

Profile of the 2008 Gippsland by By-Election

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Summary of Findings

The first thing that stands out with the booth profile of the Gippsland by-election results is the strong link between Labor's 2007 vote and the 2008 swing to the National Party candidate Darren Chester.

This was an election at which Gippsland voters, who had voted Kevin in 07, decided Kevin wasn't so great in 2008.

When we fed our 600 variable database into the 87 booths in Gippsland and benchmarked them against the 2007 Labor 2PP votes and the June 28 2PP by-election swing to Labor in every booth, we first checked the relationship between the 07-08 pro Labor swing and the 07 Labor vote and the correlations were nudging up to minus 0.5, well into significance territory.

So, we saw a reversion to the old pattern of by-election voters sending a message to Government, irrespective of the limitations seen in the alternatives offered by Brendan Nelson, who the national opinion polls show is still clearly unelectable in a general election where there's a chance he might actually become PM.

The slide against the Government was led by the huge group of persons driving themselves to work. This group is about 57 percent of Australian commuters and well over 60 percent in Gippsland.

This is a group which had swung strongly to Labor in 2007, dominating the pro-Labor swing in outer urban seats. Voters clearly want to continue to buy cheap petrol while they drive to work and contemplate how other countries can save the planet from global warming.

Another Kevin 07 group lost in 2008 was a cross section of the religious activists including some of the Pentecostals and Baptists – and if the Labor Government starts to lose everyone driving themselves to work and to Church, there are a lot of outer urban seats in States like Queensland that will be returning to the Coalition in 2010.

The Government also copped a caning from the huge group of home buyers, who are presumably starting to realise that their interest rates have risen in direct proportion to the increasing stranglehold the big four banks have on the mortgage market. This is another group clustered in Labor's outer urban marginals. These voters were trained by Labor's Shadow Treasurer Wayne Swan to blame the Federal Government for high interest rates and now they are doing just that. Unfortunately for Wayne, now he's the Treasurer.

On the positive side for the Government, the median income group seems to have consolidated their support for Labor. This is the core of the Howard Battler group.

But further up the income range, the professional third income quartile group – especially the child less twenty somethings typically clustered in the inner city rental suburbs – are continuing to return to the Coalition fold, meaning Labor is under threat in both its inner core of traditional safe seats and its marginal outer urban seats.

As far the alcopops campaign is concerned, we saw no sign of any swings by commuters driving themselves to work in a truck.

In terms of the strategy of both the campaign and its aftermath, the Government has a problem selling fuel watch, let alone an emission trading system. It's clear that the ALP vote had begun to nosedive nationally amongst car commuters (and home buyers and young families) in the month before the by-election and it has fallen four percent after preferences in the Newspoll taken over the last two months of June.

Just in case the Gippsland voters missed the point that Labor in Canberra was thrashing about aimlessly on petrol pricing stunts, the new ALP candidate signed up to the ALP as he was nominated, seems to have aroused the ire of local motorists by deriding the Liberal offer of a petrol price cut as 'ridiculous' and ensured that he would be the person selected by Gippsland former Labor voters to send a message to Canberra.

Rather than hear the message and face up to these problems, as the Liberals did after Ryan in 2001, then apologise and move on, the Labor Party leadership seems determine to ignore the warning from the electorate by pretending Labor hadn't blown both centrally and locally a real chance to win a marginal rural seat just as winnable for Labor as the new Labor marginals of Flynn and Eden Monaro.

Gippsland was a provincial seat and we wouldn't be comfortable projecting its results onto all other seats, including those in urban areas, to give some detailed projections of possible votes. But our election model does now explain about 95 percent of the variation in votes between one election and the next, which is about the standard of statistical strength of the swing pendulum, based on previous votes.

So we can say that the sort of voters who put Kevin Rudd into the Lodge last election were a more religious version of the traditional ALP stereotype of the seventies: blue collar skilled and unskilled men and women, middle white collar women, young families with young kids at Government schools, buying a home, commuting by car to work and receiving just above median income.

We can also say that at the Gippsland by-election Labor lost every one of these groups, except perhaps the median income earners.

As far as the Coalition goes, in 2007, the Coalition won votes from the rich, the well educated, the internationally qualified, persons living alone and young persons in their twenties, especially University Students and renters. The Coalition candidates, after preferences, held onto virtually all of these groups. The growth of support for the Coalition among the young professionals and renters is starting to look more like a realignment than a swing.

The spatial implications of these demographic changes threaten Labor's 2007 gains in outer suburban home buying, car commuter seats, especially those with some sort of religious base, and also hold out the possibility of long term gains for the Coalition in hitherto safe ALP seats in the inner suburbs, where we find students, renters and richer professionals living side by side.

Methodology

The analysis takes as its starting point the Elaborate database assembled by the principals of ADS over 34 years of demographic profiling of economic, social and political behaviour.

The ADS Database uses Census and modelled data, from a range of sources, including the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Australian Taxation Office and Centrelink.

The Education Database contains some 600 variables and includes a core of basic variables including Age, Income, Occupation, Industry, Home Ownership, Household Type, Mortgage and Rent, Travel to Work, Vehicles, Employment Status, Religion, Internet Use, Current Education, Education Level Attained, Field of Study, Qualifications, Language Spoken at Home and Family Type.

The primary units in the Database are Census Collectors Districts, or CCDs, comprising about 220 household neighbourhoods, which are small enough to provide a fine grained demographic picture of Australia, through 38,000 CCDs. Other units include polling booth catchments, postcodes, and state and federal electoral boundaries. We always try to use the smallest units we can find, but in federal elections, this creates problems with the allocation of non-booth votes to spatial boundaries.

We use SPSS Statistical analysis to compare this Elaborate database, with appropriate dependent variables, in this case, ALP 2PP 2008 Gippsland vote, the 2007-2008 2PP swing to the Labor Party. These correlations provide the basis of the stereotype tables and the correlation charts in the results section below. A positive correlation between any database variable and the ALP swing indicates that the persons in that particular demographic group tended to be living in booths swinging towards the Labor party.

We analysed with SPSS the swings in 87 booths in the last three elections. In 2008 the range of swings was 35 percent – plus 9.4 percent to Labor in Bendoc and minus 25.6 percent against Labor in Carrajung South. So clearly some hardy souls in Gippsland defied the trend and swung towards the Labor party, while bigger mainstream groups clearly went the other way. The current analysis enables us to profile both groups and then take a look at where these groups live nationally, so we can see if the Gippsland swings, *ceteris paribus*, could have a significant electoral impact at the next election and we can also see which groups which supported Kevin Rudd in 07, have changed that support in 08.

These first time 07 Labor voters who “sent a message” to Kevin Rudd in Gippsland are the real groups to watch in 2010.

Results and Discussion

Was Gippsland winnable for Labor?

Gippsland was a seat the Rudd Government could have won, if its primary and preferred votes had been as strong as national opinion polls indicated around the early part of June, when they showed a primary swing to Labor of some three percent since the election and a two party preferred (2PP) swing of more than six percent.

The national Liberal primary vote in early June 2008 was down by almost eight points on the late 2007 election figure and the Liberals were contesting the seat for the first time since 1987. The Liberal Primary vote in 1983 was 23.8, in 1984 it was 19.7 and in 1987 it was 18.9.

A reasonable estimate of the Liberal vote at the time of the last election in Gippsland would therefore have been an average of these figures – 20.8 percent. From this figure we subtracted the national swing against the Liberals as shown by opinion polls since the election of some eight percent and we allocated the primary votes for independent Gippsland candidates in 2007, who were not contesting again in 2008, according to the preferences of their voters at the election.

Recent elections showed Gippsland was a not a typical stable and older National party seat and it had swung strongly in recent elections when gun control and forestry policies were prominent as election issues.

Labor was starting from a primary vote of 44 percent, which would have been boosted by some two percent, with the retirement of sitting National Party member Peter McGauran and the loss of his personal vote to the Nationals.

So Labor was starting the by-election campaign with a base 2PP vote of 46 percent, minus the loss of some primary votes to the Liberals, but with other preferences from former independents and the likelihood of significant preference leakages from the Liberal candidate.

The Labor Party clearly saw the seat as winnable and parachuted in a non-ALP member and popular local Mayor as a candidate specifically to capitalise on the gaining of the former sitting Member's personal vote.

Liberal v Labor v National in Marginal Rural seats:



When we look at the primary votes for National Party and Labor Party candidates in non urban seats and compare these votes to the demographic profiles of these seats, we see the best guide to the National Party vote is the percentage of males employed in the industry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing.

When this figure is above 30 percent, as it was for six out of 150 Australian seats in 2007, the seat will tend to be held by the National Party, although Flynn, in Queensland was in this group and won in 2007 by Labor. O'Connor in WA, also in the group, is held by the Liberals, but the Nationals are not an effective force in that state.

The Liberals and Labor start to perform better, relative to the National Party, as this percentage of rural workers drops and in Gippsland the percentage is about 13 percent and the predicted vote for Labor in 2007 was around 46 percent, showing the seat could normally be won by Labor, Liberal or by the Nationals.

When we examine other provincial federal seats with an agricultural workforce above ten percent, we see seats like Lyons, Eden Monaro, Braddon, Page and Dawson – all won by Labor in 2007.

In fact, both Eden Monaro and Flynn had ALP potential votes almost identical to that predicted for Gippsland in 2007 and both were won by Labor.

Both of these provincial seats had far lower predicted Labor votes than that of Bennelong – another seat never won before by Labor, which was taken from the sitting Prime Minister John Howard in 2007.

The spin from the ALP after the election that Gippsland could never be won by Labor was part of a convincing effort to disguise an extraordinary bad result for Labor.

What happened?

Labor's vote in Gippsland dropped more than eight percent, with the primary Labor vote falling to 28.4 percent. The 2PP Labor vote was down by more than six percent – eight percent when we taken into account the fact that two percent of Labor voters supported the Nationals sitting member in 2007. This was a pretty ordinary result.

The Nationals lost almost nine percent of their 2007 primary vote, falling to 39.6 percent. However, this was an extremely strong result after preferences for the Nationals candidate Darren Chester, given the entry of a Liberal candidate. Chester's 2PP vote was up by more than six percent after the allocation of all preferences, including those from the Liberal.

The Liberals polled 20.7 percent of the primary vote – within 0.1 percent of the average of their three primary votes between 1983 and 1987. In other words, the Liberals' primary vote was steady on 2007 notional figures, despite the polls in early June showing a swing of almost eight percent against Liberal candidates nationally.

The by-election effect.

By elections typically swing against the Government – mainly because the Government does not contest them. The real picture is more complicated. If we go back to the ten by-elections held since the loss of the Keating Labor Government in 1996, up until Gippsland, the Liberals only contested three of them – Aston, Ryan in 2001 and Lindsay in 1996.

We have profiled two of these by-elections – Aston and Ryan in 2001. In Aston, in July 2001, the personal vote of deceased popular former sitting Member John Nugent of about four percent was simply redistributed to the Labor candidate. Nothing else happened. A popular sitting member died and his personal vote went back to Labor. At the time the Labor Leader Kim Beazley was told by Labor strategists that this by-election swing against the Government was a portent of swings to come at the election later in 2001 – the opposite of that now being claimed by the same Labor strategists.

In Ryan, earlier in 2001 there was a big swing of almost ten percent against the Liberals, following the withdrawal of long serving sitting Liberal John Moore for what his constituents clearly thought insufficient reasons to put them to the expense and trouble of another ballot in an election year. The swing against the then Coalition Government was led by the classic swinging voter group of young marrieds in the outer suburbs, with two kids and long commutes to CBD white collar jobs, who were clearly disenchanted with the Government at that time over the introduction of the GST and – the rising price of petrol. There was no significant statistical correlation between the swing against the Liberals and previous Liberal voters.

In Lindsay, there was a swing of 4.9 percent to the Liberal Government candidate and against the former sitting Labor MP in what had been a safe ALP seat. Jackie Kelly had earlier been elected to the seat but disqualified due to her position in the RAAF and her entitlement to New Zealand citizenship. So Kelly had been seen as a popular local winner denied her seat due to technical reasons following challenges from the

former Labor MP. She won the seat seven months after the 1996 election as a Government candidate with a swing towards the Government and against the Labor MP who had caused the by-election.

So, three votes, no real change in one – one went against the Government and one went towards the Government. The real message from a study of contested by-elections since 1996 seems to us to be that the voters don't like them and they tend to punish the party of the candidate or party that caused the inconvenience and expense. In the case of Ryan, this was the Liberals, in the case of Aston, the candidate died in office, they simply vote as they did at the preceding election, and with Lindsay, Labor was blamed for spoiling a come from behind win by a then popular candidate and Labor's 2PP vote fell from 60.2 percent in 1993, to 48.4 percent in March 1996 and then fell a further 4.9 percent at the by-election seven months later.

In Gippsland, the National Party was lumbered with a by election caused by a sitting member who'd left the seat after he lost his Ministerial job with the fall of the Coalition Government, to take a job in the private sector. This had John Moore and Ryan written over all over it.

For the other seven, the Labor Party actually lost one safe seat of Cunningham to the Greens.

To say after the Gippsland result that there was a swing against the Government in these seven seats when there was no Government candidate is a sign that Government advisers have mastered spin but not statistics.

In modern times – at least since 1996 – by-elections are up for grabs in marginal seats and there's no reason why a seven month old Government – be it Howard in Lindsay in late 1996 or Rudd in Gippsland in mid 2008 can't win a marginal seat with an effective local campaign if its national vote is strong. John Howard won the marginal Labor seat of Lindsay in late 1996, seven months after winning Government.

The Gippsland by-election profile.

The best predictor of the swing against Labor in Gippsland in any given booth was the previous Labor vote. In other words, the stronger the Labor vote in 2007, the bigger the anti-Labor swing in 2008.

This was clear evidence that the notional Liberal primary vote from 2007 was unaffected by the national opinion polls showing that the Liberal vote is being held back by low levels of support for Liberal Leader Brendan Nelson.

The simple difference between the Gippsland by-election is that it was never going to change the Government, whereas national opinion polls – like elections - are taken in the context of a choice between alternative Prime Ministers and their respective parties.

So the Gippsland result gives us a unique insight into those voters prepared to vote against Labor knowing it can't change the Government. With a more attractive Liberal Leadership in terms of someone acceptable as an alternative Prime Minister, these voters could be prepared to vote against Labor knowing that this could in fact change the Government. This is what happened with the Labor vote in late 2006 when Labor replaced Kim Beazley with Kevin Rudd and the Labor vote jumped five points to 55 percent and Labor never looked back – until Gippsland.

Outcomes management and wash up to the election.

After the loss of Ryan over GST and petrol prices in 2001, the Liberal Treasurer Peter Costello, apologised to the voters for the economic problems they were facing, dusted himself off and moved on.

This is what he said:

Well, I think, one of the lessons is that where people are electing somebody to Parliament, they are very angry if they don't serve out their full term. That is one big lesson. The second big lesson is that, I think, on the policy level, with rising petrol prices and rising interest rates, people were feeling squeezed, and I think the Government has got to do whatever it can to get petrol prices down. We have cut the excise. Obviously we have got to put as much pressure as we can on the oil producing nations. And in relation to rising interest rates, the news more recently, has been much better for young home buyers. So, we have got to continue to work on making sure that those things that are squeezing peoples' pockets, we do everything we can to try and give them a bit more to spend.

