



success through diversity
Ahakoā whakaaro kē, ka puta a ihu

Work & Life

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BULLETIN

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He Pānui mō ngā Take Mahi me ngā Take Oranga

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EEO Trust Work & Life Awards show increased importance of work/life balance

The success of this year's EEO Trust Work & Life Awards demonstrates the momentum that's been generated around work/life issues since the inception of the awards five years ago.

A record number of organisations entered this year's awards and the judges reported that the standard of the entries was even higher than previous years. The private, public and not-for-profit sectors were all represented amongst the entrants. Media and public interest in the awards was also at an all-time high with a sell-out presentation dinner and unprecedented media coverage.

Presenting the awards for the third time, the Prime Minister Rt Hon Helen Clark said she "had made the awards a priority because of the importance of recognising and giving proof of best practice in the workplace in achieving a better work/life balance."

She noted that it was particularly pleasing that nine entries were received in the Small to Medium Organisation category, compared with none last year.

The importance of senior management commitment to work/life balance and of thorough and on-going consultation with workers and their representatives were key themes of this year's entries. For example, Auckland University of Technology Vice-Chancellor, Dr John Hinchcliff, has been influential in encouraging work/life balance. At The Treasury, staff say that chief executive Alan Bollard has influenced a culture transformation through his leadership. AUT and The Treasury were winner and runner-up of the Large Organisation category.

Several of the entrants cited worker and union involvement in the development of their work/life initiatives.



The crèche at the EEO Trust Work & Life Awards was a popular place. Aston Lang (right) drew a picture of the Prime Minister Helen Clark which he was very keen to show her. Executive director of the EEO Trust, Trudie McNaughton, is pictured with Helen Clark and (l-r) Kiera Jones, Alex Jones and Rosemary de Haast.

If you would like information about the Equal Employment Opportunities Trust services or resources, please contact:

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Methanex New Zealand (First Steps joint winner) created a team of workers from throughout the organisation to develop its policies and liaise with the rest of the workforce while ACI Glass Packaging worked in partnership with the Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union.

The winners of the Australian awards, the ACCI National Work & Family Awards, were announced a week after the New Zealand awards presentation. Two organisations featured in both awards. SC Johnson was joint runner-up of the Small Organisation category at the EEO Trust awards and was recognised as a “stunning stayer” at the Australian

awards. It won the Medium Business category at the Australian awards last year.

UDC Finance was again a strong entrant in this year’s EEO Trust awards, while its parent, the ANZ Banking Group, was highly commended in the Large Business category of the Australian awards.

Joint winners of the Large Business category at the Australian awards were IBM Australia and the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Studies. IBM Australia was awarded the Gold Award for overall outstanding achievement.

More details at www.workplace.gov.au



New Zealand commercial director, Colin O'Callaghan, represented SC Johnson at the awards. The company was also recognised at the Australian awards a week later.

EEO Trust Work & Life Awards Winners

First Steps Award

Joint winners - Methanex New Zealand Ltd and Kapiti Coast District Council

Small to Medium Organisation (fewer than 50 employees)

Winner - Netball New Zealand

Runners-up - SC Johnson and Bakers and Pastrycooks Union

Large Organisation

Winner - Auckland University of Technology

Runner-up – The Treasury

Walk The Talk

Joint winners - Donella Parker, Principal, R Cubed Global Ltd

And Gary Allis, Community Assets Group Manager, Waikato District Council

Manaaki Tangata Innovation Award

Winner - Te Utuhina Manaakitanga Trust (Addiction Resource Centre)

Highly commended - Ama School

Work hours, workers and their families: a difficult equation

In 2001 the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions initiated The Thirty Families study to investigate the effects of long hours and non-standard hours on workers and their lives. Thirty Families Project: The Impact of Work Hours on New Zealand Workers and their Families is the interim report from the study.

The Thirty Families research project was modeled on similar research carried out in Australia in 2001 called *Fifty Families: What unreasonable hours are doing to Australians, their families and their communities*.

Several studies in New Zealand (see particularly *Around the Clock: findings from the New Zealand time use survey 1998-99*, Statistics New Zealand and the Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2001) had already established that patterns of work were changing for men and women. But while these studies are beginning to quantify changes in the New Zealand workplace, there has been little focus on the qualitative effects of such changes on individuals and their families and communities.

For the Thirty Families study, 40 primary interviews were carried out with workers and their partners across a range of ages, ethnicities and industries. After establishing the number and pattern of hours worked by participants, the study then investigated the reasons why people work long hours, the impacts on individual workers, the impacts on their families, and specific issues for women.

