

# New South Wales Quality Part Time Work Round Table

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## *'Delights' and Dilemmas of Part-Time Work*

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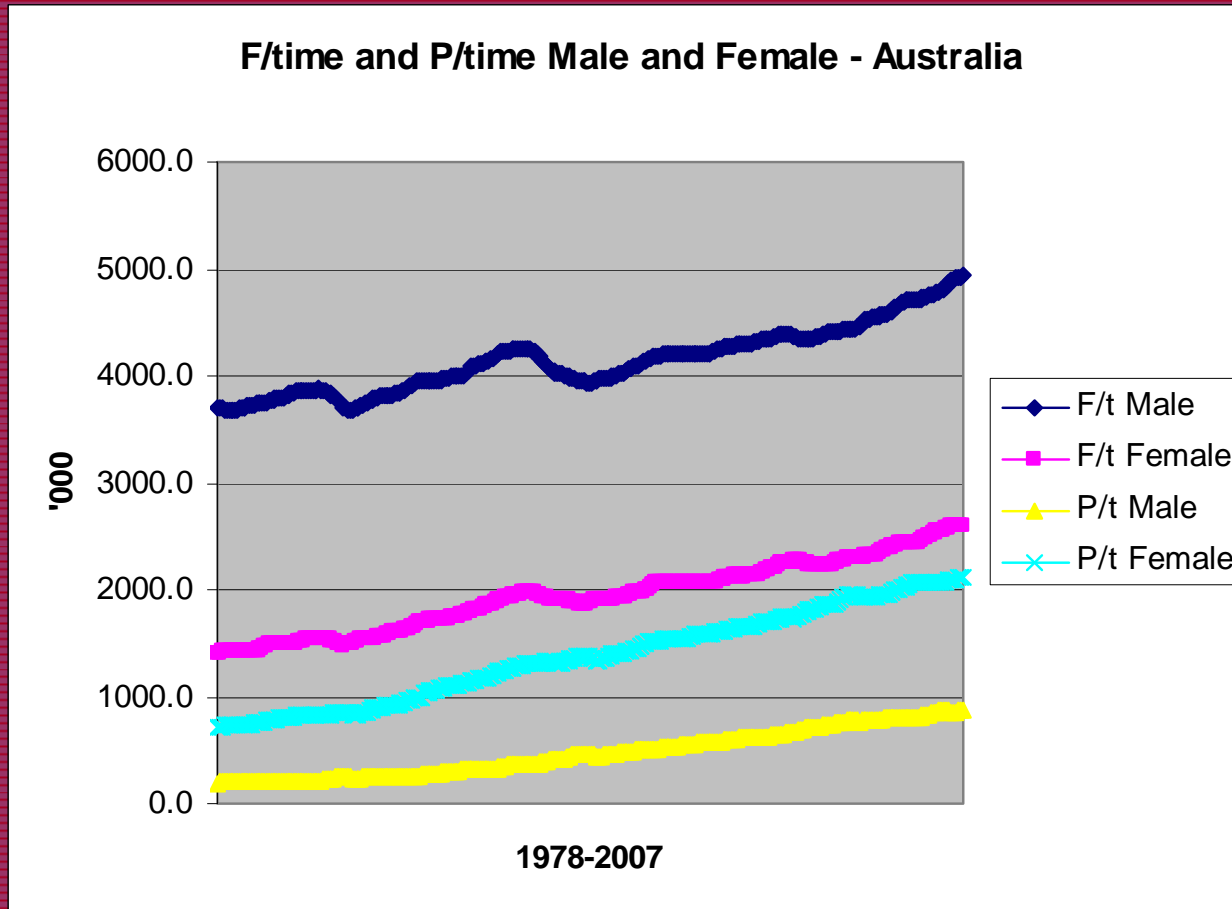
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# ABS (Cat. No. 6105.0 July 2008)

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- ❑ Part-time work defined as <35 hours per week.
- ❑ 45% of employed people in Australia are women.
- ❑ 44% of women work part-time; 16-29 hours most common.
- ❑ 25% of employed women are without paid leave entitlements.
- ❑ Underutilisation rate higher for females than males.
- ❑ underemployment higher for females in part-time work.

# Work in Australia



# The delights and dilemmas of part-time work

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- ❑ Flexibility - but over work and under pay
- ❑ Choice – but under utilised in terms of skill and hours
- ❑ Preference – but structural constraints and care responsibilities
- ❑ Options – but difficult to transition from part-time to full-time; (beware reverse causation effect\*)

# Part-time work: Different for men and women

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- Men – study
- Women – care (for infants and children; sick, disabled and elders).

# Meet 2 academics:

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## Colin

- ❑ Born 1960
- ❑ Married (not to an academic)
- ❑ 30% chance has a full-time working partner
- ❑ 2 children
- ❑ No major career breaks
- ❑ Worked 14 years
- ❑ Full-time – 7% chance being p/t
- ❑ Level D or E

## Cheryl

- ❑ Born 1960
- ❑ Married (not to an academic)
- ❑ 50% chance has a full-time working partner
- ❑ 2 children
- ❑ Number of career breaks – 4 years
- ❑ Worked 11 years
- ❑ 20% chance working part-time
- ❑ Level B or C

# 'Colin and Cheryl' cont.

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- ❑ Work av. 50 hrs per week.
- ❑ Prefer research.
- ❑ Satisfied with academic life.
- ❑ Feel working conditions have deteriorated, but in terms of support staff (secretarial, teaching, research) than physical conditions.
- ❑ Do not recommend the career to young people.
- ❑ Have influence at dept. level, not at institutional level - top-down mgt; cumbersome admin procedures; strong performance orientation.

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# Insights from Colin and Cheryl

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- Different 'ideal workers'.
- Both committed to work – i.e. Cheryl is not 'less committed'.
- But Cheryl, more than Colin, is 'structurally constrained' by
  - household division of labour;
  - career options;
  - social supports.

# International lessons (Gash 2008)

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- ❑ UK, Denmark, France compared.
- ❑ Opportunity structures for both preference formation and attainment vary by nation state.
- ❑ Women with family responsibilities are particularly influenced by national policies and practices which support maternal employment.
- ❑ Preferences are not independent of institutional and policy contexts.
- ❑ Lesson - Importance of social policy!

# Questions to consider

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- How do we make workplaces (and society) more equitable and efficient?
- What do women want in terms of hours of work and type of jobs?
  - Careful research needed - comparative and over time.
- What do women need in terms of employer and state policy support?
  - Interstate and international lessons available.