

# Women, Work and Family

New South Wales

## NSW labour force participation

- In 2004–05, the total NSW labour force was 3,389,000. Females accounted for 44.6% of the total labour force. The participation rate for females was 54.8% (compared to 70.3% for males). The participation rate of females with children aged 0–4 years was 52.9%. The median age of females in the NSW labour force was 38 years (males 39 years).<sup>1</sup>
- In 2004–05, of the total females employed in the NSW labour force, 43.4% were employed part-time (compared with 14.8% of males).<sup>2</sup>
- In 2004–05, of all female employees in NSW, 30.9% were employed without leave entitlements (compared with 21.7% of males).<sup>3</sup>
- In 2004–05, the unemployment rate for females was 5.4% (males 5.1%). The median duration of unemployment for females was 13 weeks (males 18 weeks).<sup>4</sup>
- In 2004–05, of females aged 55–64 years the participation rate was 42.1% (males 63.3%). Of all employed females transitioning to retirement, 47.6% were employed part-time (compared with 16.4% of males in the same age group).<sup>5</sup>
- At the 2001 Census, just under 35% of Aboriginal women in NSW were employed (a rise of nearly 3% since 1996), compared to 44.2% of Aboriginal men and 48.5% of all women in NSW. In 2001, the unemployment rate for Aboriginal women in NSW was 20.2%, compared to 6.4% for women in NSW generally and around 25.3% for Aboriginal men.<sup>6</sup>

## Average weekly earnings

- In August 2006, women's average weekly ordinary time earnings for full-time work in NSW were approximately 85% of those of men's full-time ordinary earnings.<sup>7</sup>
- The pay gap widens when considering the average weekly earnings of all women in the NSW workforce (including part-time and casual workers) to approximately 69% of average weekly earnings for all men.<sup>8</sup>

## Leave benefits

- In Australia in 2005, the majority of full-time female employees in their main job had access to holiday leave, sick leave and long service leave. Approximately half of part-time female employees in their main job had access to these leave entitlements.<sup>9</sup>
- In Australia in 2005, 9.6% of full-time and 48.2% of part-time female employees had no leave entitlements in their main job. The leave benefits they did not receive include holiday leave, sick leave, long service leave, and maternity leave.<sup>10</sup>

## Superannuation

- In 2002, the average superannuation balance for Australian women was \$6,400, compared to \$13,400 for men. Half of women who have retired or will retire in the next 10 years have less than \$20,000 in superannuation, 20% of women will have less than \$5,000.<sup>11</sup>

## Workplace agreements

- In Australia, women under registered collective agreements receive 90% of the hourly pay of men on such agreements, whereas women covered by Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) receive only 80% of the hourly pay of men on AWAs. The gap widens significantly when part-time employees are considered, where the difference paid on AWAs is 24%.<sup>12</sup>
- In Australia in 2002–2003 AWAs delivered low levels of family friendly provisions to employees. Only 8% of AWAs had paid maternity leave compared with 10% of collective agreements, 5% of AWAs had paid paternity leave compared with 7% of collective agreements, and only 4% of AWAs provided for unpaid parental leave.<sup>13</sup>
- A recent survey of 5,000 younger workers (under 25) in NSW revealed half of the workers could not tell the difference between casual and permanent work and a quarter have never received a pay slip. Ignorance was higher among young women employees than young men.<sup>14</sup>

## Managing families, care and work

- In 2005, in 60.1% of all couple families with children aged under 15 years (including both opposite-sex and same-sex couple families), both parents were employed, in 34.6% one parent was employed, and in 5.3% neither parent was employed. 52% of parents in one-parent families were employed.<sup>15</sup>
- In 2003–04, of all children aged under 15, 15.7% lived in families where no resident parent was employed.<sup>16</sup>
- In 2005, 48% (2,416,500) of persons aged 18 years or older in NSW provided care for another adult or child. A higher proportion of females provided care (53%) than males (42%). Of those who provided care, 79% provided care on an ongoing or continual basis.<sup>17</sup>
- Male carers were more likely to be looking after their own child (62% compared to 55% of female carers). A greater proportion of female carers were looking after children other than their own (51% compared to 34% of male carers), or looking after someone aged 65 years or over (19% compared to 13% of male carers).<sup>18</sup>
- In 2005, of all the carers in NSW, 1,163,000 (48%) were employees in paid employment. Of these, 531,800 (46%) had used some form of work arrangement in the last six months to help care for another person.



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- The most common work arrangements used to care for another person were paid leave (52%) and flexible working hours (36%), although the type of work arrangement used varied depending on sex. Males were more likely than females to use paid leave (58% compared to 48%) or a rostered day off (19% compared to 13%). Females were more likely to use part-time work (17%), casual work (13% compared to 4% for males) and unpaid leave (17% compared to 11%).<sup>19</sup>
- Approximately 527,000 of all carers were not looking for paid work in October 2005. Of these 221,300 (42%) were not looking for paid work primarily because of their caring responsibilities. The proportion of females not looking for paid work due to caring responsibilities (46%) was more than males (24%). The main sources of income for carers not looking for paid work were their spouse or partner's income (53%) followed by Centrelink payments (44%).<sup>20</sup>

## Maternity leave

- In Australia in 2005, 54.7% of full-time female employees and 25.6% of part-time female employees were entitled to paid maternity leave in their main job (although the basis of the entitlement and the quantum of leave is not known). This left around 45.3% of full-time employees and 74.4% of part-time employees with no entitlement. 35.4% of full-time male employees and 8.3% of part-time male employees were entitled to paid paternity leave in their main job.<sup>21</sup>
- In NSW in 2005, 102,000 women worked in a job while pregnant. Of these women, 37,000 women took paid maternity leave, 52,000 women took unpaid maternity leave/time away, and 78,000 took leave.<sup>22</sup>
- In NSW in 2005, the mean length of time of women who worked a job while pregnant and returned to work in a job after birth was 29 weeks. The mean age of the child when the mother commenced work again was 6 months.<sup>23</sup>
- In NSW in 2000, an estimated 5% of women aged 18–59 with children under 15 reported resigning from a job in the previous 5 years because sufficient maternity leave was not available.<sup>24</sup>

## Child care

- In NSW in 2005, of all children aged 0–12 years, 45.7% used child care (not including preschool), and 54.3% of children aged 0–12 years did not use child care.<sup>25</sup>
- Of the 45.7% of all children aged 0–12 years that used child care, 19.7% used formal care, 34.6% used informal care, and 8.6% used both formal and informal care.
- Of the approximately 20% of children using formal care, 6.5% used before and/or after school care, 9.7% used a long day care centre, 2.7% used family day care, 1.2% used an occasional care centre, and approximately 0.4% used other forms of formal care.<sup>26</sup>
- Of the approximately 36% of children using informal care, 20.8% were cared for by a grandparent, 1.9% were cared for by a brother or sister, 7.8% were cared for by another relative, and 6.4% were cared for by another person that was not a relative.<sup>27</sup>

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