



T R U S T

success through diversity  
Ahakoa whakaaro kē, ka puta a ihu

# Work & Life

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B U L L E T I N

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He Pānui mō ngā Take Mahi me ngā Take Oranga

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## Fathers in paid work – issues and ideas

The Prime Minister Helen Clark launched the What do kiwi fathers really want? project at this year's EEO Trust Work & Life Awards presentation on September 4, a couple of days before Fathers Day. The project includes:

- an on-line survey to find out what working fathers want,
- an in depth international literature review conducted by Janice Burns of Top Drawer Consultants, and
- a toolkit of options developed by Janice Burns to help workplaces assess and address the needs of fathers.

### What our literature review discovered

*Put simply, what fathers want is the ability to provide for and spend time with their children. Although work is an unquestionably powerful source of male identity and satisfaction, family is equally strong.<sup>1</sup>*

The literature review explored the experience of fathers in paid work and the forces that mitigate for and against fathers being able to balance their work and home lives. It examined reasons why attention should be paid to the issue and some of the possible ways forward for the future.

### Why is "fathers in paid work" an issue?

#### For fathers

There is ample research across jurisdictions confirming that fathers want to spend time (quality and quantity) with their families and want to be partners in parenting with mothers.

#### For mothers

As one commentator says:

"The remarkable surge of women into the labour force has muddied men's roles at home and in the workplace. Expanding women's freedom requires economic and social policies that encourage new patterns of male behaviour... you can't fix gender inequality without fixing men's relationships to the home and their roles as parents."<sup>2</sup>

#### For children

The importance of fathers to children is highlighted by Jan Pryor, psychologist and senior lecturer at Victoria University



(co-author of a report based on 200 British studies involving 10,000 children) on outcomes for children whose parents separate. The report concludes, "Fathers remain very important after separation and an involved relationship with dad really does help children in the long term.

"When kids are asked what they think is the worst thing about separation they say it is losing contact with their fathers."<sup>3</sup>

#### For organisations

The benefits that accrue to organisations of implementing work and life policies and programmes have been well documented and include:

- reduced absenteeism
- increased moral and worker satisfaction with work
- reduced turnover
- increase in return to work after parental leave
- increased loyalty

#### What do fathers do?

The Work and Family Unit (Australia) finds that men access workplace work and family

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policies less than women and suggests that part of this could be due to the different time use patterns of men. Fathers are “less likely to be the ones popping out of the office if the childcare centre rings to say the child is sick”. They suggest this could be related to the way men look after children more generally, which tends to be sporadic and event-based. They feel that working fathers are more likely to structure their time to gain maximum income.<sup>4</sup>

New Zealand material shows that in the first year of the operation of paid parental leave 14,477 people accessed paid leave – 94 (0.065%) of them were men.<sup>5</sup> Tracking this over time will be important.

### **The experiences of fathers in paid work** ***Having “enough” time***

Fathers report wanting to spend more time with their children. There appears to be striking similarities in the desires of mothers and fathers to participate fully in their children’s lives while pursuing work for both personal and financial gain.

In-depth interviews with 47 Melbourne families (27 fathers)<sup>6</sup> found many fathers reported a sense of having to make a choice between work and family time.

However, all

- asserted the importance of spending time with children – for the benefit of the children and their own pleasure
- reported a need for quality and quantity of time
- felt that “just hanging out was important”.

### ***Being stressed***

Research suggests that fathers experience feelings of stress and guilt around aspects of their parenting in ways similar to mothers. Fathers who are more satisfied with their childcare arrangements feel less stressed at work, more satisfied with their role as parents and more satisfied with their life in general.<sup>7</sup>

The need to work shift work has been noted as a significant stress on working fathers.<sup>8</sup> This may be because a lack of control over work schedules has been identified as a strong predictor of stress and a feeling of overload.<sup>9</sup>

### ***Working long or non-standard hours***

A considerable body of research identifies the issue of working long or non-standard hours as impacting on work and family balance and negative work-to-home “spillover”.