The long-hours culture

The people interviewed worked a range of hours, from those who could not get enough regular work hours to one who regularly worked 80 hours or more a week. Half worked between 40 and 50 hours per week and, for these workers, as well as for those who worked 50 to 60 hours per week, the gap between hours contracted and hours worked was marked.

For some, the advent of communications technology meant the boundaries between work and home time were increasingly blurred, with the expectation from employers that workers would be available to contact

in the evenings and weekends.

Another issue for a significant number of workers was the lack of breaks during the day. Nearly three quarters of interviewees did not take regular breaks or rests, even through a ten-hour day.

What are the reasons for these patterns of work? Although for some workers their long hours were a matter of individual choice, usually motivated by the monetary reward of paid overtime, or by commitment to the job, many felt trapped and without real choice. Even those who loved their jobs or were strongly committed to serving students, patients or the public, sometimes felt that the length of their work hours was at a high cost to themselves and their families, and that their loyalty to the people they served was taken advantage of by employers.

Long work hours were often the result of understaffing; where staff had left and not been replaced, or where the workload had increased but the staffing levels had remained the same. And many felt that unless they complied with the long-hours culture in their workplace they would be branded poor workers, be denied promotion or other benefits, or even lose their job. In some workplaces, participation in out-of-hours activities such as sports teams or voluntary work was expected, and a failure to participate would be seen as "letting the side down".

In some instances, the nature of the job appeared to require long work hours for some periods, with downtime and under-employment at others. Such was the case in the dairy industry, in forestry and horticulture, and also in the theatre business. Workers in these industries felt there was little to be done about the pattern of long hours since it was implicit in the very nature of the work.

The effects of working long hours

One of the most common effects reported by participants in the study was the work/eat/sleep cycle. They felt there was no time in their life for anything other than the constant round of working, eating and sleeping. Some reported feeling lost and aimless on the rare occasions they had some time to themselves, a result of letting friendships, social contacts and recreational activities lapse.

Mental and physical health problems also resulted from the fatigue and stress of working long hours. Physical symptoms such as high blood pressure, constant tiredness, poor sleeping patterns and vulnerability to illness, and psychological symptoms such as depression and moodiness were reported.

Effects on families

The effect on families was particularly marked. For some the extra money brought in by one or both parents working long hours was positive, allowing mortgages to be paid off, childcare or children's activities such as sports gear or school trips to be paid for, or family holidays to be taken. But for most, the impact of long or irregular hours on partners and children, as well as other family relationships was negative. Time to spend with family was not only limited but often of poor quality, marred by stress, bad moods, tiredness, short tempers and the effects of general exhaustion.

Time with children was often snatched between or during the functional activities of the household, and some parents struggled to keep up with the details of their children's friendships and school lives.

For partners too, long work hours meant a lack of quality time and the loss of intimacy. Many couples reported frequent arguments because there was little time to talk things through or develop the relationship.

Double shifts for women

For some women the effects of working long or difficult hours were compounded by the extra work of childcare and housekeeping. Those whose partners worked long hours

frequently took on the majority of parenting and household tasks. Many women reported that, in effect, they were like single mothers, running a household single-handed, filling the roles of both mother and father, and often also fitting this in around work.

Many women faced difficult choices around the balance of career and family. Those whose partners worked long hours frequently adapted their career plans to fit in with their partners' work, and were likely to take time out of the workforce to raise the children. As a result women's careers sometimes flourished later in life, after their children were grown up, and just as their partners' careers were winding down.

The study concludes that, in spite of the success of some workers in reducing their work hours by taking such steps as changing jobs, going part-time or taking demotions, many feel they are powerless to change their conditions.

In Australia, the Fifty Families study, which came to similar conclusions to the Thirty Families research, was a key piece of evidence in a test case taken to the Australian Industrial Relations Commission. The Australian Council of Trade Unions, which brought the case, aimed to have guidelines on excessive hours of work included in award conditions.

The Commission awarded a more limited test case provision than that sought by the ACTU. The Commission agreed that employees should not have to work unreasonable overtime and provided guidance on whether overtime hours are "unreasonable", taking into account the needs of the workplace as well as the effects of the hours on the employee.

Non-standard working arrangements: choices and constraints

Eva McLaren writes about recent research into non-standard work arrangements undertaken by herself and other Massey University researchers.

The regulation of paid employment and the importance of such employment as a basis for participation in society seemed a relatively simple matter not so long ago. Normally, paid work was performed at the employer's workplace and was mediated by a regular direct relationship between employer and employee. People worked about 40 hours a week and their pay was generally sufficient to provide for a family. This standard job also determined the rules regulating terms of employment and industrial relations.

