

# Mum's the word in female jobs surge

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MOTHERS returning to the workforce and employers seeking out mature, experienced candidates has led to a surge in female employment in South Australia.

Figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics for last month show that women are increasingly stepping up in the workforce, with their unemployment rate having been on the decline since the beginning of this year while during the same period, males have struggled to find work.

Female unemployment has now returned to the same levels as this time last year, 4.9 per cent, while the ABS figures



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report male unemployment in our state is at 6.2 per cent.

While nationwide gender-based employment figures have fluctuated - including some states reporting women bearing the brunt of workplace downsizing - in South Australia the picture is much rosier.

According to the SA branch of the Labour Economic Office, the male labour workforce participation rate has been falling steadily since last October while the female participation rate has risen proportionately.

Organisational psychothera-

pist and director of recruitment service Expr3ss! Dr Glyn Brokensha says the volume of applications from women aged 30 years and over looking to work in the retail sector has more than doubled in the past three months.

"The current economic climate is changing the landscape for employers... they are seeking employees with qualities such as loyalty, the ability to handle change and the skills to manage increasingly hectic workloads," he said.

"Many older women, who have spent years running the family home and who have broad life experiences, possess these exact qualities.

"Anecdotally, we are also hearing that many older women

are returning to the workforce as the global financial crisis places additional financial stress on households."

Fairview Park Foodland IGA is harnessing women's breadth of life experience with its new iService department with an all-female dedicated staff providing cooking tips and directions for recipes.

Adelaide's Finest Supermarkets general manager Mike Rutherford says a certain type of staff member is needed to drive the iService department.

"We see real benefits for our customers in having staff, particularly in the iService role, who are more mature, have run a household and raised kids and have practical life experience," Mr Rutherford said.