In a 1999 study of 1000 Australian fathers conducted by Dr Graeme Russell, respondents were asked what they thought were the barriers to men becoming involved as fathers.

- 57% said workplace factors – they worked an average of 47 hours a week and 33% said they spent an average of 50 hours in paid work

- the majority said they would like to spend less time on paid work
- 66% said they did not spend enough time with their children<sup>10</sup>

These findings are mirrored by the NZCTU research (2000) on working hours<sup>11</sup> and by an extensive survey in the UK.<sup>12</sup> This survey found that while almost everyone thought that balancing work and home lives was important, one in eight employees reported working on both Saturdays and Sundays, and one in five employees work for companies that are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

## **The impact of fathers’ experiences**

### ***Family relationships***

Don Edgar<sup>13</sup> believes the evidence suggests that children usually yearn for more attention from their fathers – even 10 minutes extra a day of father’s attention can produce astonishing results in school grades, self-esteem etc.

However, children can also be remarkably pragmatic. The researcher for an MA in Psychology sent a questionnaire to junior secondary schoolgirls and their fathers in Auckland<sup>14</sup>. Results showed:

- Both fathers and daughters perceived that fathers’ work interfered with family life.
- Daughters whose fathers had the highest workload perceived the greatest work family conflict
- Work family interference was also a predictor of conflict in family functioning which in turn was associated with self-perceived negative affect at school

### ***Why are fathers not accessing family-friendly opportunities?***

A theme throughout the research is the invisibility of fathers in the workplace. Women with children are more likely to be asked about their child-management arrangements<sup>15</sup> (even if these questions may often be inappropriate). For men it seems to be assumed that “the business of children” will be taken care of by someone else.

Men appear to want to be more equal partners in parenting. This has been found to be particularly true for younger men. Research conducted by Radcliffe Public Policy Centre found that having a job schedule that allows for family time is more important to young men than money, power or prestige and that 82% of men aged 20-39 put family time at the top of their list of priorities<sup>16</sup>.

In contrast, recent research by the Social Policy Research Centre<sup>17</sup> (a literature review and case study in two organisations) found that Australian fathers (as with fathers in most other countries) are far less likely than mothers to make use of workplace provisions that could help reconcile the competing demands of work and family life.

### **Are workplaces at fault?**

There is some disagreement in the literature as to why family friendly workplace policies are not being fully utilised by fathers.

Men report that workplace demands and practices are the key barriers to their equal participation in the home and to spending time with their children.<sup>18</sup> They have expressed concern as to the impact that accessing work and family provisions such as flexible hours would have on their career. For example two-thirds of male respondents to the UK Work-life Balance Survey, 2000, said that working part-time would adversely affect their career.

Research suggests that one reason why fathers consider the work and family policies and practices that are available as really being for mothers, or would disadvantage fathers if they used them, is because of the way these policies are being communicated or promoted. Australian research confirms this view.<sup>19</sup> James Levine is convinced that the way to reach fathers is through

technology – communicate with them directly electronically.

### **Are fathers the problem?**

Other research presents a different view as to why men do not access work and life balance policies. The researchers ask whether fathers are erecting the barriers to participation themselves.

In their book,<sup>20</sup> Levine and Pittinsky conclude that, "Quite often fathers limit their own capacity to create change by unknowingly participating in a game called 'blame the culture.' Fathers consider the culture and assume, at best, it is supportive of working mothers. Companies look at the lack of men participating in work life programmes as evidence that balancing work life is a woman's issue."

Other commentators have suggested that. "Stolid machismo, reinforced by workplace norms, prevent many fathers from striking the work-family balance they say they want."<sup>21</sup>

## What do fathers want?

Levine and Pittinsky<sup>22</sup> (USA) talked with fathers who work in operational areas and who do shift work. They said they needed:

- access to paid or carers time
- flexible work arrangements
- an understanding team
- an understanding that families are broader than children and partners

Russell and Llewellyn-Smith<sup>23</sup> (Australia) were told by fathers that they needed greater workplace flexibility and support, and better access to advice and education.

