



# Key facts and trends in part-time work: NSW women

## Fact sheet

Part-time employees usually work less than 35 hours per week.<sup>1</sup> Nearly half of NSW employed women work part-time. This fact sheet provides key information about NSW women and part-time work.

*This fact sheet was prepared in partnership with the Workplace Research Centre and Women and Work Research Group, The University of Sydney.*

## Quick facts – NSW women and part-time work

- Nearly half (45%) of all employees are women.<sup>2</sup>
- 45% of employed women work part-time, compared to 17% of men.<sup>3</sup>
- Almost two-thirds (68.5%) of part-time employees are women.<sup>4</sup>
- 54% of part-time women employees are casuals, with no entitlement to paid holiday, sick or carers' leave.<sup>5</sup>
- 55% of part-time women workers are employed in just four industries: retail; accommodation and food services; healthcare and social assistance; and administrative and support services.<sup>6</sup>
- Women are under-represented as managers with 10% of employed women as managers, compared to 17% of men)<sup>7</sup>. Part of the reason may be that few managers work part-time; with one national survey reporting that only 12.3% of managers work part-time, of whom nearly two-thirds are women.<sup>8</sup>
- Women are well represented in the professions, including teaching and nursing (28% of employed women are professionals compared to 20% of men).<sup>9</sup>
- One national survey reports nearly 22% of professionals work part-time, of whom nearly three-quarters are women.<sup>10</sup>
- Nationally, the most common methods of pay setting for part-time employees are collective agreements and award only arrangements. 28.5% of women working part-time are award-reliant whereas 11.1% of full-time women employees are award-reliant.<sup>11</sup> Average weekly earnings for NSW women who are award-reliant (full-time and part-time together) are considerably lower than for women paid under other pay setting arrangements.<sup>12</sup>

- Of the total number of women employed in NSW in 2009, 20.6 % were trade union members. Of the total number of men employed in NSW in 2009, 21.3% were trade union members. Of the total number of people employed in NSW in 2009, 20.9% were trade union members.<sup>13</sup>
- Nationally, 22.2% of full-time women employees and 15.8% of part-time women employees are trade union members.<sup>14</sup>

## Who works part-time and why?

Data drawn from a national survey indicates that the need to combine work with other responsibilities is the main reason why women work part-time.<sup>15</sup> The same patterns are assumed to apply in NSW.

- Younger women (15-24) often work part-time to combine work with education or training, as do young men – about three-quarters of young men and women give this as their main reason for working part-time.<sup>16</sup>
- Women in the childbearing years (25-44) work part-time largely for childcare reasons (nearly 60% of part-time women workers report this as their main reason)<sup>17</sup> or, to a much lesser extent for preference (between 10.5% of those aged 25-34 and 16.5% of 35-44 year olds, who work part-time).<sup>18</sup>
- Of older women aged 45-54, a large minority work part-time because they prefer to (41%), with childcare reasons and care for adults given by a smaller proportions (17.5% and 1.9% respectively).<sup>19</sup>

## What are the conditions and circumstances of part-time work?

National data indicate that opportunities for

women to progress their careers and their working conditions are influenced by whether they work part-time or full-time.<sup>20</sup>

- Full-time women workers aged 25-54 are over four times more likely to be promoted than part-timers whilst full-time women workers over 55 are over 20 times more likely to be promoted than part-timers in the same age group.<sup>21</sup>
- Only 28.6% of part-time women workers have supervisory duties compared to 50.2% of full-time women workers.<sup>22</sup>
- 31% of part-time workers undertake training in their jobs, compared to 46% of full-timers.<sup>23</sup>
- More than half of NSW women working part-time hours are casuals, and so do not have paid holiday and paid sick/carers' leave.<sup>24</sup>
- 60% of workers who earn less than \$500 per week are women working part-time.<sup>25</sup> As employers are not required to contribute superannuation for workers earning less than \$450 per week,<sup>26</sup> women's concentration in part-time work significantly limits the accumulation of superannuation by women.
- Women represent three-fifths of workers who receive less than \$40 per week in superannuation contributions from their employer. By contrast, women represent a third of workers who receive more than \$100 per week in super contributions from their employer.<sup>27</sup>

## How family friendly is part-time work?

Although the main reason women work part-time is to enable them to care, part-time work is often not carer-friendly.

