple families where both parents work full time, Australia's proportion (21 per cent) was well below the OECD average, with the Netherlands (6 per cent) and Germany (17 per cent) being even lower.

The proportion of couple families with both parents in employment increases with the age of the youngest child.

Australia's proportions of couple families in employment by the two age groups of youngest child are below the OECD average for the 0 to 2 age group (43 per cent compared with 46 per cent) and above the OECD average for the 3 to 5 age group (62 per cent compared with 60 per cent) (figure C.21). Having said that, the proportion of couple families in employment for these two age ranges in Australia is still below the proportions of other countries under comparison.

Figure C.20 **Employment patterns of families with children under 15 years in selected OECD countries**^{a,b,c,d,e}

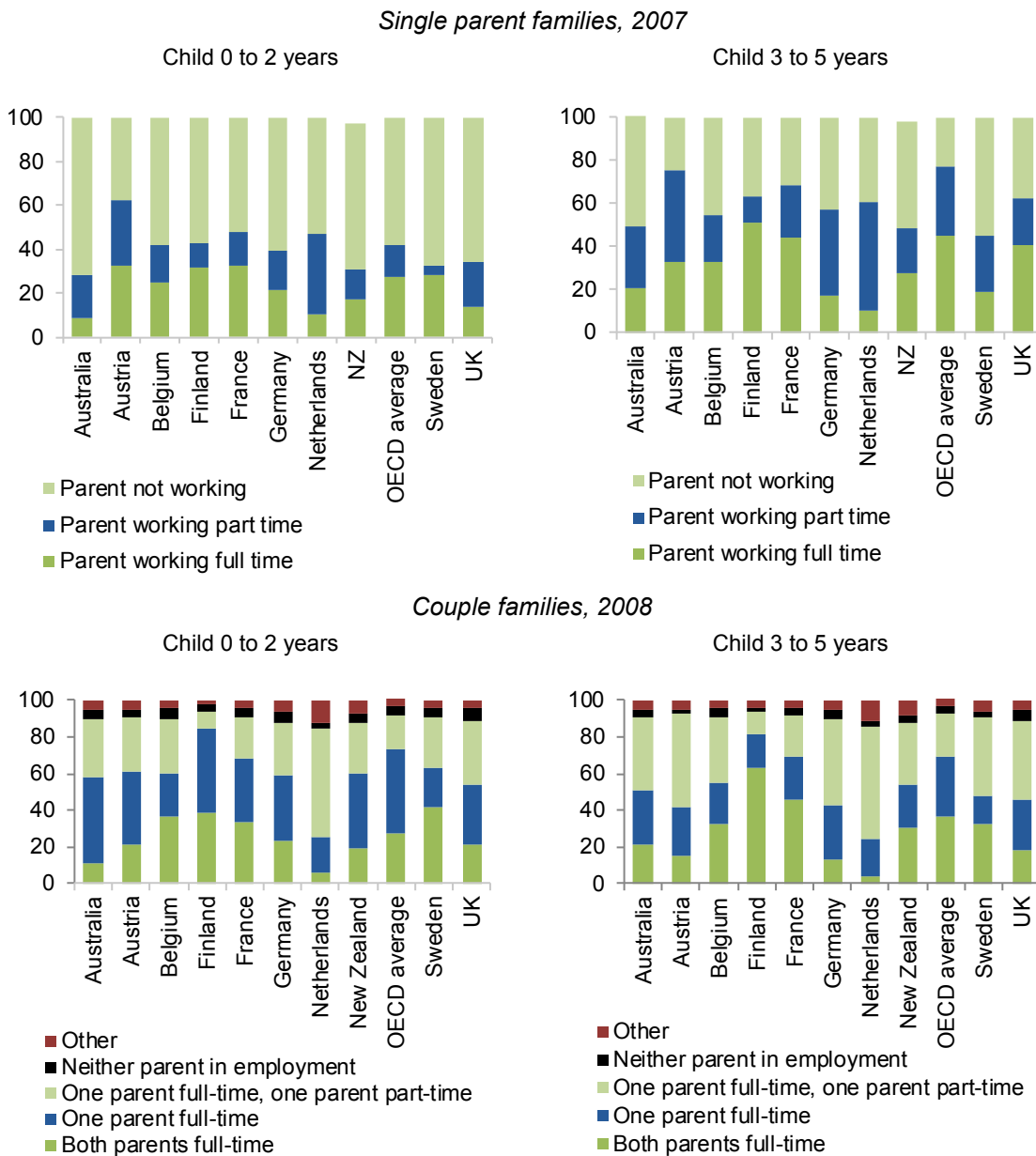
Per cent



^a Single parent and couple families aged 15 to 64. ^b There is no distinction between full-time and part-time employment in the United States. ^c The OECD average for single parent and couple families covers the following countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States. ^d For couple families, 'other' includes any other combination (for example, both parents working part time, one parent working part time and one parent not working). ^e For sole parents in New Zealand and the United Kingdom, the proportions do not add to 100. ^f The original OECD data for New Zealand do not add to 100 and so the individual components have been rounded up in order to do so.