As a great deal of labour market literature and data attests, this situation has changed and continues to do so. Employers and employees are increasingly engaged in alternative forms of work as standard jobs are being eroded and non-standard working arrangements are emerging. Thus, instead of working full-time for a single employer with the assumption of ongoing employment, there is a growing trend towards self-employment, part-time work, irregular hours that vary and less continuity of job tenure such as casual and fixed-term engagement.

A complex web of relationships and arrangements emerge because of the numerous exchanges among individuals, teams and employers. Depending on the definition of non-standard work, estimates of jobs that are non-traditional range between 25% and 50%.

Issues for knowledge workers

Non-standard workers are a disparate group of people with different labour market capacities and outcomes. While the experiences of the more economically disadvantaged, marginalized individuals are examined in phase two of our research programme, research completed in

phase one focused on a group of 40 people (19 men and 21 women) in the greater Auckland area in diverse, non-standard working arrangements with either knowledge and/or technology components to their work. The largest group were in the 35-45 age bracket (53%). Sixty percent held university or polytechnic qualifications and 27 (67.5%) of those interviewed had been born in New Zealand.

The aim of this research was to inform our understanding of changing work arrangements. More specifically, the objectives included:

- examining the significance of changing work arrangements;
- exploring individuals' perceptions and experiences of working in a non-standard way; and
- identifying the implications of changing work patterns:
 - for the household of a member working in non-standard ways;
 - for education and training; and
 - on local, regional and national policy.

Benefits and disadvantages

The many themes that emerged reflected the relatively privileged, skilled and qualified composition of the sample and chiefly relate to the self-management of work/non-work relations and issues. Choice, flexibility and autonomy are identified as important gains in the shift to non-standard work but they bring a blurring of the boundaries that previously existed between work and home and between private and public spheres. The scope for self-management of time and space/location increases significantly, with obvious benefits, but also a range of disadvantages, or at least issues that need to be more consciously managed.

We did not make gender a major focus of our study. However, the men we interviewed talked about the importance of non-work relations and responsibilities, but they were still less likely than the women to indicate how

these were accommodated alongside work commitments.

Rather than gendered group patterns, our interviewees provided us with a picture of highly individualised, context and work specific responses to their work and other aspects to their lives. We would argue that participants who engaged mainly in home-based work demonstrate that a new paradigm is emerging that individualises work patterns and relationships.

Some policy considerations

While many of the participants wanted less rather than more regulation, the challenge in a regulatory framework is to adequately reflect the current employment mix by accommodating the greater flexibility and diversity that non-standard work arrangements bring.

There is also a need to balance the desire for less regulation of the boundaryless or voluntary non-standard worker with the need to ensure the well-being of the most contingent non-standard worker. Even when minimum entitlements and protection exist, non-standard workers tend to be overlooked as they fall outside the mainstream of employment relations. One recent example is the paid parental leave scheme. Eligibility is currently confined to those in paid employment for ten or more hours per week for a year before the due birth or adoption of the child. This might exclude the non-standard worker who is working part-time or on a casual basis.

More information needed

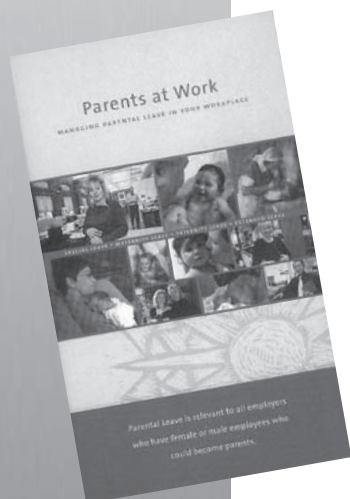
Increasingly it is becoming evident that the available statistics provide only a limited contribution to effectively portraying and understanding the labour market. The burgeoning numbers of workers who are engaged in derivative working arrangements reinforce the need for an expanded range of labour market indicators to give a more accurate reflection of the current labour market trends.

The importance of skills and the increasing relevance of a more flexible and responsive learning system, given greater participation in alternative working arrangements, creates challenges to the education system. Furthermore, the increased incidence of flexible, derivative work forms and externalising activities has implications for workplaces and strategies of staffing practices.

Our study, albeit limited in scope, appears to confirm that the non-standard working arrangements of workers with higher order task discretion do indeed increase worker satisfaction. The amicable blending of work-leisure-home domains, however, depends not only on prevailing social structures, but also on personalities and abilities to devise effective strategies of self-management that minimise their own work/non-work conflicts. For those outside this group of skilled workers, however, the implications could be far-reaching with potential threats to sustainable employment and family well-being.