In NSW, 59% of part-time women employees feel they have control of the number of hours they work, whilst the Australia-wide figure is 70%.<sup>28</sup>

Nationally:

- Only two thirds of part-time women employees are guaranteed a minimum number of work hours (compared to 93% of full-timers).<sup>29</sup>
- 40% of part-time women employees have variable weekly hours or are usually required to be on call or standby, compared to 28% of full-timers.<sup>30</sup>
- Part-time employees generally receive shorter notice of schedules than full-timers.<sup>31</sup>
- Over half of part-time women employees are without paid holiday, sick or carers' leave as they are casuals whilst less than one-tenth of full timers do not have these entitlements.<sup>32</sup>
- Women aged 25-54 in couples with young children, who work part-time, spend more hours on work, domestic labour and childcare combined than similar women working full-time.<sup>33</sup>

## Are women satisfied with part-time work?

Women are broadly satisfied with working part-time despite some of its disadvantages – as noted above.

- A study examining NSW women's employment histories between 2007 and 2009 indicates that women working part-time hours tend to remain part-time; however if they move into full-time work, they generally continue with full-time hours.<sup>34</sup>
- The same study indicates a higher proportion of NSW women move from casual to permanent work than women nationally.<sup>35</sup>
- NSW women employees generally report being happy with their working hours, and a greater proportion of those working part-time report being satisfied than women working than full-time.<sup>36</sup>
- NSW women employees working full-time

hours were more than three times as likely as those working part-time to express a preference for working less<sup>37</sup>: Australia wide evidence suggests these full-time employees are women aged 35 and over.<sup>38</sup>

- Many part-time women employees in NSW would like to work more hours – though not necessarily full-time.<sup>39</sup> National data suggests these women are in the younger age groups.<sup>40</sup>

## Does it matter if the conditions and career opportunities of part-time work are different to other jobs?

As so many women work part-time, the working conditions and career opportunities of part-time jobs can affect women's earning capacity and incomes over their life course. Enabling women to work the part-time hours they prefer and still improve their earnings potential and progress their careers will lessen the financial impact of their reduced hours over time.

A national study using employment histories looked at women's earnings development since the age of 15. The results suggest that in real dollar terms:

- earnings increase over time in full-time work;
- earnings decrease over time in part-time work; and
- part-timers going back to full-time work are likely to earn less than before they left full-time employment and are unlikely to recoup the wages gains which a continuously full-time career would have given them.<sup>41</sup>

## What is quality part-time work?

The characteristics of quality part-time work include:<sup>42</sup>

- Pay and conditions which are pro rated to equivalent full-time positions.
- Offering the same access to training and other career development and promotion

opportunities as full-time jobs.

- Part-time jobs being available at all levels of an organisation and over time there being a balance between the numbers of men and women who work part-time hours.
- Working hours which carry some degree of flexibility, are carer-friendly and/or allow some input from the employee when designing the job's pattern of work.
- Jobs which are correctly sized for part-time hours.
- Job protection and access to remedies for unfair dismissal.
- The opportunity for part-time workers to request to reduce or increase their work hours in the same job or when promoted.<sup>43</sup>
- Organisational policies providing for part-time work and how to request it.
- Organisational investment in payroll and other systems, including decision-making hierarchies, which support part-time arrangements.<sup>44</sup>
- A willingness to trial new arrangements.
- Imaginative responses to part-time jobs for example developing deputies to cover any essential but intermittent aspects of part-time jobs.<sup>45</sup>

## References

<sup>1</sup>ABS, *Labour Force Survey Standard Products and Data Item Guide*, Cat. No.6103.0, Dec 2009.