After this mea culpa, the Liberals had improved their electoral position for the Aston by election, four months later and went on to win the 2001 election from a Labor Party which thought Aston was a swing to Labor, rather than a re-allocation of Peter Nugent's personal vote.

Costello's leadership in the aftermath of Ryan provide a textbook example which could have been used by Labor, instead they spent the weeks before the election managing expectations, trying to convince the media the seat couldn't be won, including leaking their own polling to prove it.

It would appear the handpicked candidate parachuted into Gippsland had been performing below expectations with remarks that the Coalition moves to reduce fuel prices by five cents a litre were "ridiculous" and in view of the evidence presented below, this was a remark guaranteed to cost the candidate the by-election all by itself.

However, the Labor vote in the national polls was also heading down in the second half of June and a combination of an inexperienced candidate, a strong National Party local campaign, and falling national support were problems Labor's leadership apparently didn't want to

admit, so the Labor Party leadership decided to deny the seat was ever winnable ... and this is from a party which tipped out the Prime Minister from a seat Labor had never won only seven months earlier.

The difficulty for Labor now is that if they keep saying the dog ate their homework the voters may keep sending them to the naughty corner.

The National Party and the Liberal Party now both know that their members intending to retire can do so with relative impunity, knowing that they are unlikely to be challenged by Labor candidates.

Stereotypes

Tables below show selected top positive and negative correlations between database variables and political variables in the analysis, with the means for each variable for Australia and Gippsland.

Each table is a brief snapshot of the typical voter under consideration. The Australian means enable the reader to gauge the significance of each variable in the stereotype. What we are looking for here is strong correlations with bigger groups.

Correlations are a descriptive tool only, and not necessarily analytical. But they tell you a lot about your target voters in key seats and if you attract the votes of enough of them, you win the big spatial correlation, which is a majority of seats in the House of Representatives.

If we take the first table below, we should look first from the top down, at the Australian Means for decent sized groups. The first larger one we see is shown as \$400-599, which is men with an individual income of between \$400 and \$599 per week in August 2006. This would be about \$35,000 per annum now and be slap bang in the middle of the male income chart we see later.

We see the swing to Labor in Gippsland from this group was plus 0.32, which is significant to above 99 percent probability, which, if it were a Greenhouse correlate, would be enough to get you a carbon tax. If we look a little to the left, we can see that this income group also swung to Labor at the last election, so it's a sign of a longer term trend or realignment – median income men coming back to Labor. When we check the means, to the right of the chart on the same row, we see that 12.49 percent of Australians 15 and over are in this income group, whereas, in Gippsland it is 14.04 percent. In other words, Gippsland has more men in this middle income group.

The letter f in front of a female means it relates to females, while fos means Field of Study and fosf is females' Field of Study.

So fosEducation below denotes men who studied education at a tertiary level – ie male teachers. Male teachers evidently loved computers and swung strongly to Labor in 2008, but the bigger group of female teachers went the other way.

Where there's no f in front of a variable it relates to males. We use the shorthand version of the database here because basically this is a free service and readers are

Code	Aust 2PP Swing to ALP 04-07	Gippsland Swing to ALP 07-08	Australia n Means (RHS)	Gippslan d Means RHS
f50-54 no kids	-0.31	0.36	1.05	0.92
Fam \$150-249	0.03	0.33	1.11	1.30
fosEducation	-0.02	0.33	3.54	4.39
\$400-599	0.26	0.32	12.59	14.05
f60-64 two kids	0.08	0.32	1.98	2.24
Filipino ex Tag	0.17	0.31	0.12	0.05
Agric\ forest & fish	-0.02	0.31	5.57	12.93
\$600-799	0.44	0.29	11.69	10.76
Anglican	0.00	0.27	18.10	21.80
Fully Owned	-0.06	0.26	34.96	43.06
Worked at home	-0.05	0.25	5.53	7.70
Managers	-0.18	0.24	16.70	19.27
f50-54 three kids	0.23	0.24	1.94	2.49
fLabourers	0.30	0.24	9.27	10.44
Year 9	0.18	0.23	7.43	11.40
Bus	-0.28	0.23	2.59	0.57
Med age	-0.04	0.22	37.63	42.01
Med age	-0.04	0.22	37.63	42.01
Quals Inad Desc	0.21	0.22	2.39	2.52
fEmployed/away from work	-0.14	0.22	3.16	2.23
Mort \$250-399	-0.06	0.21	3.08	6.34
fosfHealth	-0.01	0.21	13.99	16.84
fosSociety & Culture	-0.37	0.21	5.53	3.16
60-64	-0.01	0.20	5.07	6.53
Fam \$1200-1399	0.40	0.20	6.95	7.07
Education	-0.29	0.19	4.23	3.91
f45-49 no kids	-0.30	0.19	1.28	1.22
fAgric\ forest & fish	0.00	0.19	3.38	6.59
Two Person Home	-0.14	0.19	34.45	38.23

These are the statistically significant correlations with the swing to Labor in Gippsland across the 87 booths on the day of the by-election, ranked in descending order of swing.

The table is topped by females 50 to 54, with no children, a group comprising only about one percent of Gippsland and Australian residents.

This is followed by a very low family income group, then male teachers, then men earning \$400 to \$599 in 2006.

Also of interest in the table are the Anglicans, rural workers, home owners, persons working at home, unskilled workers, public transport users, women whose field of study was health, fly in fly out workers and older persons.

It looks like Labor regained the farmers it had lost in 07 and did quite well across a range of older, less well educated rural groups.

It should be emphasized that this is the swing we are showing here, that is the change in votes. The votes for the Nationals in 07 and 08 were exceptionally strong amongst Agriculture workers and the Nationals typically perform better with this group than do the Liberal Party candidates.

Code	Aust 2PP Swing to ALP 04-07	Gippsland Swing to ALP 07-08	Australia n Means (RHS)	Gippslan d Means RHS
Church Christ	0.02	-0.36	0.26	0.15
Car as driver	0.29	-0.35	57.58	60.54
Mort \$750-949	0.09	-0.34	9.81	14.09
USA	-0.38	-0.34	0.32	0.20
Utilities	0.03	-0.33	1.38	4.87
University	-0.29	-0.33	3.60	1.43
f25-29 no kids	-0.30	-0.32	4.59	2.60
20-24	-0.16	-0.31	6.80	5.28
fSalvation Army	0.18	-0.30	0.34	0.25
fMedia	-0.28	-0.29	1.65	0.95
Retail	0.12	-0.28	8.77	9.11
Fam \$2000-2499	-0.12	-0.28	7.26	5.00
\$1600-1999	-0.25	-0.28	3.60	2.92
40-44	0.02	-0.27	7.32	6.63
TAFE	-0.04	-0.27	2.10	1.90
f60-64 three kids	0.12	-0.27	1.55	2.20
fJudaism	-0.25	-0.27	0.45	0.04
fCantonese	-0.11	-0.26	1.10	0.08
fChina	-0.12	-0.26	1.03	0.09
Health & social assist	-0.26	-0.26	4.19	3.34
fBosnia	0.03	-0.26	0.11	0.02
Internet Other	-0.25	-0.26	0.60	0.52
Quals NS	-0.01	-0.25	20.47	21.46
fArabic	0.05	-0.25	0.95	0.03
Mort \$3000+	-0.25	-0.24	7.22	1.89
fGreek	-0.05	-0.24	1.17	0.22
f30-34 two kids	0.44	-0.23	2.14	2.05

These are the statistically significant groups which dominated the swing against Labor across all booths. The biggest group to swing against Labor is not shown here but was Labor's 2007 voters and the correlation was minus 0.49.

The huge car as driver group is a killer for Labor's re-election chances unless addressed with something a little smarter than fuel watch. Labor's gains from car commuters in 07 have been reversed in 08. Presumably future Labor candidates won't be deriding the Coalition proposals to cut fuel excise as "ridiculous".

Utility workers also didn't seem fussed about an ETS.

Young persons and University students also have swung against Labor in both 07 and 08, eroding Labor's support in inner city rentals. We'd be looking for alco-pops perhaps, but the trend started in 07.

There are also signs of erosion in Labor's vote from some of the more activist religions, including Church of Christ, Salvation Army and Judaism and whatever Kevin Rudd is saying in Mandarin to Cantonese speaking Chinese, he should stop straight away.

Upper income and mortgage groups seem to be a growing disaster area for Labor to be felt in the rich inner suburbs in 2010. This looks like a trend.

The real canary in the political mine for Labor is the 30-34 year old mothers of two kids, where 08 support has fallen back towards 07 levels.

Code	Aust 2PP Swing to ALP 04-07	Gippsland Swing to ALP 07-08	Australian Means (RHS)	Gippsland Means RHS	Gippsland 08 swing minus Aust 07 Swing
f50-54 no kids	-0.31	0.36	1.05	0.92	0.67
fosSociety & Culture	-0.37	0.21	5.53	3.16	0.58
Bus	-0.28	0.23	2.59	0.57	0.51
fSingapore	-0.35	0.14	0.21	0.03	0.50
f45-49 no kids	-0.30	0.19	1.28	1.22	0.49
Education	-0.29	0.19	4.23	3.91	0.49
Bachelor Degree	-0.36	0.13	17.08	8.99	0.49
fosfCreative Arts	-0.35	0.12	3.49	2.04	0.47
Graduate Diploma	-0.32	0.14	1.77	1.51	0.46
f80-84 no kids	-0.27	0.18	0.27	0.26	0.45
Managers	-0.18	0.24	16.70	19.27	0.43
Family no kids	-0.26	0.16	39.40	44.59	0.42
fosCreative Arts	-0.30	0.11	2.16	1.32	0.41
No Religion	-0.22	0.18	20.17	26.14	0.40
fThailand	-0.26	0.13	0.19	0.08	0.40
Employed part time	-0.24	0.15	10.78	10.17	0.39
fGraduate Diploma	-0.31	0.07	3.39	3.88	0.39
f60-64 no kids	-0.29	0.09	0.59	0.60	0.38
Single Person Home	-0.38	-0.01	24.63	26.88	0.36
f85+ no kids	-0.33	0.03	0.27	0.27	0.36
F\$1600-1999	-0.34	0.02	1.23	0.47	0.36
fEmployed/away from work	-0.14	0.22	3.16	2.23	0.36
fManagers	-0.18	0.17	10.53	13.55	0.35
fSouth Africa	-0.28	0.07	0.50	0.20	0.35
fosEducation	-0.02	0.33	3.54	4.39	0.35

These are the demographic groups which had the biggest difference between their 07 and 08 swings. They tend to be the groups lost in 07 and won back in 08 by Labor.

There are signs of older persons, families without kids, better educated persons, male teachers, agnostics, single person homes and self employed managers, as well as public transport users.

It's a real mixed bag, although we see some signs of the better paid AWA group who strongly supported the Coalition in 07, especially in WA.

By and large we can see that many of the normal pro-Labor demographic alignments disturbed in 07, possibly by Labor's policy lite working families' campaign, returned to the ALP at the by-election, assisted by the absence of a counterproductive ALP campaign.

Code	Aust 2PP Swing to ALP 04-07	Gippsland Swing to ALP 07-08	Australia n Means (RHS)	Gippslan d Means RHS	Gippsland 08 swing minus Aust 07 Swing
Other Prot	0.97	0.01	0.29	0.05	-0.97
f30-34 two kids	0.44	-0.23	2.14	2.05	-0.67
Pentecostal	0.45	-0.21	0.94	0.70	-0.66
Car as driver	0.29	-0.35	57.58	60.54	-0.64
Technical & trades	0.34	-0.23	22.33	25.83	-0.56
Manufacturing	0.38	-0.15	14.11	13.57	-0.54
Other	0.35	-0.19	3.80	3.47	-0.53
f30-34 three kids	0.42	-0.11	0.92	1.00	-0.53
fSales	0.32	-0.21	12.78	14.71	-0.53
fosEngineering	0.41	-0.10	29.35	35.58	-0.52
Fam \$1400-1699	0.31	-0.20	7.81	6.89	-0.51
fOther Prot	0.59	0.09	0.32	0.09	-0.50
f25-29 one kid	0.39	-0.09	1.22	1.16	-0.49
fSalvation Army	0.18	-0.30	0.34	0.25	-0.48
fPentecostal	0.45	-0.02	1.08	0.70	-0.47
f40-44 three kids	0.27	-0.18	1.89	2.22	-0.45
p25-34 Married	0.24	-0.22	6.74	5.03	-0.45
Samoa	0.28	-0.16	0.11	0.00	-0.45
f10-14	0.35	-0.09	6.41	7.24	-0.44
Mort \$750-949	0.09	-0.34	9.81	14.09	-0.44
Ave hhold size	0.35	-0.08	2.52	2.41	-0.44
f35-39 three kids	0.34	-0.09	1.59	1.80	-0.43
Being Purchased	0.25	-0.18	32.61	31.43	-0.43
fRetail	0.32	-0.11	13.85	16.81	-0.43
f15-19 no kids	0.28	-0.15	6.85	7.18	-0.43
\$800-999	0.35	-0.07	9.22	8.00	-0.43
Three Person Home	0.29	-0.12	15.47	13.28	-0.41
Single Parent kids under 15	0.27	-0.14	8.67	9.29	-0.41
Machinery operators & drivers	0.40	0.00	11.10	12.31	-0.41

This chart shows the opposite of the preceding chart ... that is, where Labor lost most support in 08 from those groups attracted to Labor in 07.

These are the groups which swung to Labor in 08 and elected Kevin Rudd PM in blue collar booths and in the outer suburbs, and in Queensland's more religious rural areas, and who were prepared to use the by-election in Gippsland to send him a message.

So long as the ALP denies receiving the message, it risks having it repeated on a bigger stage.

Any voter who is attracted to a Party in one election and then changes their mind six months later is held by that Party via a slender thread indeed.

If the Coalition can snap that thread, and present a credible alternative Prime Minister in 2010, as Shakespeare would say: "all losses are restored and sorrows end".

Correlation charts

The correlation charts below show the strength of the relationship between swings across Australian 04-07 and in Gippsland 07-08, and the Elaborate Database, for most of the 600 variables, presented in various categories, starting with Current Schooling.

The charts are in standard excel format, with correlations for the Australian wide ALP 2PP swing in 04-07 shown in royal blue bars or lines, with the Gippsland 2PP 2004-2007 Swing shown in gold. The Australian means for each corresponding variable are shown below in blue and the Gippsland means in green, with the relevant figure on the right axis.

Correlation charts should be read the same way as the worm debating chart – the zero line is neutral and the score heightens as the correlation increases its distance above or below the zero line. Correlations above the line indicate a positive relationship and correlations below the line show a negative relationship. The significance levels vary according to the number of pairs and we would advise the reader not to get too excited about any correlations below plus or minus .15 for Australia and .27 for Gippsland.