New Zealand research by the Office of the Commissioner for Children<sup>24</sup> supported these findings. Fathers also raised the issues of being able to access leave to be the primary caregiver, time off to care for sick children, time to attend children's activities. They wanted a work environment with family lunch facilities and crèches and leave for fathers to be with their children at these facilities if necessary.

<sup>1</sup>Working Fathers, New Strategies for Balancing Work and Family, James Levine and Todd L Pittinsky, USA 1997

<sup>2</sup>No Turning Back: Generations and Genderquake, Helen Wilkinson, Demos 1994. From an interview with the author.

<sup>3</sup>Reported in Little Treasures, June/July 2000

<sup>4</sup>Quoted in, Working fathers and working mothers – do their needs differ? - Work and Family Insert No 17, August 1998

<sup>5</sup>Information from the Employment Relations Service, Department of Labour. Data refers to July 1 2002 – 30 June 2003

<sup>6</sup>Fathers' views on family and paid work, Kelly Hand and Virginia Lewis, in Family Matters, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Issue 61, Autumn, 2002

<sup>7</sup>Kirby Deater-Deckard, op cit

<sup>8</sup>Fathers' views on family life and paid work, Kelly Hand and Virginia Lewis, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Family Matters Issue 61, Autumn 2002

<sup>9</sup>Thirty Families Interim Report of the 30 Families Project: the Impact of Work Hours on New Zealand Workers and their families, CTU, 2002; Rosalind Barnett, National Institute of Mental Health, cited in Levine and Pittinsky, 1997 op cit

<sup>10</sup>Fitting Fathers into Families – men and the fatherhood role in contemporary Australia, Department of Family and Community Services, January 1999

<sup>11</sup>Thirty Families Interim Report of the 30 Families Project: the Impact of Work Hours on New Zealand Workers and their families, CTU, 2002

<sup>12</sup>Work-life balance Survey 2000, Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick and IFF Research, UK

<sup>13</sup>Don Edgar, Men, Mateship and Marriage, (date?)

<sup>14</sup>The Work-Family Interface – perceptions of adolescent daughters and their fathers, Pamela Sycamore, thesis MA in Psychology, March 2000

<sup>15</sup>Independent Newspaper, July 1997 – "A working father can't be a true man", a report on a paper by Sarah Lewis to the British Psychological Society Conference – Women and Psychology.

<sup>16</sup>Life's Work: Generational Attitudes toward Work and Life Integration, Paula Rayman, Francoise Carre, Leslie Cintron, Shannon Quinn, Radcliffe Public Policy Center, 2000

<sup>17</sup>SPRC research commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services on Father's Uptake of Family-Friendly Workplace Provisions. Initial results presented in SPRC Newsletter, November 2002. Final report not yet published

<sup>18</sup>Fitting Fathers into Families – men and the fatherhood role in contemporary Australia, Department of Family and Community Services, January 1999; The Work-Family Interface – perceptions of adolescent daughters and their fathers, Pamela Sycamore, thesis MA in Psychology, March 2000

<sup>19</sup>SPRC research 2002, op cit

<sup>20</sup>Working Fathers, New Strategies for Balancing Work and Family, James Levine and Todd Pittinsky, USA., 1997

<sup>21</sup>The Daddy Trap – Men face greater expectations at home but work is not giving them the slack they need, article in Business Week, 21 September, 1998 – commenting on the work of Levine at the Work and Family Institute

<sup>22</sup>Working Fathers, New Strategies for Balancing Work and Family, James Levine and Todd Pittinsky, USA., 1997

<sup>23</sup>Working with Fathers where they are: Learnings from the workplace. G Russell and Peter Llewellyn-Smith. Paper presented to the 2nd Australian Conference: Building Family Strengths, December 2001

<sup>24</sup>Fathers Who Care: Partners in Parenting – Fathering in the New Millennium, Rae Julian, Office of the Commissioner for Children, 1999

# EEO Trust survey findings

Eighty percent of fathers generally wish they could spend more time with their children according to the EEO Trust's on-line survey on fathering and paid work. Nearly 1200 New Zealand fathers completed the survey.