Source: OECD (2010, 2012).

Figure C.21 Employment patterns of families by age of youngest child in selected OECD countries^{a,b,c,d,e}
Per cent



^a Covers single parent and couple families aged 15 to 64. ^b There is no distinction between full-time and part-time employment in the United States. ^c The OECD average for single parent and couple families covers the following countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom. ^d For couple families, 'other' includes any other combination (for example, both parents working part time, one parent working part time and one parent not working). ^e Data on the aged group of youngest child 6 to 14 years was not included as there are no data reported for Australia with which to make comparisons.

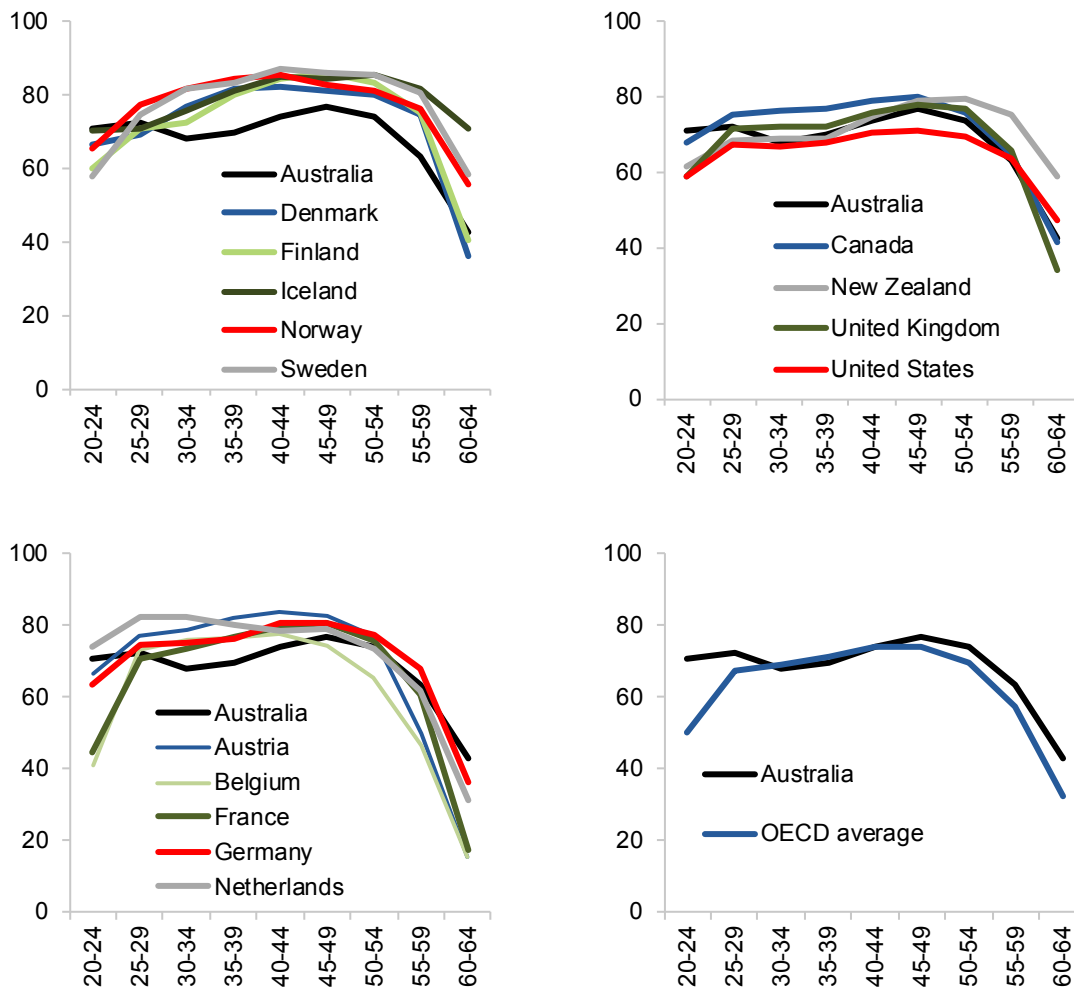
Source: OECD (2010, 2012).