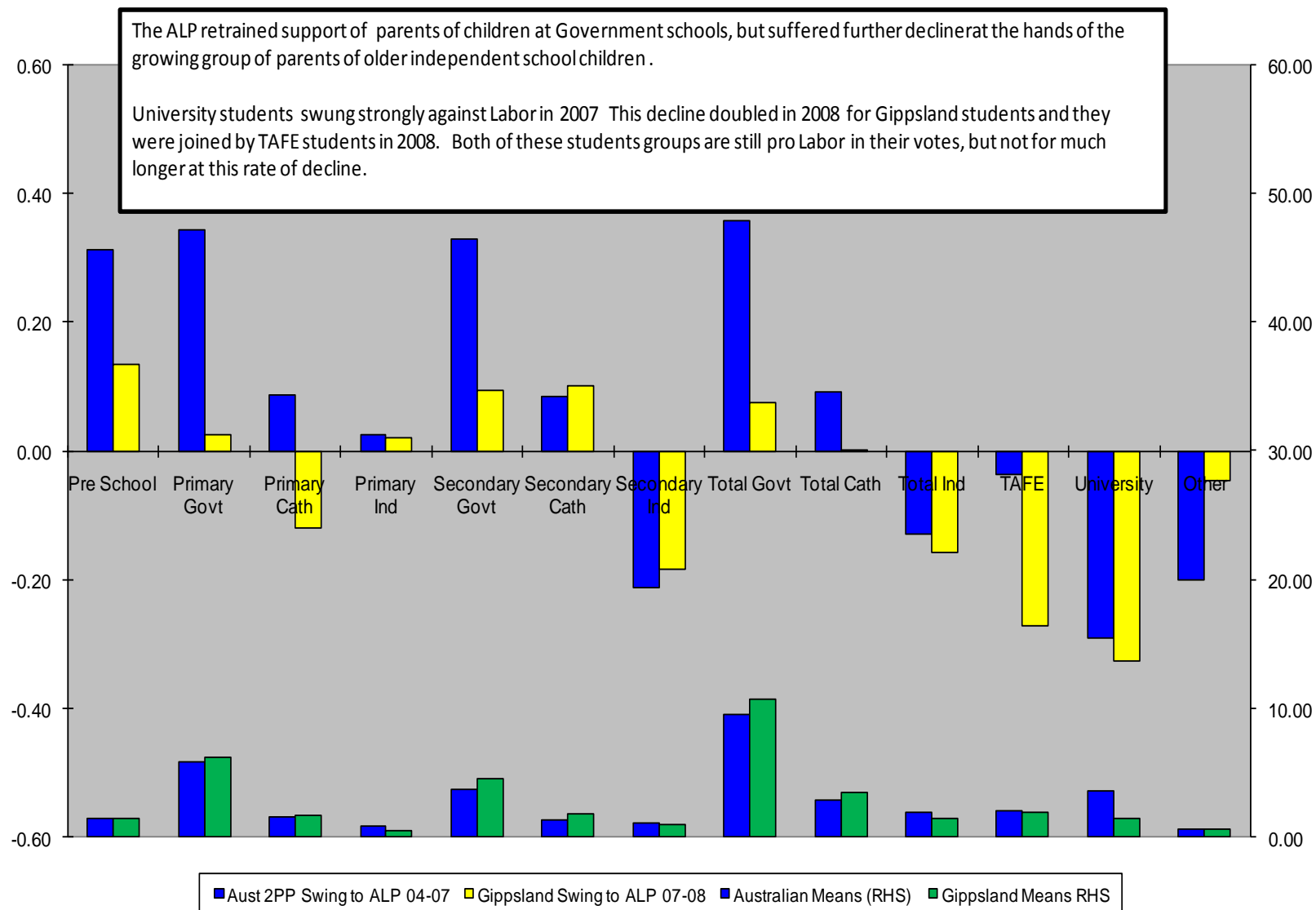
Similarly, the reader should be cautious about high correlations from variables with a very low mean, from the more esoteric religions, or unusual countries of birth or languages spoken at home. This is an arbitrary call, but, if it's less than about half of one percent of the population, it's usually pretty meaningless. **In summary, we are looking in the charts for longer vertical bars or trend lines, above or below 0.27, consistent patterns across each chart and big population numbers.**

The descriptive information for each chart will tend to be found in the explanatory boxes within the charts themselves, with the important ones highlighted in colour.

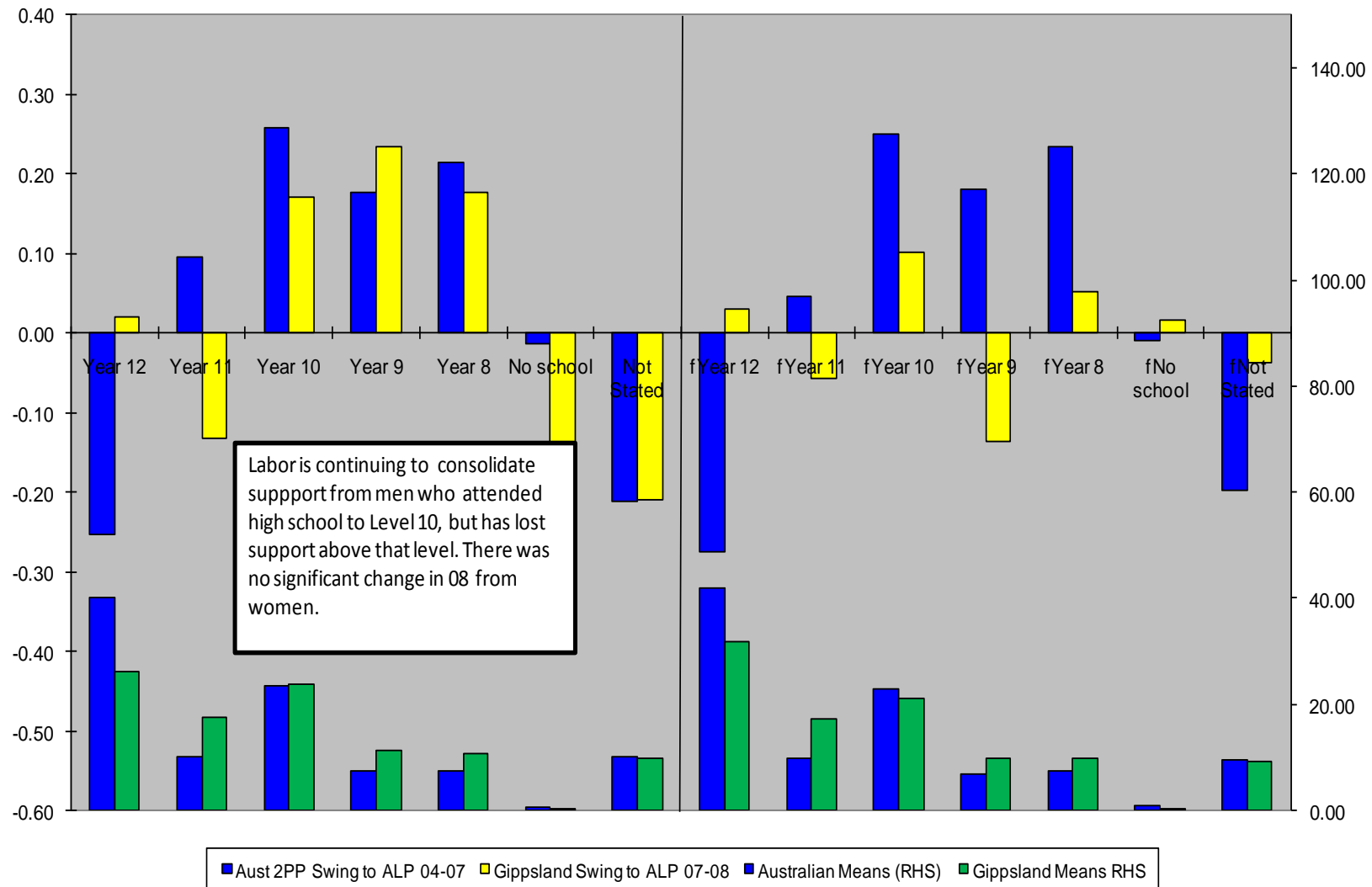
If the stereotype tables are snapshots, the following charts can be seen as small pictures, which can then be combined to make up a fine-grained demographic portrait of each political variable under scrutiny. We emphasize that we're looking here at what happened to the actual votes, in terms of who lived in what national seat or Gippsland booth, we're not looking survey results from an opinion poll.

So causality has to be inferred, unless we are clearly looking at the financial impact of a Government tax decision. In these respects, the analysis is therefore somewhat similar to Greenhouse Science, you get simultaneously occurring events with sketchy linkages to explain complex patterns. Like Greenhouse Science, it will be interpreted with a healthy grain of scepticism by the mathematically literate and ignored by political boofheads.