Eighty two percent of respondents said their paid work negatively affects the amount of time they spend with their children while 52% said their paid work affects the quality of the time they spend with their children.

The survey asked respondents how their workplace currently helps them be the sort of father they want to be. Having access to a phone so they can contact their family was the most common assistance. While office workers take this for granted, it is a major issue for some workers in other sectors such as retail and manufacturing.

The following table shows the full results of this question. Respondents could tick as many options as they wanted.

<b>Ways workplaces help</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>
Access to phone for contact with your family	890
Flexible start and finish times	680
Flexibility to have time off during the day	630
Sometimes being able to work from home	444
Your senior managers supporting you as a father	285
Being able to work part time or less hours	176
Your senior managers modelling good fathering	127
School holiday programmes	110

Respondents were also asked how they wanted their workplace to help them be the sort of father they wanted to be. Flexibility in terms of start and finish times, sometimes being able to work from home and sometimes being able to take time off during the day were the most popular options. Support to take parental leave entitlements was the next most popular option.

The following table shows the full results of this question. Respondents could tick as many options as they wanted.

<b>Ways workplaces could help</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>
Flexible start and finish times	602
Sometimes being able to work from home	566
Flexibility to have time off during the day	538
Support to take parental leave entitlements	473
Less work pressure	439
Giving you access to a phone so you can be in touch with your family	364
More support from senior management for you as a father	355
Providing a school holiday programme	310
Meetings in core work hours	292
Being able to work part time or less hours	288
Senior managers modelling good fathering	284
Less travelling for work	254
Fine as it is	175
Change of shift	58
None of these would help	25

While most of the men who completed the survey were fathers, 126 were not. Of these, 82% wanted to have children in the future. When asked if they thought they could be sort of father they wanted to be if they stayed in their current job, 55% said no.

## Comments from kiwi dads

*My daughters play hockey which I get great delight in watching as a spectator. I'd like to do a bit more and become a referee or even a coach for one of the teams but I can't. Work commitments make it impossible to leave at 2.30 in the afternoon to make it to school to help coach the team etc.*

*It is possible that I could squeeze the time out with unpaid work but to do this for 20 weeks or so does not go down well!*

*Fathers care. Fathers try and do the best they can (and sometimes get it hopelessly wrong) but what I want as a father to my two children is nothing material (though I do love our tradition of giving me a trout fishing license for fathers day each year) but those times when they show that somehow they recognise the efforts made and my often clumsy attempts at being a father are done through love and wanting the best for them. Nothing is better than the 'Hey dad let's ...'*

*I'm a father and have been for seven years, I had my child when I was 16 years old and I was still at school.*

*"I left school just to find a job.....I've grown into a young man early but still adapting. I wish I could spend more time with my girl but can't get out of work or not enough annual leave, or whatever leave there is.*

*"Reality is some kids don't know their daddy anymore coz he's always at work or trying to impress the boss!!"*

*To me time off is everything, and I think we are pushed more and more into losing our free time to spend with family. After all we did have a family to enjoy their upbringing and to be part of their lives...*

## Workplace toolkit – ideas for workplaces

In order to help organisations discover what fathers want in their workplace, the EEO Trust has developed a toolkit of resources available from [www.eeotrust.org.nz](http://www.eeotrust.org.nz).

The toolkit includes a questionnaire which workplaces can use as is or select questions from, and a discussion checklist to use at team meetings or in focus groups. The checklist may be more appropriate in smaller workplaces or where people prefer verbal communication.

## Snippets...

### Childless couples increase

The July *Jobs Letter* reported that childless couples will become the most common family unit in the next three years. The latest Statistics NZ figures show that from 2006, couples without children will be the most common household unit, displacing two-parent families with one or more children.

Statisticians are predicting that New Zealand will have 614,000 childless couples in 2021, a huge 51% rise from the 407,000 couples today. The rise is partly due to the aging population (couples whose children have left home) and younger people putting off having children.