Employment rates over the life course

Employment rates by age group of females and males cast light on the patterns of entry to and withdrawal from the workforce over the life course (OECD 2013d). In most countries under comparison — for example, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, New Zealand, and Sweden — female employment rates do not dip during the principal childbearing years (25 to 35 years), but eventually increase till retirement age (figure C.22). However, in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, the employment profile over the life course can look like an ‘M’ curve as employment rates increase until the child-bearing years (25 to 35 years), during which time they dip, until they again increase as their children grow up. Of the countries under review, only the Netherlands shows female employment rates declining over the life course following the child-bearing years.

Compared with females, males are less likely to adjust their employment rates during the child-bearing years, although they tend to withdraw from employment at older age groups — for example, employment rates of Australian males begin to fall after ages 35 to 39 years (figure C.23).

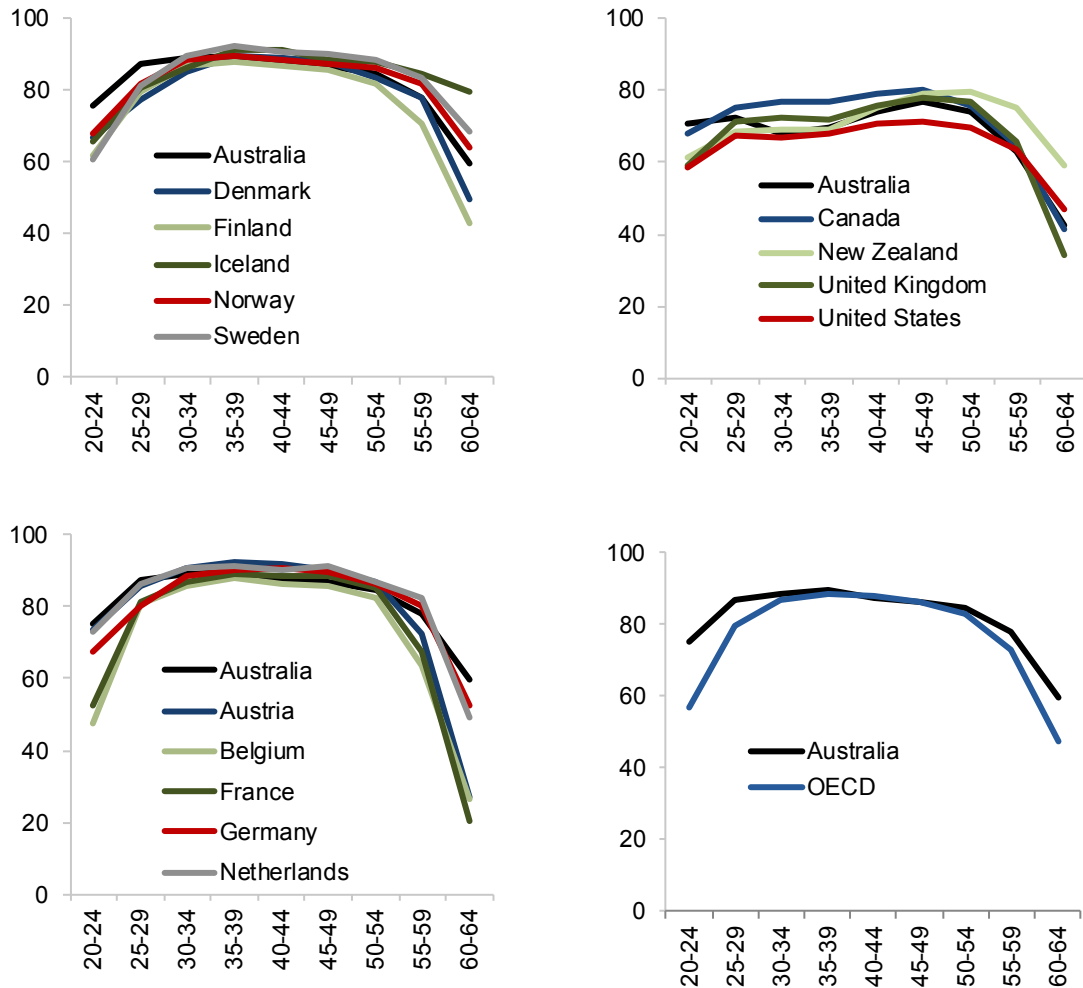
Figure C.22 Female employment rates by age group in selected OECD countries^a
2011, per cent



^a The OECD average covers Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States.

Source: OECD (2013d).

Figure C.23 **Male employment rates by age group in selected OECD countries^a**
2011, per cent



^a The OECD average covers Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States.

Source: OECD (2013d).