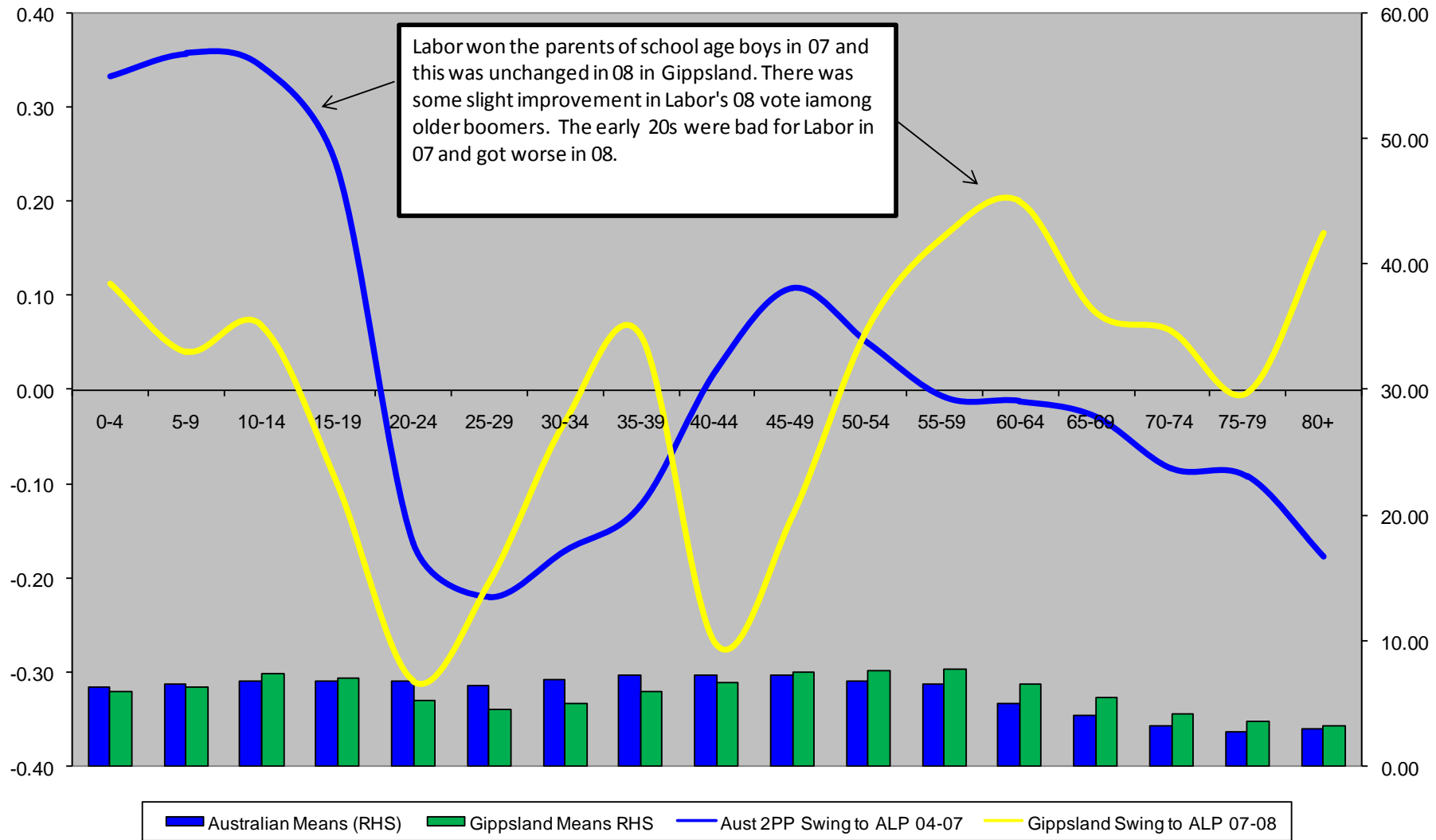
Current Schooling



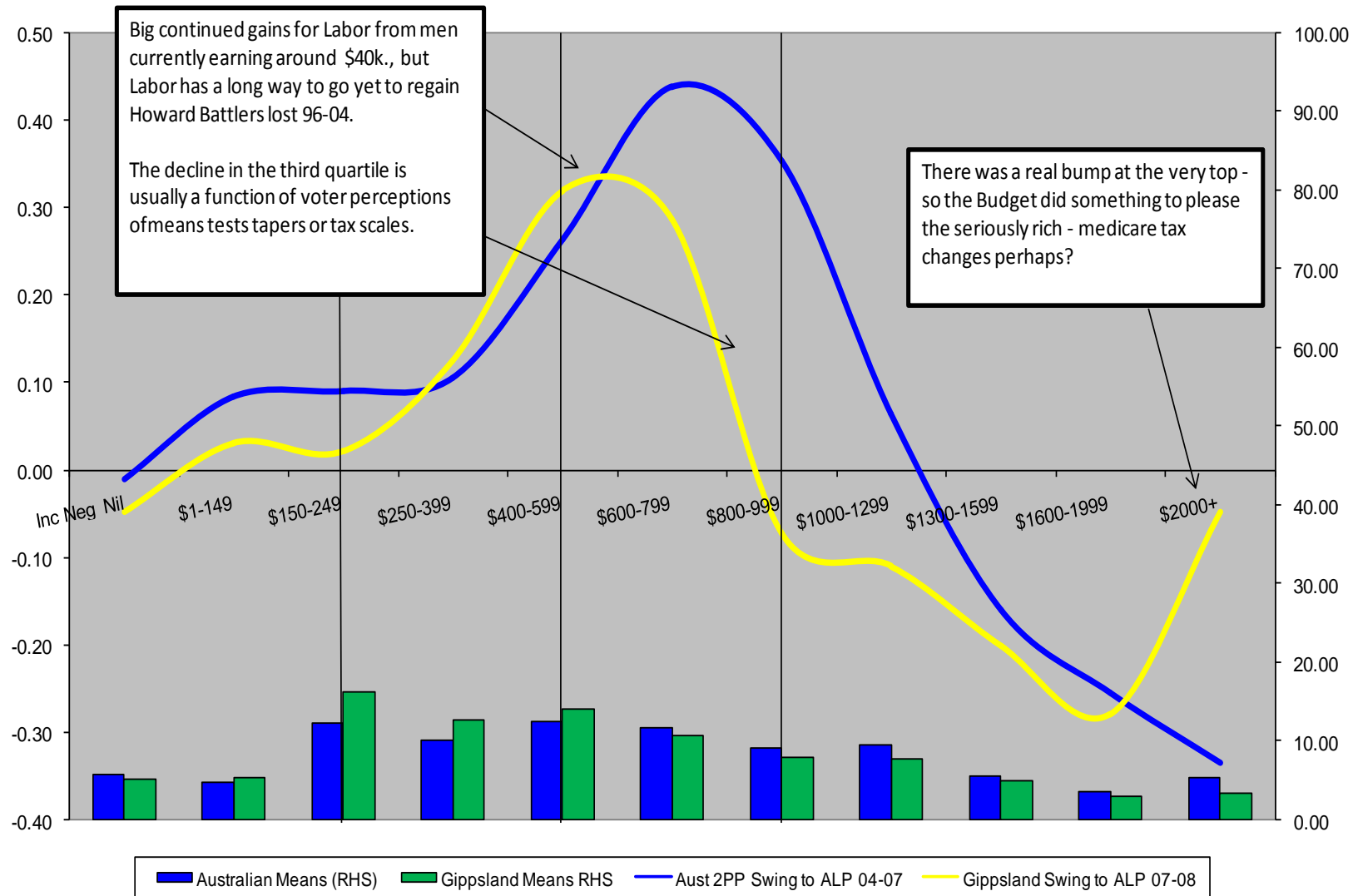
Completed Schooling



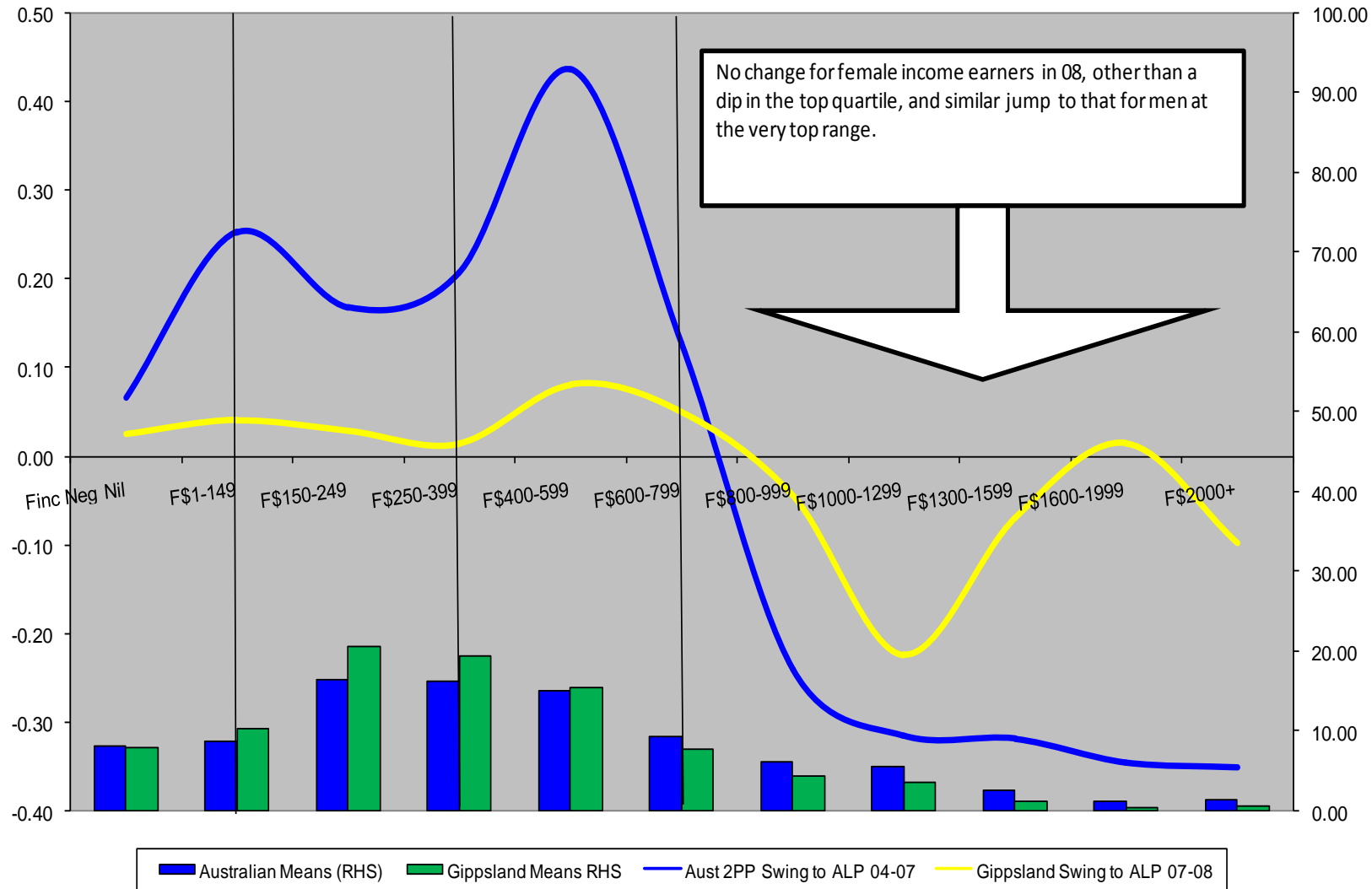
Age Male

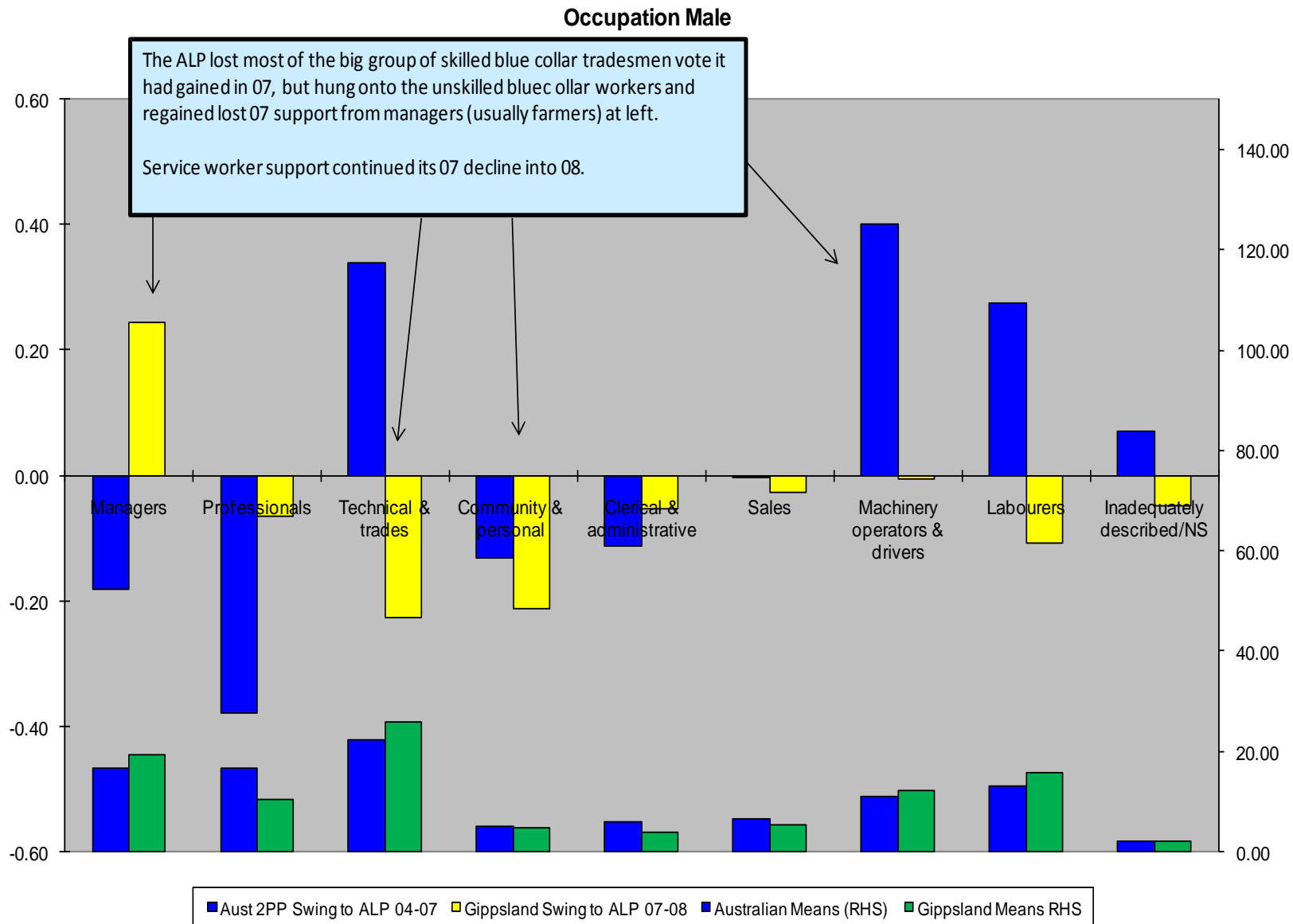


Income Male

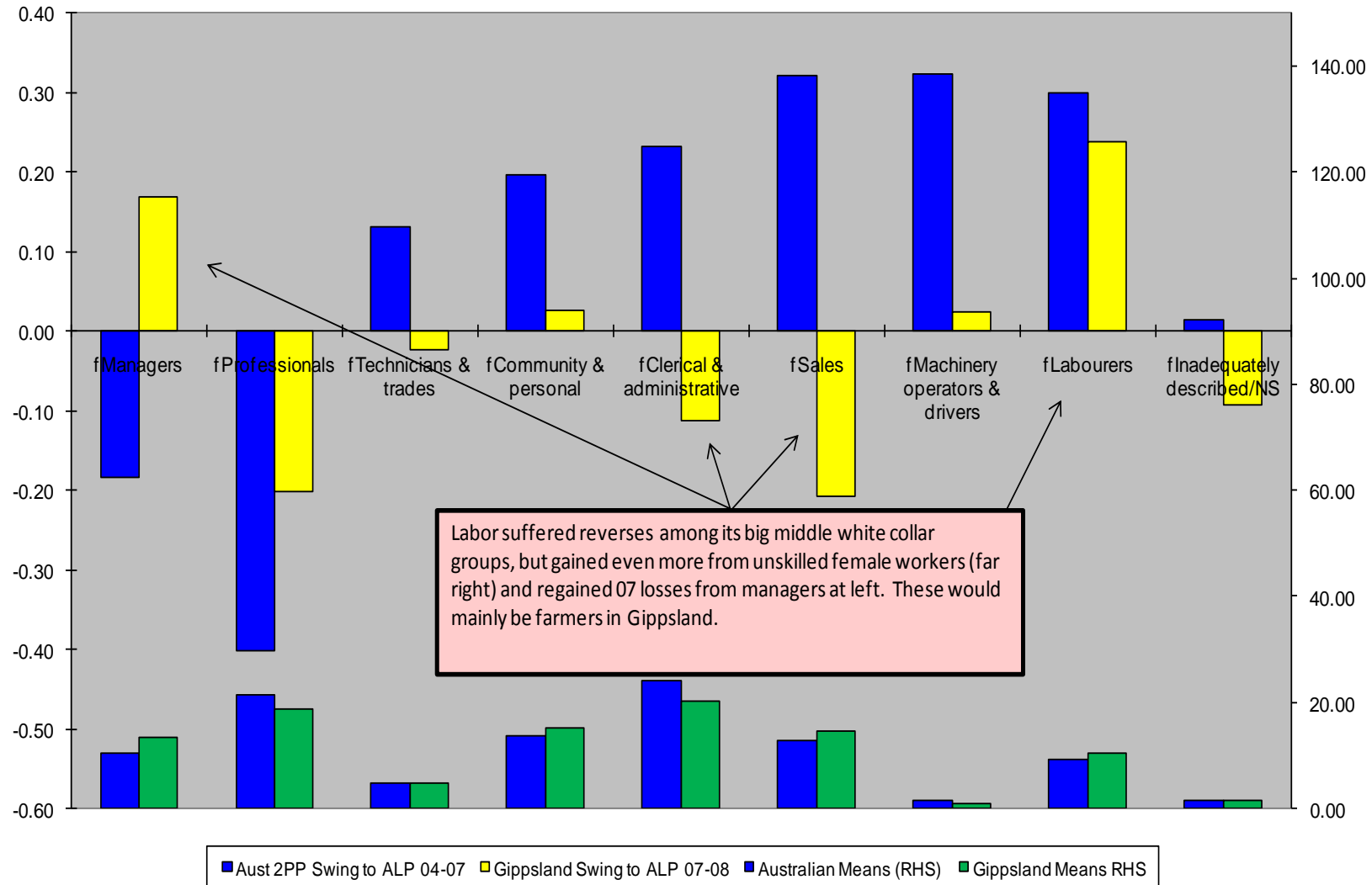