The *Jobs Letter* said University of Waikato demographer Ian Poole blames "family hostile" policies that are discouraging large numbers of people from having children. "We are not making a reconciliation between family and work – and we are cutting our own throats. We are so goddamned miserly on family policy. Large student-loan debt that encouraged women to work longer, and minimal maternity leave were factors in people putting off having children, or not having them at all."

For more information: [www.jobsletter.org.nz](http://www.jobsletter.org.nz)

# New Zealand's best employers in work and life

Auckland City and Westpac Banking Corporation were joint winners of the Large Organisation category at this year's EEO Trust Work & Life Awards sponsored by Progressive Enterprises and Hesketh Henry. Auckland City also won the Progressive Enterprises Manāki Tangata Innovation Award.

Executive Director of the EEO Trust and one of the awards judges, Trudie McNaughton, says the quality of this year's entries was outstanding. "Over the six years we've been holding the awards, the quality of entries has consistently improved. Work-life initiatives that would once have been seen as very innovative are now included in organisations' workplace provisions as a matter of course. For example, flexible working hours or the ability to work from home occasionally are now standard for many organisations that enter."

Auckland City won the Progressive Enterprises Manāki Tangata Innovation Award with its programme to provide support in the workplace for employees who were experiencing domestic violence.

Auckland City CEO, Bryan Taylor, provided strong support for DVFree. "A good employer should be concerned if an employee is a victim of domestic violence at home. This programme enables our organisation to better respond to people who need help," he said.

Trudie McNaughton says the six entries in the innovation category was well above the previous high of two entries. "These entries demonstrate that workplaces' innovative approach to work-life balance is taking them far beyond the standard menu of work-life initiatives to develop programmes that meet the particular needs of their workplaces and other stakeholders."

Joint winners of the Small to Medium Organisation Award for workplaces of up to 50 people were Phoenix Supported Employment Services from Palmerston North and the Muscular Dystrophy Association which is based in Auckland.

Both organisations provide services to people with disabilities and show an alignment between the organisations' values and their employment policies. Both workplaces recognise the needs of people working in a sometimes emotionally demanding environment with compassionate work-life strategies which support staff and ensure they can give of their best.

Trudie McNaughton says the winners' entries show that effective work-life initiatives are not necessarily related to big budgets. "What they do do is mirror the organisation's values and address the specific needs of the workforce."

Winners of the Walk the Talk category were Phil and Glenys Ker of Auckland University of Technology. Phil Ker is Executive Director of Corporate Services and Glenys is Manager of the Careers Centre. They are married and have four children aged from five to 22.

This is the first time a couple have jointly won the award but the judges recognised that their partnership approach to work-life balance was critical to their personal and professional success.



*Staff from the Muscular Dystrophy Association with their Manāki Tangata Award for innovation.*



*Phil and Glenys Ker with daughter Tara are presented with the Walk the Talk Award by the Prime Minister Helen Clark.*

Joint runners-up of the Walk the Talk were Gagau Annadale-Stone who manages a 24-hour/seven-day a week ANZ call centre and Linda Sewell, Chief Executive of Carter Holt Harvey Futurebuild.

Joint winners of the Hesketh Henry First Steps Awards were Central Hawkes Bay District Council and Stratex Networks (NZ) Ltd.

Central Hawkes Bay District Council is located in Waipawa, near Waipukarau, and employs 37 people. Work-life initiatives were designed to meet a range of employee needs, including ensuring credit was received for extra work undertaken, allowing staff to take time out during the week to make up for extra time worked and allowing staff with children to be able to take them to school.

Stratex Networks (NZ) Ltd is part of Stratex Networks Inc of California. It is based in Lower Hutt and develops and manufactures high performance radio frequency products and network management software solutions.

Stratex Networks employs 127 full-time equivalent staff. There is strong senior management and HR support for flexibility and high levels of staff involvement. Initiatives are partly driven by a social club which is supported by the company

The organisation says the focus on work-life has resulted in improved recruitment with a reduction in average time to fill a vacancy from a high of 80 days down to 40 days, and improved retention with turnover reduced from 19% in 2001 to 10.13% in 2003. Absenteeism levels have reduced by 8% with average sick days per employee per year now 2.9 days.