<sup>2</sup>ABS, *Australian Demographic Statistics*, Cat. No. 3101.0, 2010.

<sup>3</sup>ABS, *Labour Force Survey*, Cat. No. 6202.0, Jun 2010.

<sup>4</sup>ABS, *Labour Force Survey, Detailed Electronic Delivery*, Cat. No. 6202.0, Jun 2010.

<sup>5</sup>ABS, *Australian Labour Market Statistics*, Cat. No. 6105.0, July 2010.

<sup>6</sup>ABS, *Detailed Labour Force Survey*, Cat. No. 6291.55.003, May 2010, Chapter 2, 'Profile of Women's Employment in NSW: Trends and Issues', 2010.

<sup>7</sup>ABS, *Detailed Labour Force Survey*, Cat. No. 6291.55.003, May 2010, Chapter 2, 'Profile of Women's Employment in NSW: Trends and Issues', 2010.

<sup>8</sup>EOWA statistics 'Women in Management by Occupation', February 2009, accessed on 25 October 2010 at: [http://www.eowa.gov.au/Information\\_Centres/Resource\\_Centre/EOWA\\_Publications/Pay%20Equity%20Resources/women\\_in\\_management\\_09.pdf](http://www.eowa.gov.au/Information_Centres/Resource_Centre/EOWA_Publications/Pay%20Equity%20Resources/women_in_management_09.pdf)

<sup>9</sup>ABS, *Detailed Labour Force Survey*, Cat. No. 6291.55.003, May 2010, Chapter 2, 'Profile of Women's Employment in NSW: Trends and Issues', 2010.

<sup>10</sup>EOWA statistics 'Women in Management by Occupation', February 2009, accessed on 25 October 2010 at: [http://www.eowa.gov.au/Information\\_Centres/Resource\\_Centre/EOWA\\_Publications/Pay%20Equity%20Resources/women\\_in\\_management\\_09.pdf](http://www.eowa.gov.au/Information_Centres/Resource_Centre/EOWA_Publications/Pay%20Equity%20Resources/women_in_management_09.pdf).

<sup>11</sup>ABS, *Employee Earnings and Hours*, Cat. No. 6306.0, Aug. 2008.

<sup>12</sup>ABS, *Employee Earnings and Hours*, Electronic Delivery, Cat. No. 6306.009, Aug. 2008.

<sup>13</sup>ABS, *Employee Earnings, Benefits and Trade Union Membership*, Cat. No. 6310.0, Aug. 2009.

<sup>14</sup>ABS, *Employee Earnings, Benefits and Trade Union Membership*, Cat. No. 6310.0, Aug. 2009.

<sup>15</sup>Abhayaratna, J, Andrews, L, Nuch, H, and Podbury, T, (2008), *Part-time Employment: the Australian Experience*, Staff Working Paper, Productivity Commission, pp. 76-79 and Appendix D, drawing data from the Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey 2007 Release 5.1.

<sup>16</sup>Abhayaratna et al. (2008), (fn 14).

<sup>17</sup>Abhayaratna et al. (2008), (fn 14).

<sup>18</sup>Abhayaratna et al. (2008), (fn 14).

<sup>19</sup>Abhayaratna et al. (2008), (fn 14).

<sup>20</sup>Abhayaratna et al. (2008), (fn 14).

<sup>21</sup>Abhayaratna et al. (2008), (fn 14), p.170.

<sup>22</sup>Abhayaratna et al. (2008), (fn 14) Appendix F.

<sup>23</sup>Abhayaratna et al. (2008), (fn 10) pp. 155-156.

<sup>24</sup>ABS, *Australian Labour Market Statistics*, Cat. No. 6105.0, July 2010.