Income Female

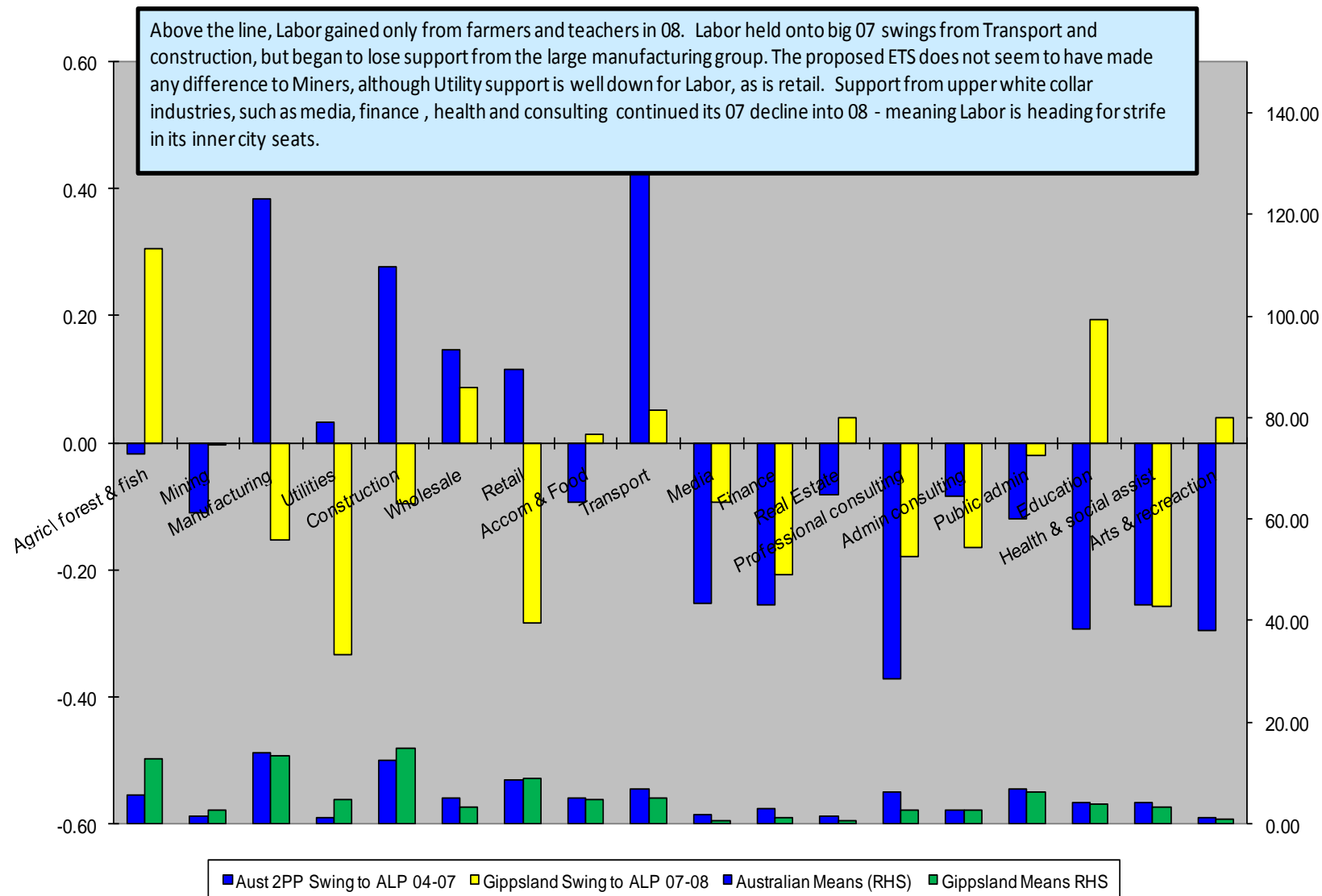




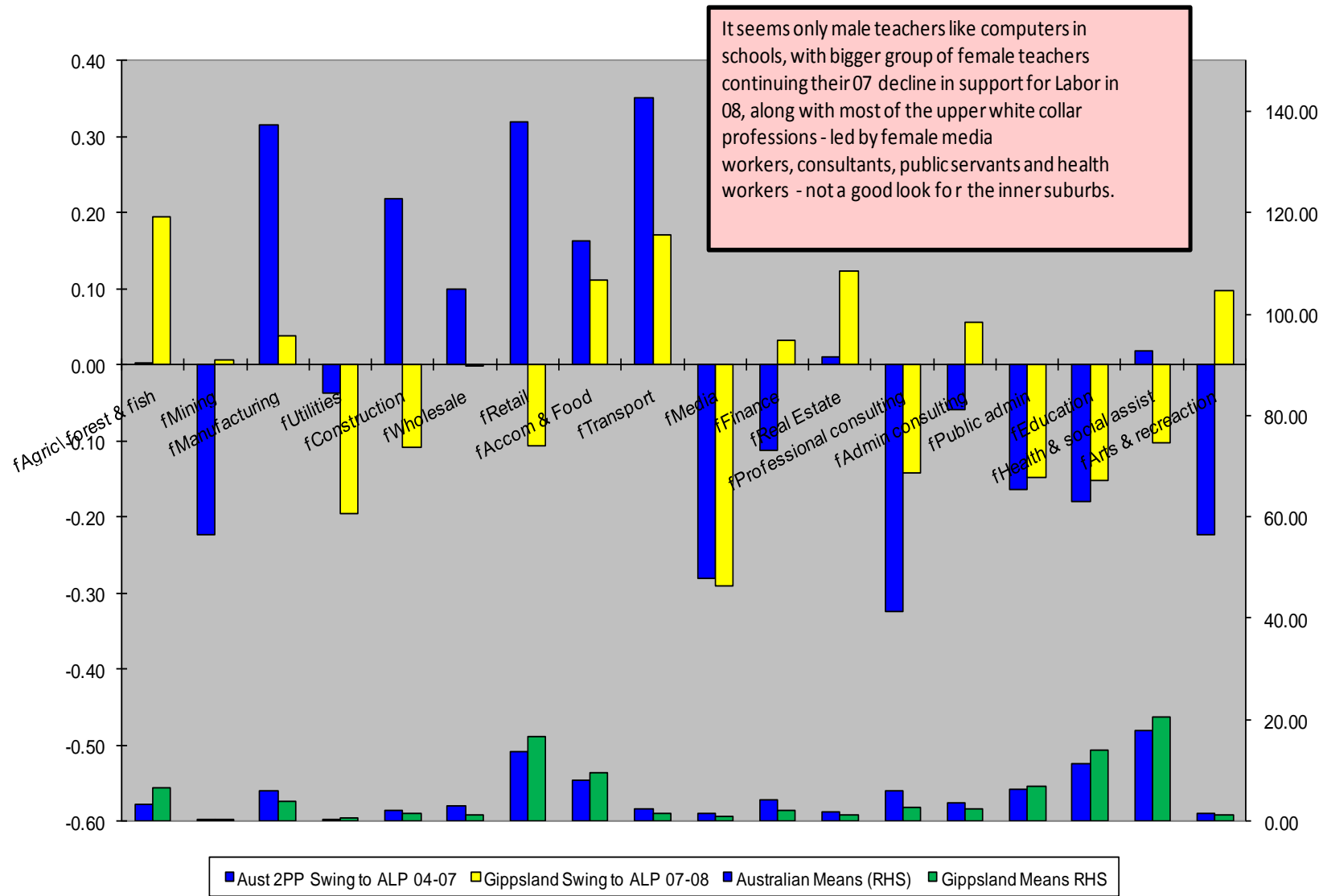
Occupation Female



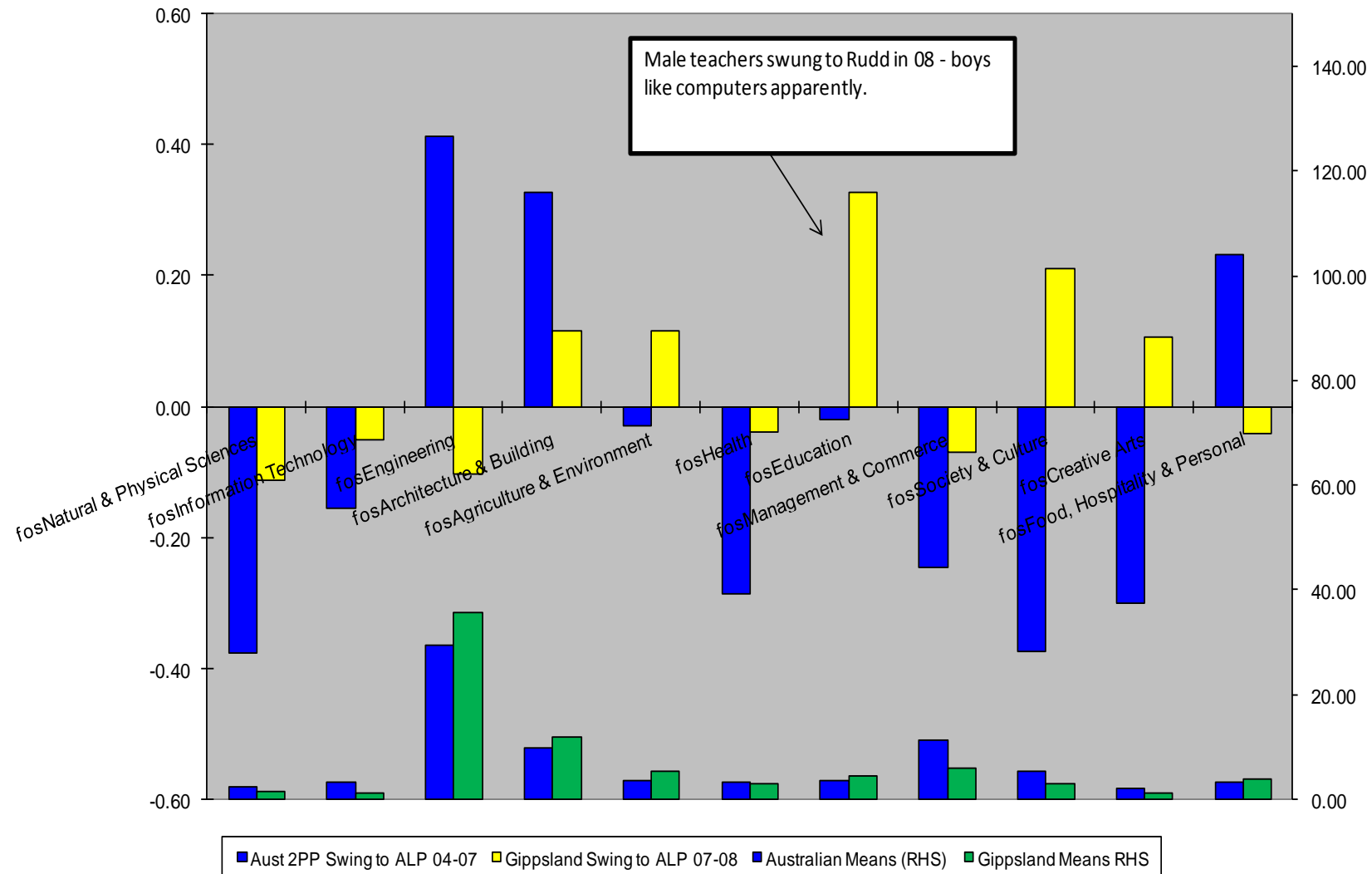
Industry Male



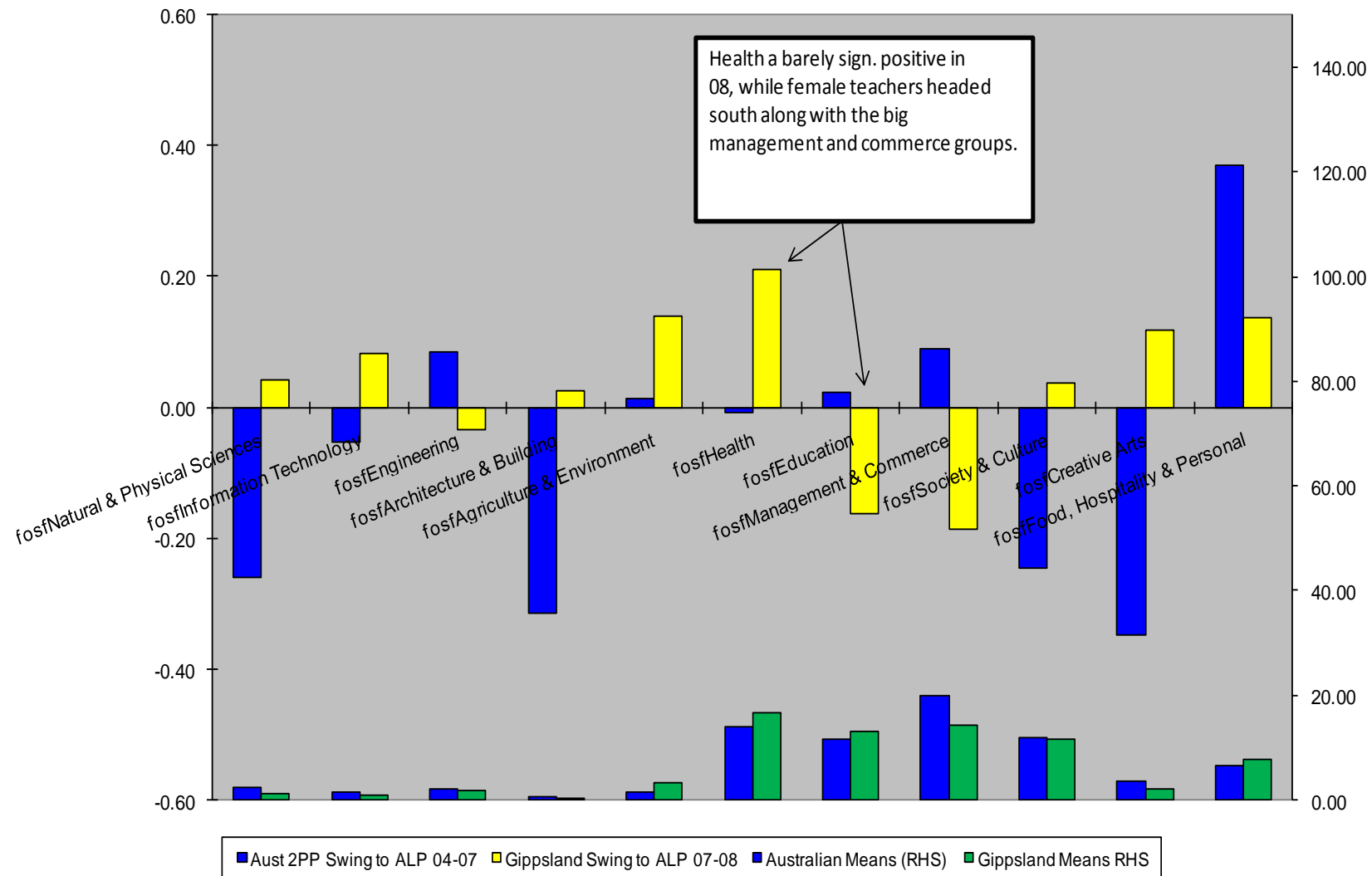
Industry Female

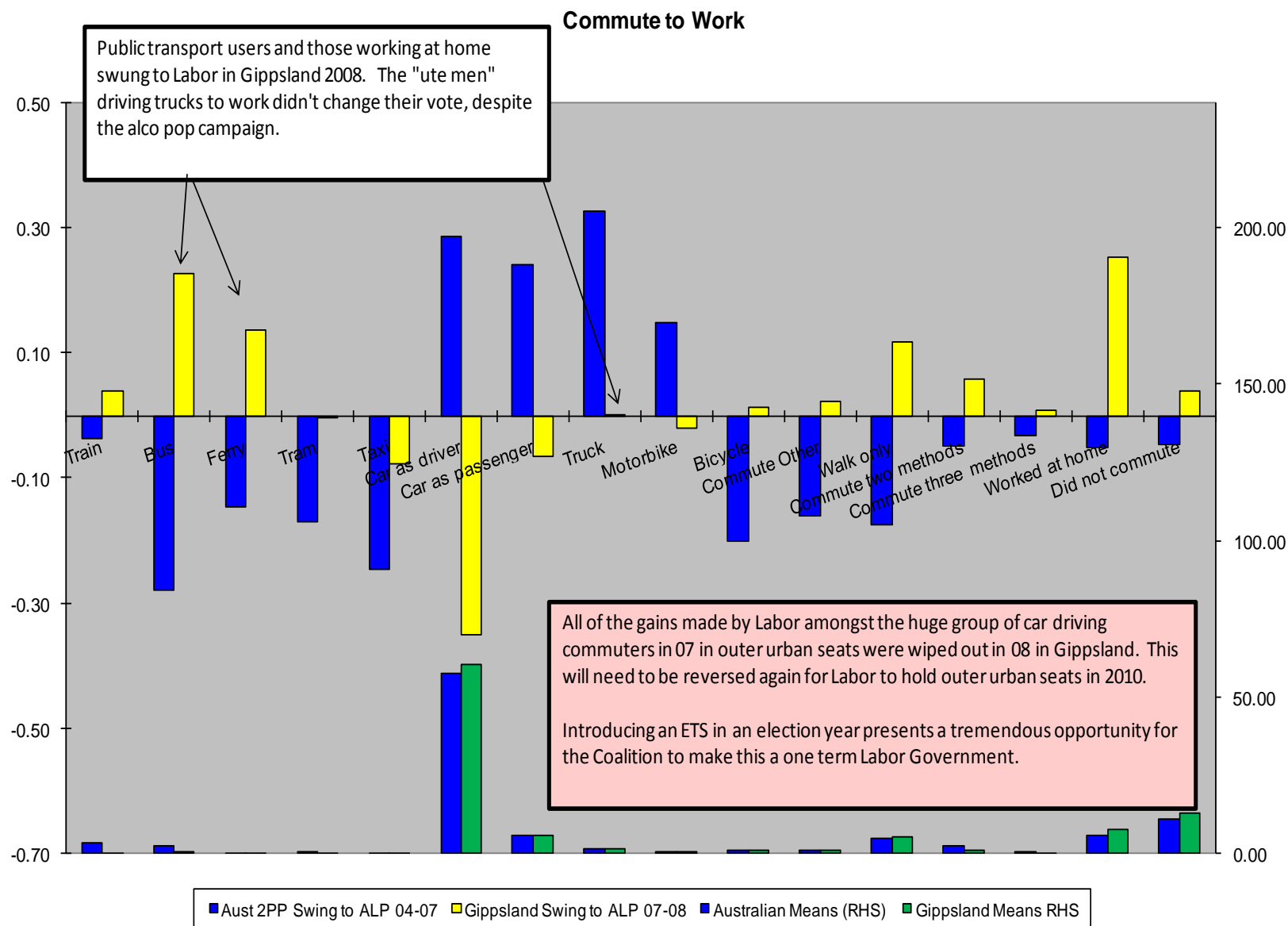