## Government co-ordinates approach to work-life balance

In August, the government announced the establishment of an integrated work programme to develop family-friendly and other policies promoting work-life balance.

An inter-agency steering group chaired by the Department of Labour has been set up to develop and co-ordinate the work programme.

Labour Minister Margaret Wilson says work-life balance policies and practices could help individuals to improve well-being and more fully use their potential both in work and outside of work. Work-life balance practices could also help employers to increase retention, reduce absenteeism and improve productivity and profitability.

“What is important is the extent to which people have real choices and control over their circumstances. What is also clear is that achieving work-life balance is complicated, and will therefore require different government, employer, individual and community responses,” she says.

EEO Trust Executive Director, Trudie McNaughton, is on the work-life steering group. She says one of the innovative aspects of project is the intention to involve a range of stakeholders.

“The goal of making New Zealand a great place to work and live won’t be achieved by government alone or by workplaces alone. The project will bring together a range of stakeholders as they all have different perspectives and different contributions to make.”

She says a scorecard will be developed to engage discussion on how well New Zealand is doing and to measure progress. The EEO Trust will be involved in consulting with workplaces on the development of the scorecard.

## World Wide

### **Australian employers and work-life balance**

On August 6, Australia's employer body, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), released a national industry policy statement on work and family called *Workplace Relationships and Family Life*.

The ACCI said that work and family was not the number one workplace issue, creating jobs and reducing unemployment is. "But it is a relevant and important issue if we are to continue developing a more flexible, more diverse and more inclusive labour force with more opportunities for entry and participation."

*Workplace Relationships and Family Life* is a guide for industry, by industry. It has been collectively adopted by members of the ACCI Council, comprising 30 of Australia's leading business organisations.

*Workplace Relationships and Family Life* is available at [www.acci.asn.au](http://www.acci.asn.au).

## Research Forum

### **The effects of high performance management practices on work-life balance**

A recent study by White, Hill, McGovern, Mills and Smeaton has examined whether aspects of high performance management practices conflict with work-life balance policies: (2003) 41(2) British Journal of Industrial Relations 175-195.

Comparing data from two surveys of employees in Great Britain, the researchers measured negative job-to-home spillover.

They found that:

- work hours are a critical issue as negative job-to-home spillover increases with additional hours worked
- high performance practices are an important source of negative spillover, even after controlling for working hours
- taking part in a flexible hours system significantly reduced negative spillover for women in 2000, and discretion over hours was linked to a reduction in negative spillover for men.

The researchers suggested that employers should examine their high performance practices and build in safeguards to ensure work-life balance

### **UK research on returning to work after parental leave**

Juliet Bourke and Dr Graeme Russell's July newsletter includes a summary of a UK article examining the role of planning and workplace support in returning to work after parental leave. The article was in the June 2003 edition of the British Journal of Industrial Relations.

The study found that the majority of mothers would prefer not to work full-time and that 24% of respondents were not able to return to work in a manner consistent with their preferences during pregnancy. The three key factors predictive of returning to work as intended are planning, income and workplace support.

For more detail contact [juliet.bourke@workpluslifestrategies.com](mailto:juliet.bourke@workpluslifestrategies.com)

## Upcoming Events

### Children's Day

Sunday October 26 is National Children's Day. This is the fourth year New Zealand has marked Children's Day which aims to see children celebrated, nurtured and treasured by all.

How about having a workplace family event to mark Children's Day – perhaps a picnic on the day or a children's party on the Monday. Go to [www.childrensday.org.nz](http://www.childrensday.org.nz) to find out more.



### Telework seminars

Bevis England of Telework New Zealand advises that Dr John Gundry, UK-based expert in making virtual work and virtual teamwork work well, is coming to Australia and New Zealand in late November to deliver a range of seminars and workshops.

More information at [www.telework.co.nz](http://www.telework.co.nz).

### School holidays 2004

Don't forget to take the school holidays into account when you're planning events for next year.

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