<sup>25</sup>ABS, *Employee Earnings, Benefits and Trade Union Membership*, Cat. No. 6310.0, Aug. 2009

<sup>26</sup>See the Australian Tax Office website, accessed on 5 Nov 2010 at: <http://www.ato.gov.au/businesses/content.asp?doc=/content/00249857.htm>

<sup>27</sup>Richardson, D. (2009) *The impact of the recession on women*, The Australia Institute Paper No. 3, August 2009.

<sup>28</sup>Australia at Work Data, Waves 1, 2 & 3 (2007-2010) Workplace Research Centre, The University of Sydney.

<sup>29</sup>ABS, *Working Time Arrangements*, Cat. No. 6342.0, Nov. 2009.

<sup>30</sup>ABS, *Working Time Arrangements*, Cat. No. 6342.0, Nov. 2009.

<sup>31</sup>ABS, *Working Time Arrangements*, Cat. No. 6342.0, Nov. 2009.

<sup>32</sup>ABS, *Australian Labour Market Statistics* Cat. No. 6105, July 2010.

<sup>33</sup>Craig, L. and K. Mullan (2009), 'The policeman and the part-time sales assistant: household labour supply, family time and subjective time pressure in Australia 1997-2006', *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 40 (4): 545-560.

<sup>34</sup>Australia at Work Data, Waves 1, 2 & 3 (2007-2010) Workplace Research Centre, The University of Sydney.

<sup>35</sup>Australia at Work Data, Waves 1, 2 & 3 (2007-2010) Workplace Research Centre, The University of Sydney.

<sup>36</sup>Australia at Work Data, Waves 1, 2 & 3 (2007-2010) Workplace Research Centre, The University of Sydney.

<sup>37</sup>Australia at Work Data, Waves 1, 2 & 3 (2007-2010) Workplace Research Centre, The University of Sydney.

<sup>38</sup>Abhayaratna et al. (2008), (fn 14).

<sup>39</sup>Australia at Work Data, Waves 1, 2 & 3 (2007-2010) Workplace Research Centre, The University of Sydney.

<sup>40</sup>Abhayaratna et al. (2008), (fn 14).

<sup>41</sup>Chalmers, J. and Hill, T. (2007) 'Marginalising Women in the Labour Market: 'Wage-scarring' Effects of Part-time Work', *Australian Bulletin of Labour*, 33(2): 180-201.

<sup>42</sup>Chalmers, J, Campbell, I and Charlesworth, S, (2005), 'Part-Time Work and Caring Responsibilities in Australia: Towards an Assessment of Job Quality', *Labour & Industry*, 15(3): 41-66; Charlesworth, S., Hall, P. and B. Probert (2005). *Drivers and contexts of equal employment opportunity and diversity action in Australian organisations*, RMIT Publishing, Melbourne; DIIRD (Vic) (2005), 'Quality Part-Time Work: Working Better for Everyone – A Report from the Quality Part-Time Work Project', Melbourne; Lyonette C., Baldauf, B. and H. Behle (2010). *Quality Part-time Work: a review of the evidence*, UK Government Equalities Office, HMSO, London.

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<sup>44</sup>Charlesworth S. and Cartwright S. (2007) 'Part-time Work: Policy, Practice and Resistance in a Manufacturing Organisation' in Fastenau, M., Douglas, K. and Branigan, E. (Eds.) *Women and Work: Current RMIT University Research 2006* RMIT Publishing; Charlesworth, S., Keen, M. and Whittenbury, K. (2009) 'Integrating Part-time Work in Policing Services: Policy, Practice and Potential', *Police Practice and Research: an International Journal*, 10 (1): 31-47; Charlesworth, S. and Baird, M. (2007) 'Getting Gender on the Agenda: The Tale of Two Organisations', *Women in Management Review*, 22 (5): 391-404.

<sup>45</sup>Bardoel, E., Morgan, L. and Santos C. (2007) "'Quality" Part-time Work in Australian Organizations: Implications for HRD', *Human Resource Development International*, 10 (3): 281-299.