Field of Study Male

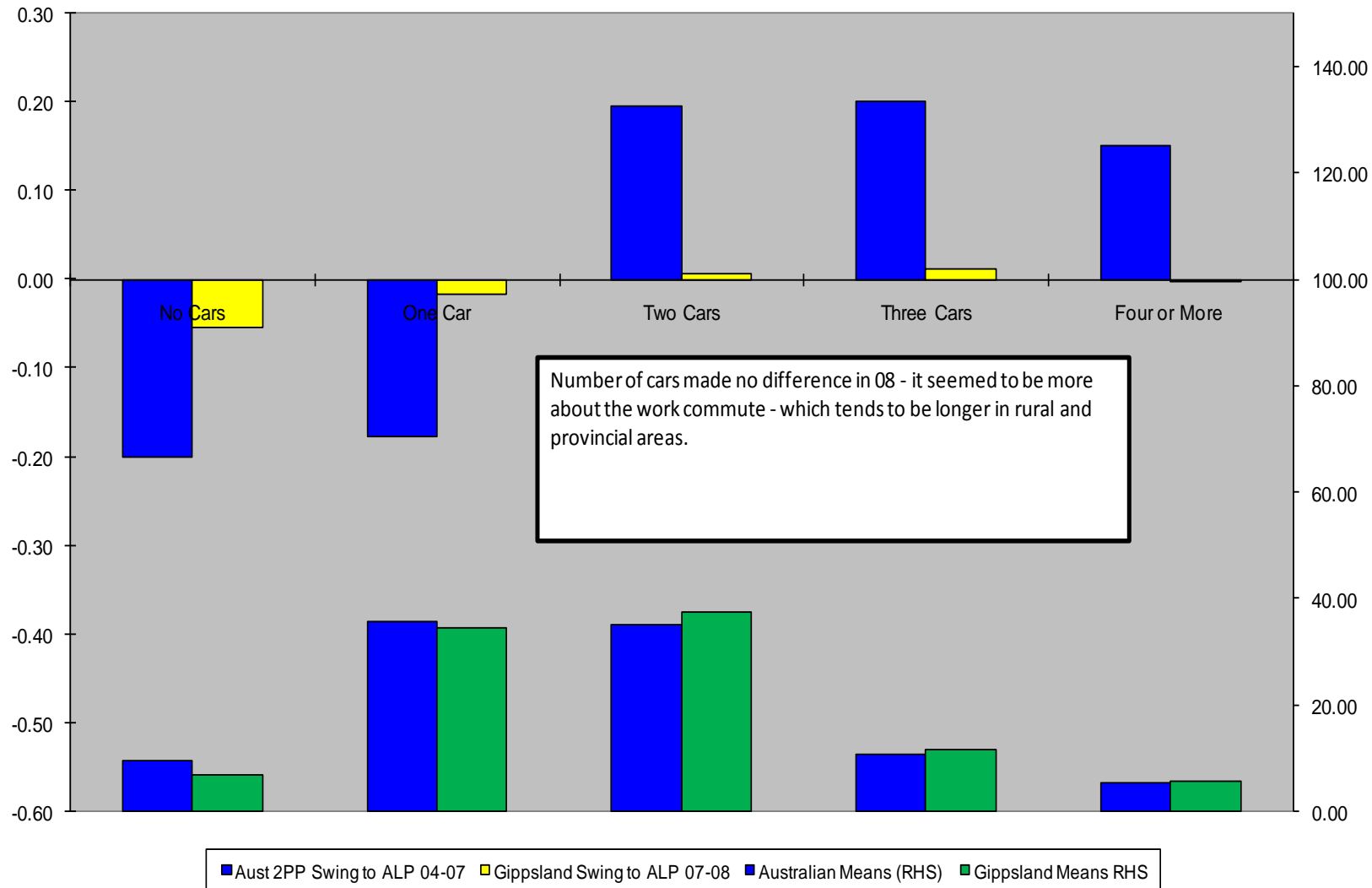


Field of Study Female

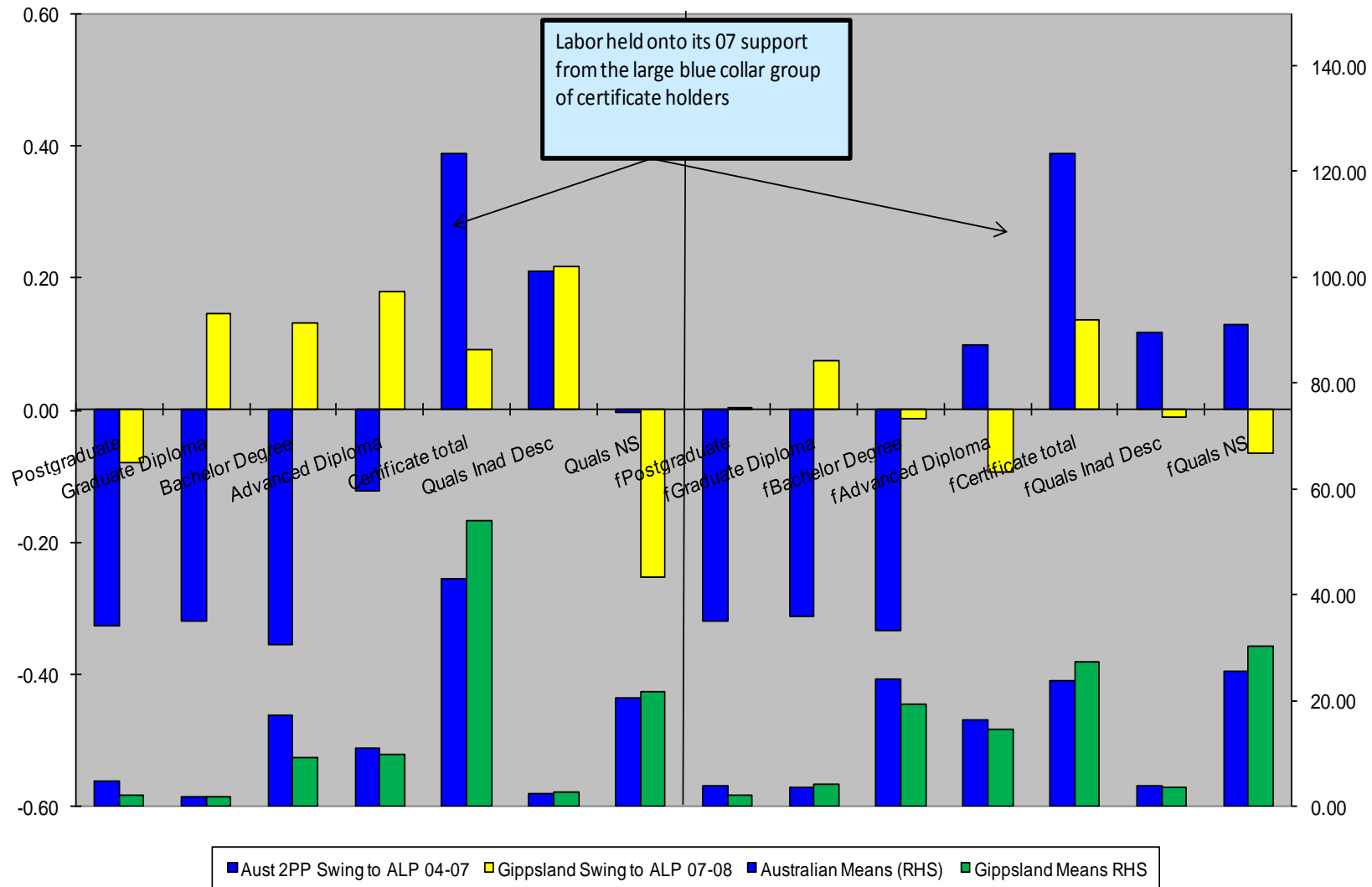




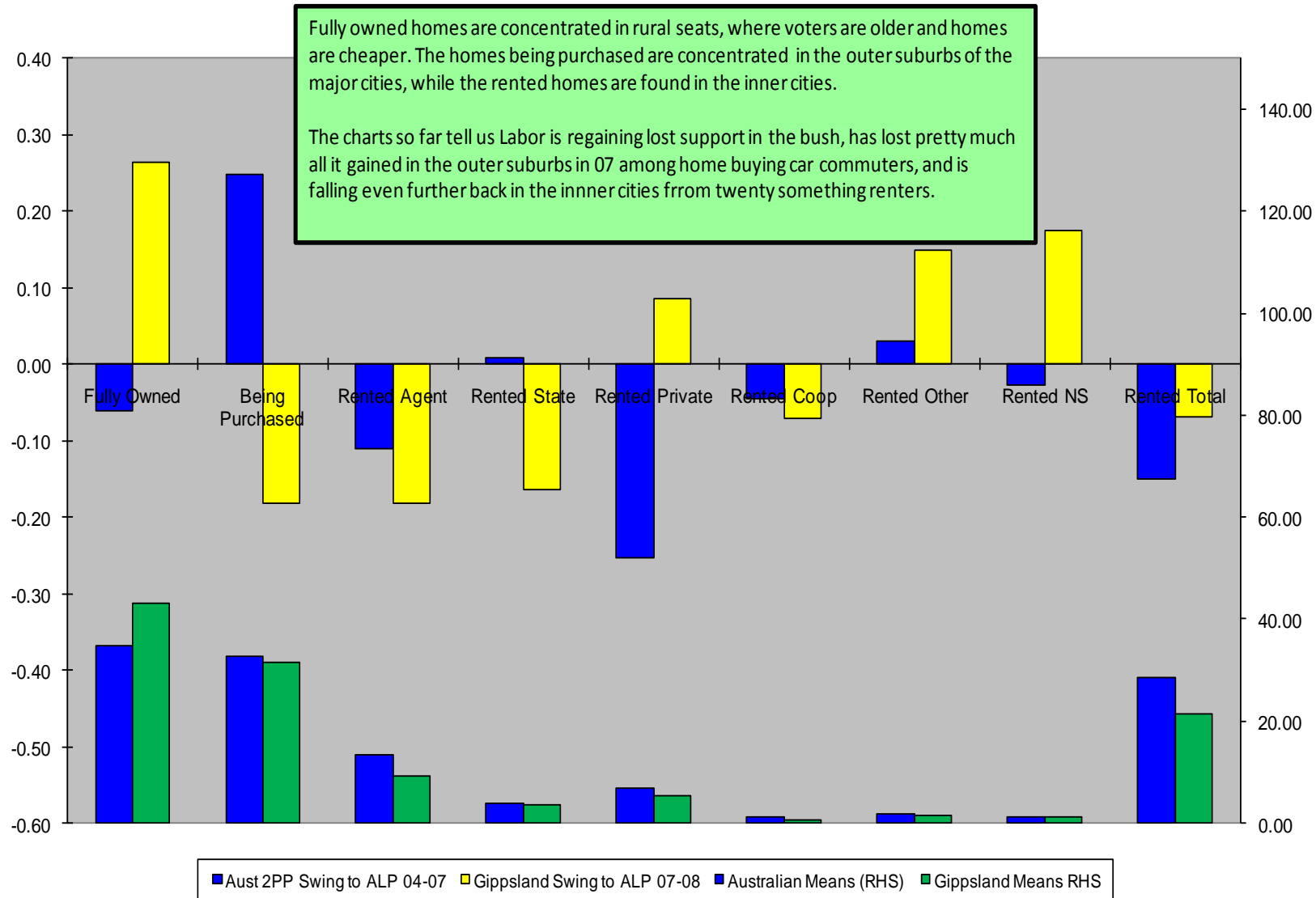
Number of vehicles

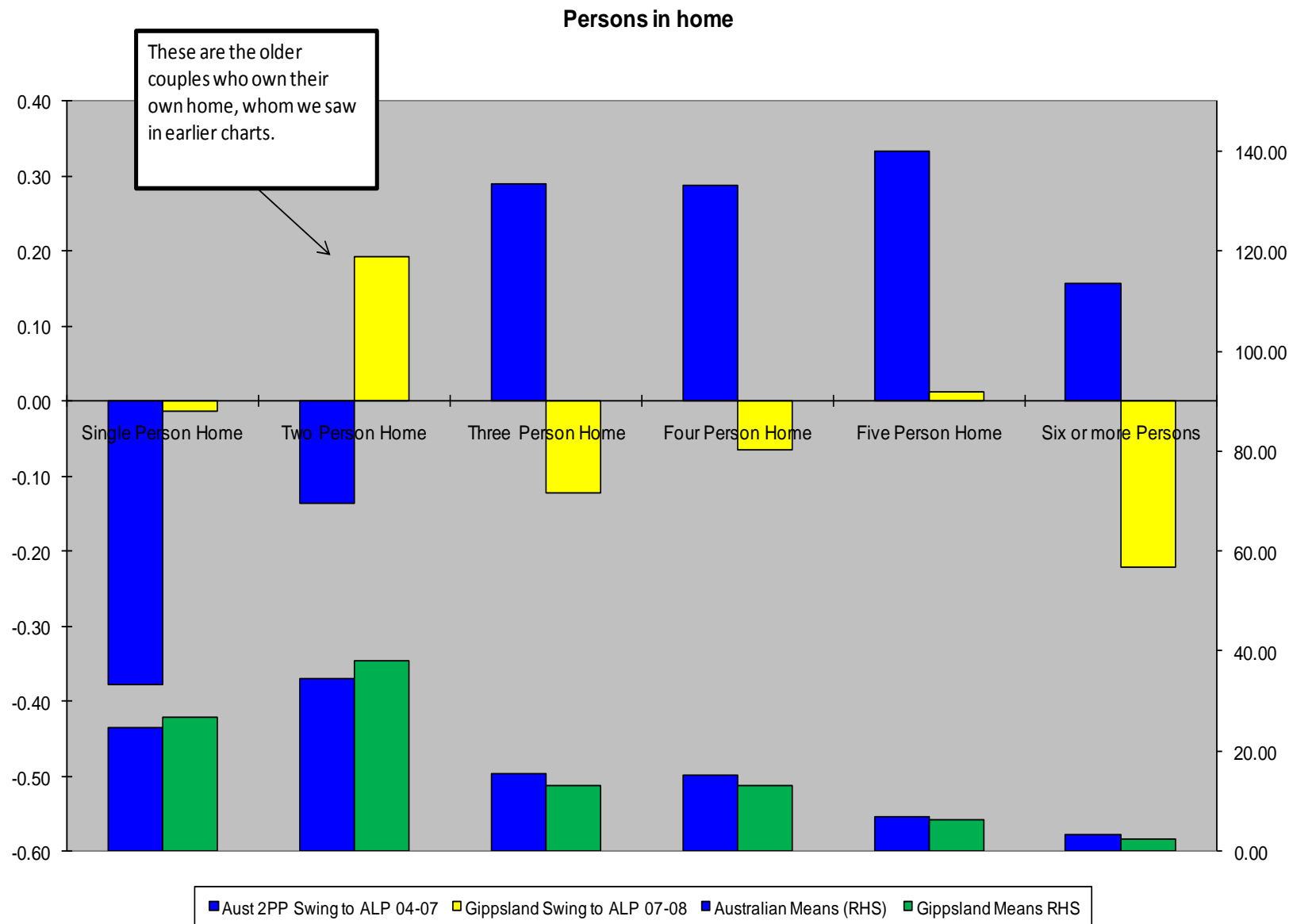


Qualifications Male and Female

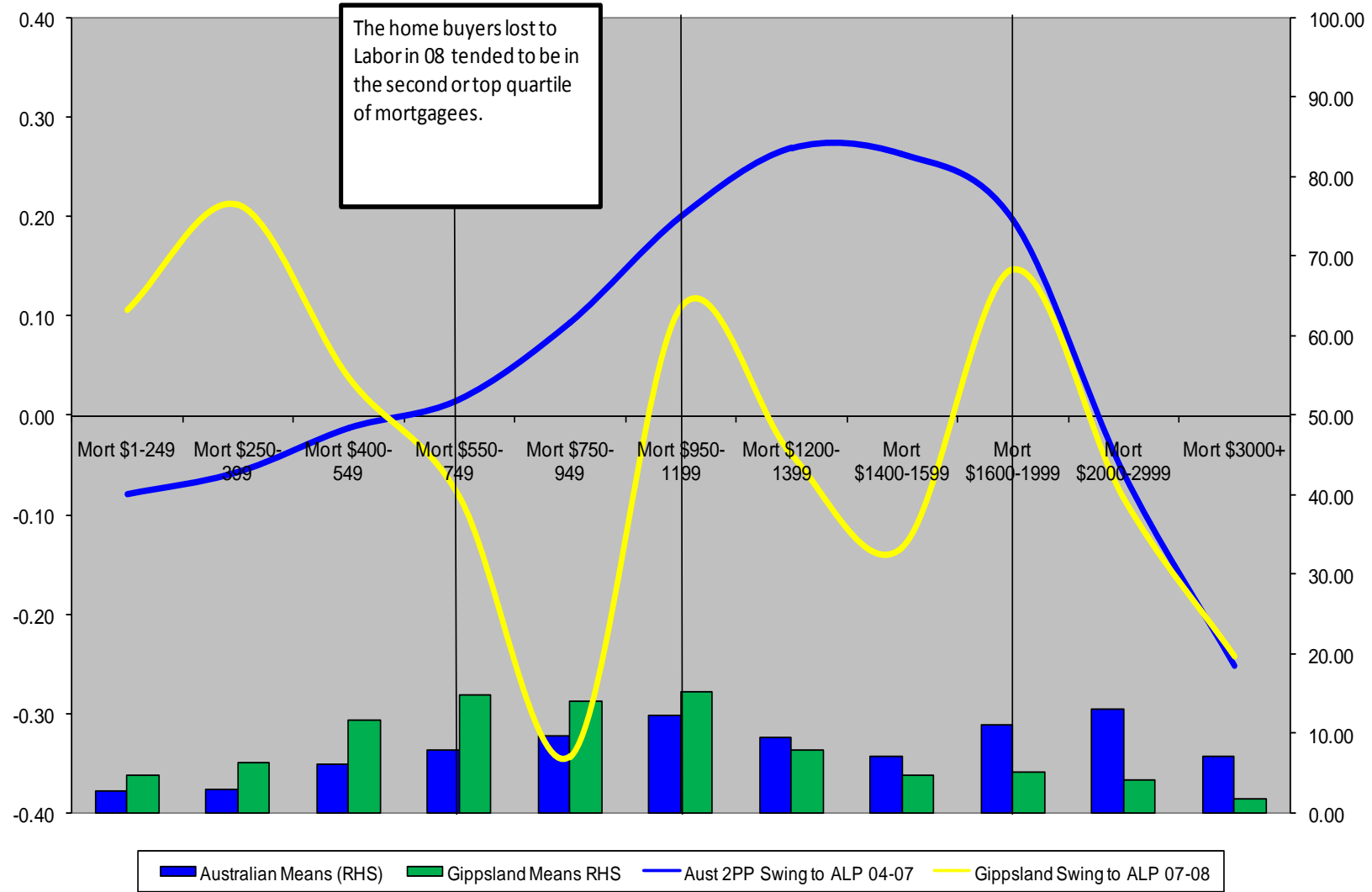


Tenure

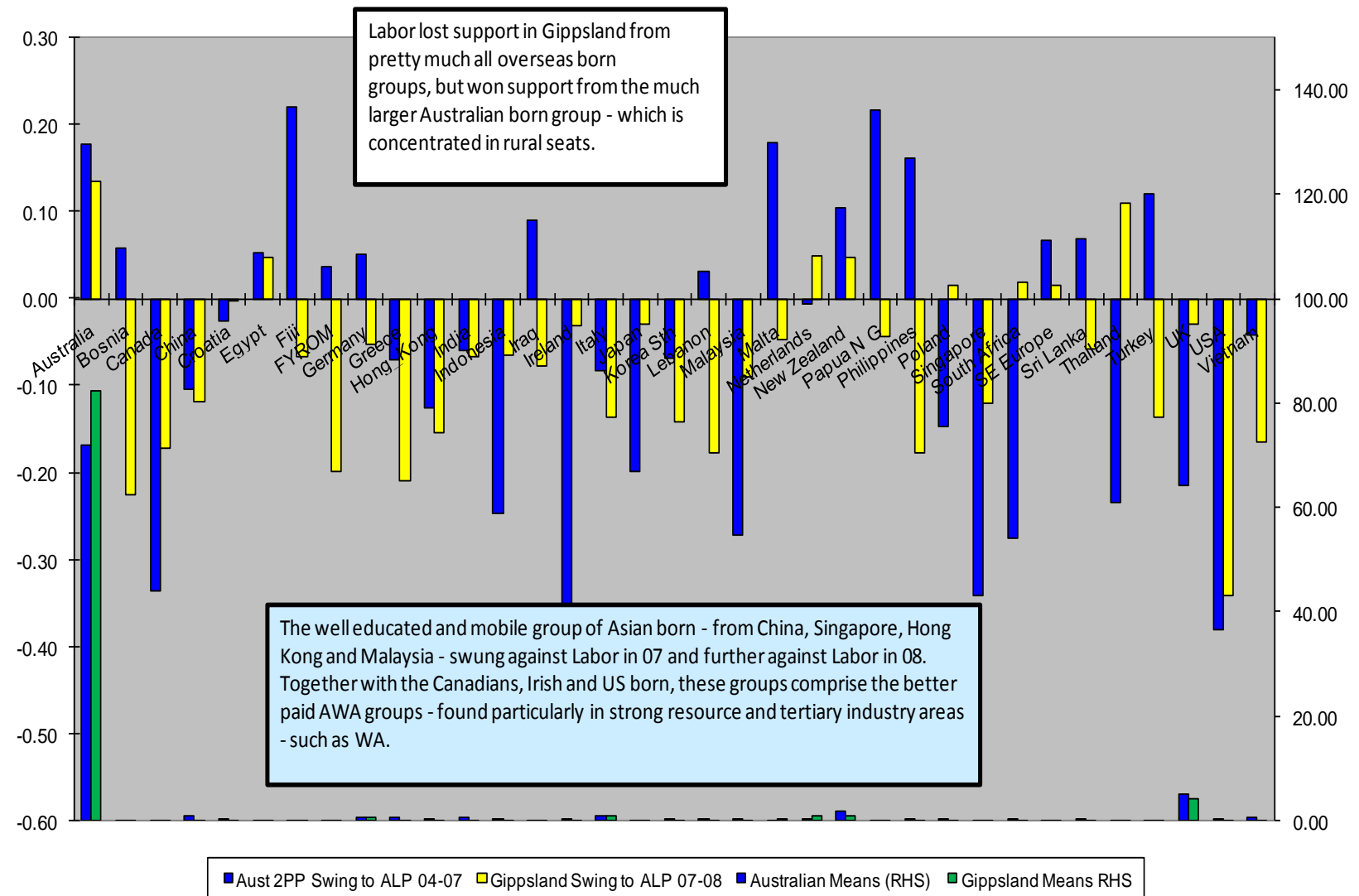




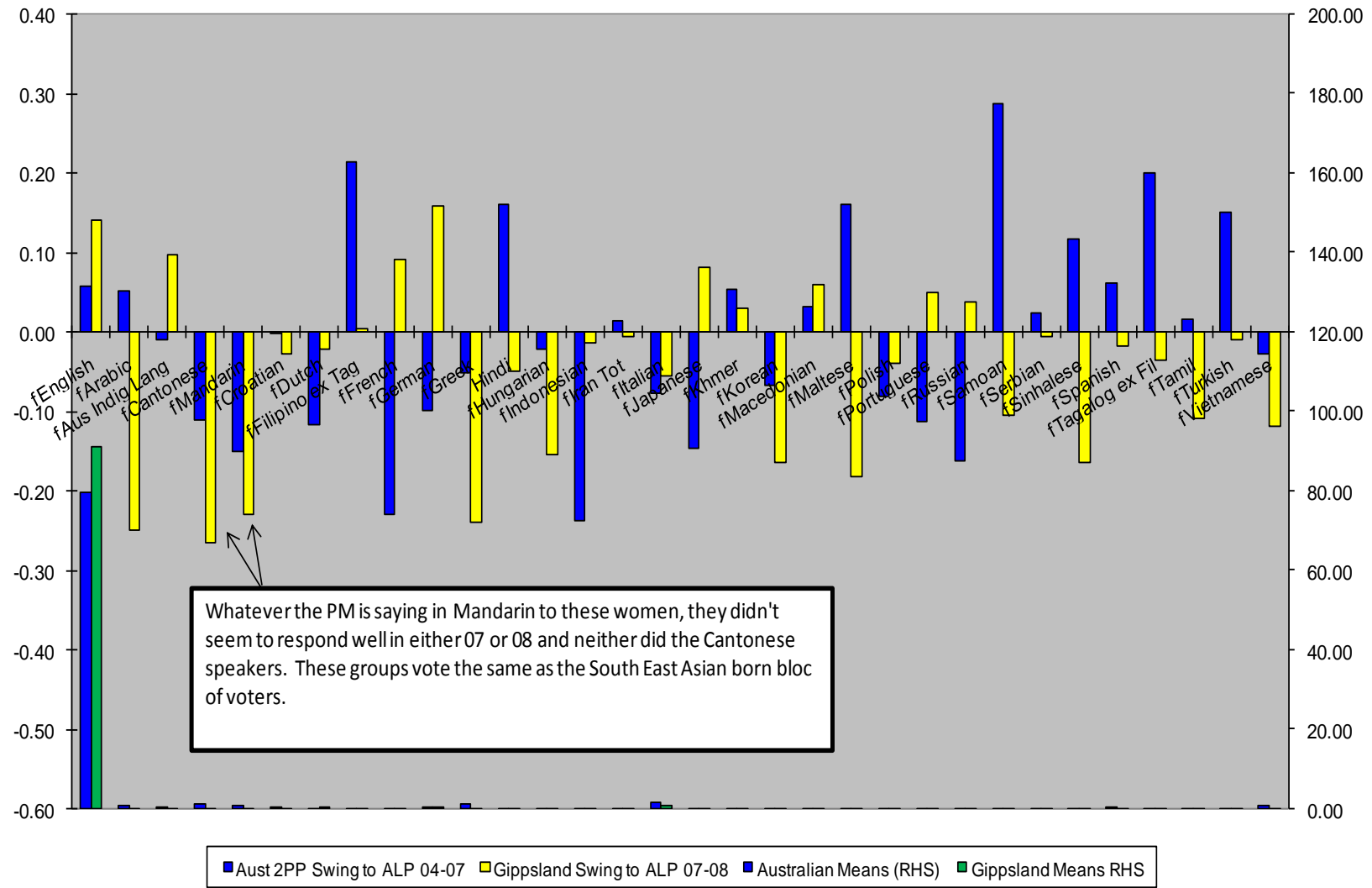
Mortgage



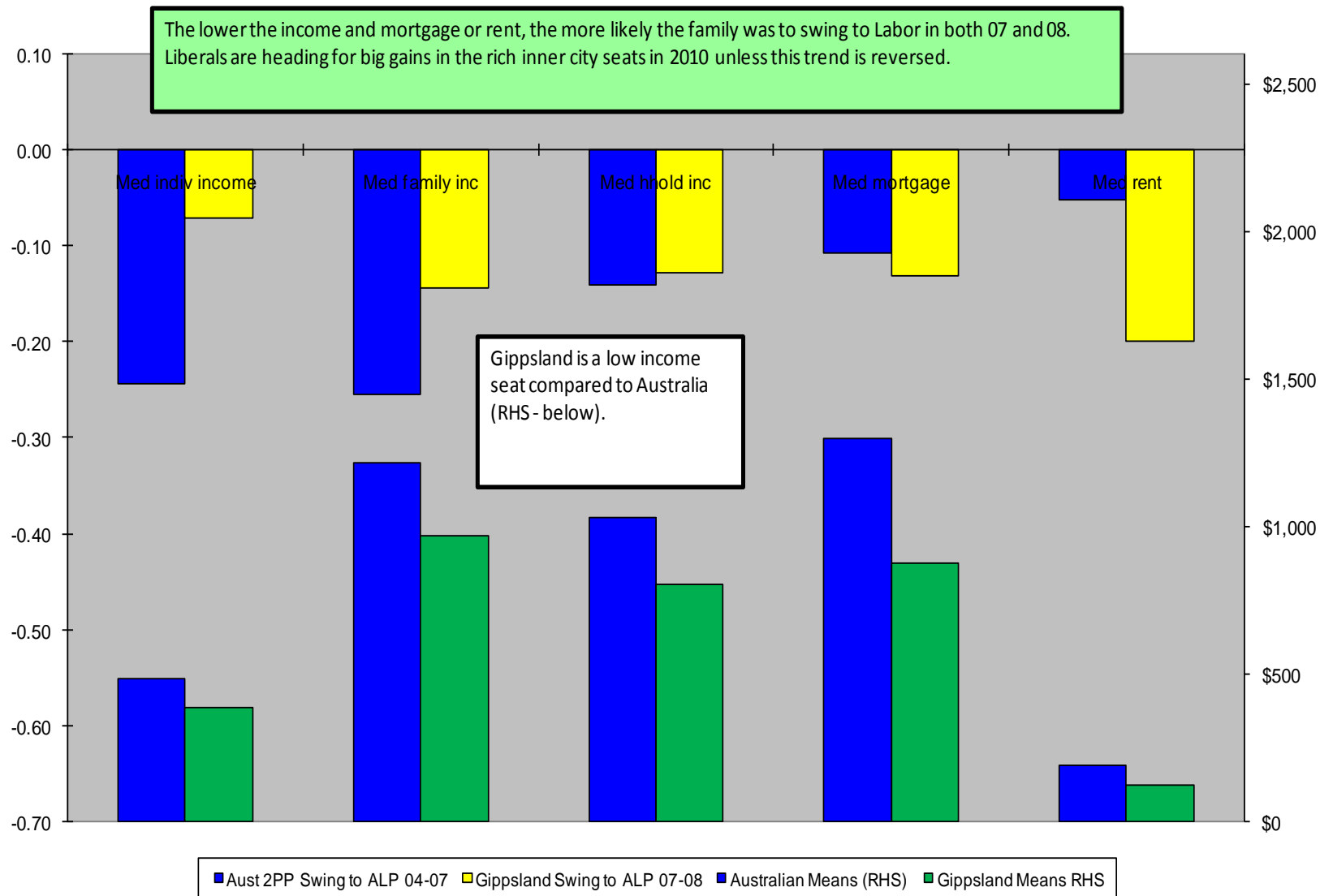
Birthplace Male



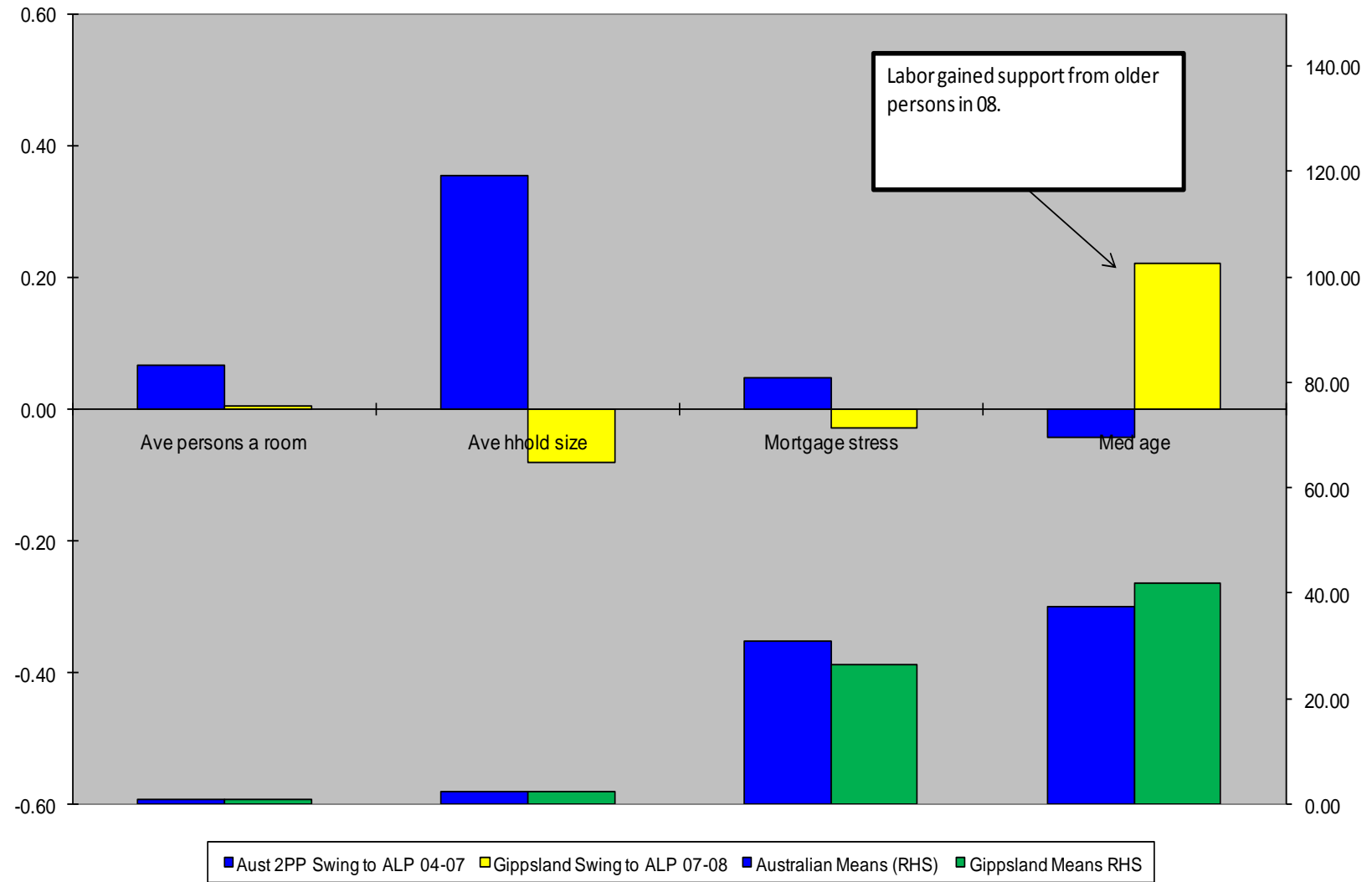
Language Female



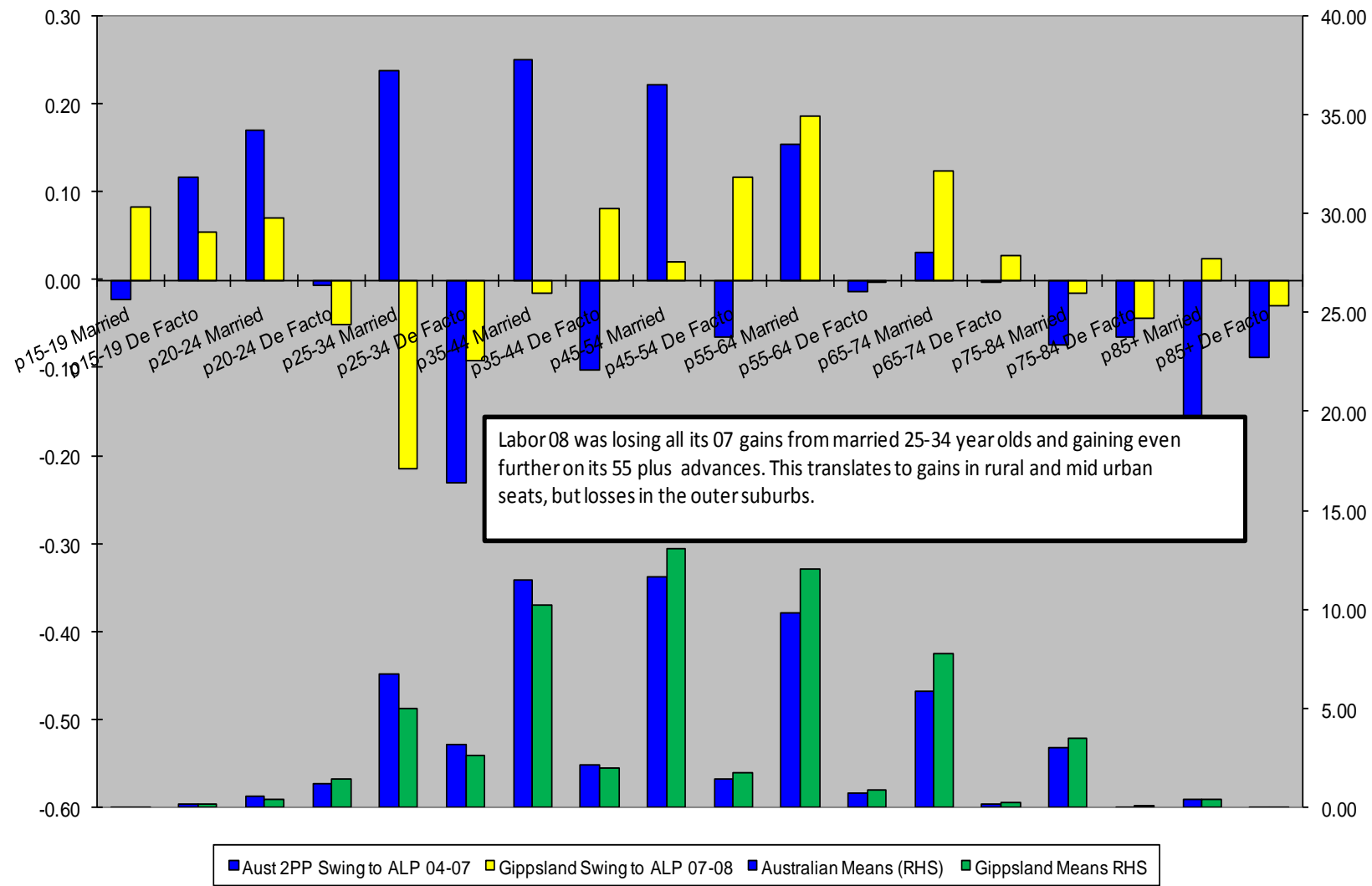
Family Budgets



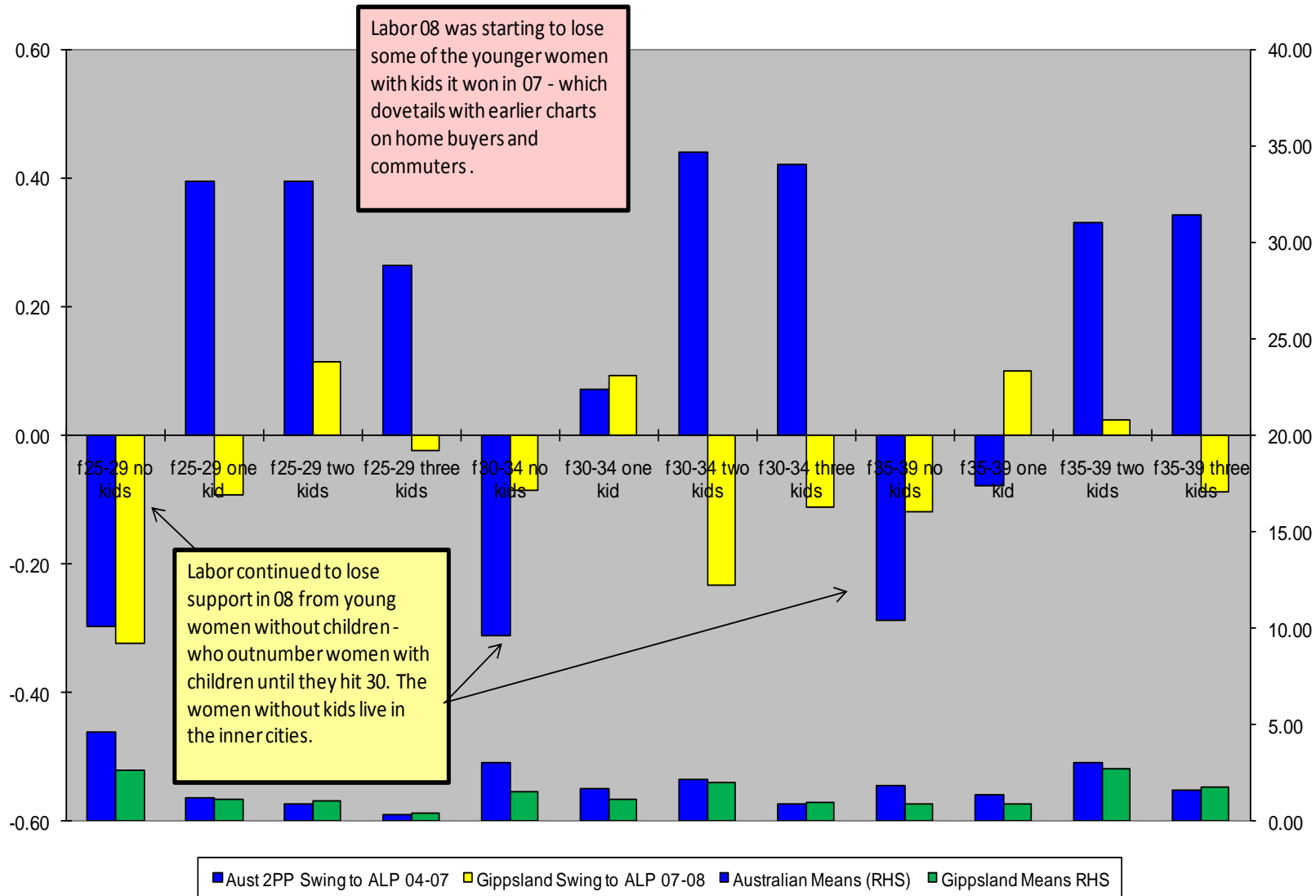
Family Means



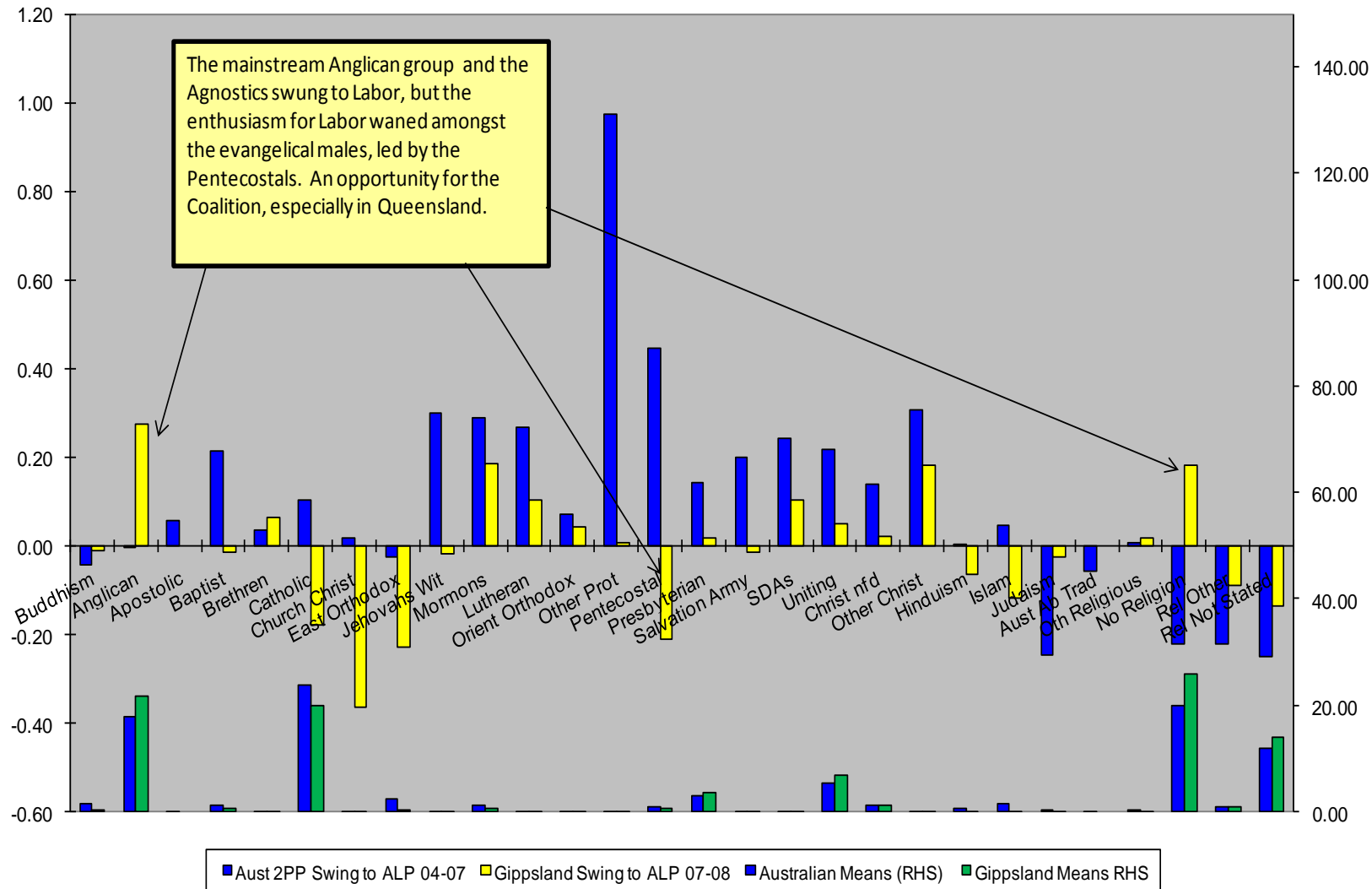
Marital Status



Number of Children for Females 25-39



Religion Male



Religion Female