This research has been funded by the Foundation for Science, Research and Technology via the Public Good Science Fund. The Labour Market Dynamics Research Team is led by Paul Spoonley and includes Patrick Firkin, Ann Dupuis, Anne de Bruin, Eva McLaren, Rolf Cremer, John Overton and Hector Perera. A copy of their report, *Non-Standard Work: Alternative Working Arrangements Amongst Knowledge Workers*, can be downloaded from www.lmd.massey.ac.nz.

Resources for parents and employers of parents



Parents at Work

This 20-minute training video has been created to tell employers about their rights and responsibilities under the Parental Leave and Employment Protection (Paid Parental Leave) Amendment Act 2002.

It is full of practical information for workplaces and covers:

- Managing parental leave in your workplace
- The paid parental leave scheme, including eligibility criteria and entitlements
- What types of leave can my employees apply for?
- How does PPL affect my employment agreements?
- Do I have to keep the job open? (including a discussion of 'key positions')
- How can I successfully manage parental leave within my business?

The video uses role play sketches, practical case study examples, vintage film footage and interviews with employers and other commentators to outline the law and show how paid parental leave can be successfully implemented in workplaces.

Commentators include the EEO Trust's Trudie McNaughton, Anne Knowles of Business NZ and the Human Right's Commission's Lana Hart. Companies talking about their experiences, including the business benefits of paid parental leave, include Stagecoach, Westpac Trust, Strategy Recruitment, Bendon Ltd and Auckland University of Technology.

Wider issues are also discussed, including sharing leave between partners, keeping in touch during leave, discrimination on the basis of pregnancy and family status, recruitment and retention, returning to work, flexible working and breastfeeding support.

Although targeted at employers, *Parents at Work* also outlines employees' parental leave rights and

responsibilities, and would be a useful tool for staff information and training.

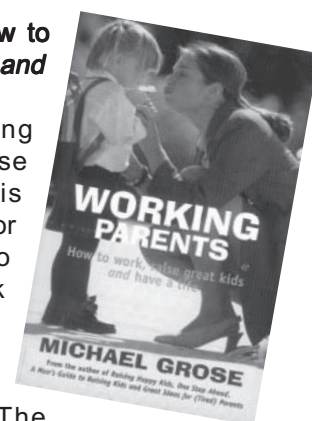
Parents at Work is produced by Educational Resources, and is available from the EEO Trust for \$62 incl GST, email admin@eetrust.org.nz or phone 09 525 3023.

Working parents: How to work, raise great kids and have a life

Australian parenting expert Michael Grose has produced this practical handbook for working parents who are juggling their work and family lives. He starts by quoting US work/family expert Ellen Galinsky: "The problem (as parents) is not **that** we work; it is **how** we work", and the rest of the book focuses on how parents can more effectively combine working with parenting. Tips and tools focus on time management and planning, health and wellness, and family-friendly and flexible working (including working at home).

As a father, Michael Grose is careful not to overlook the challenges for working dads. The only problem with useful books like this is that working parents probably don't have the time to read them. But for those short of time, each chapter ends with summarised Main Points and Action Steps, and there are brief management and parenting plans to complete in the appendix. Employers will find this book useful if they are working parents themselves, or to better understand and support employees with family responsibilities.

Working Parents is published by Random House Australia (ISBN 1 74051 027 5) and is available from bookshops, 249 pages, price \$27.95. Michael Grose's website is at www.Parentingideas.com.au



Please Read On...

OSCAR Legal Resource Kit

An extended and updated version of the OSCAR legal resource kit is now available to provide a complete picture of the law regarding out of school care. The kit is 70 pages long (30 more than the first edition) and includes a section on how the law safeguards children. Tel: 09 366 0320.

Cost of turnover calculator

Many people developing work/life balance initiatives find that an understanding of turnover costs can be useful in arguing for the value of the initiatives. The Australian Equal Opportunities for Women in the Workplace Agency has developed a web-based tool to calculate the costs of staff turnover. Research shows that labour turnover costs can range from 50% to 130% of an incumbent's salary with an exponential rise if the employee has a high degree of impact on company decisions. To calculate the cost of turnover in your workplace go to www.eowa.gov.au and do a search for "calculator". Click on Costing Turnover Calculator.

Website for carers

If you, your colleagues or your employees have caring responsibilities, a new website could be useful. www.carers.net.nz brings together health and disability information for carers and their friends. It provides easy access to resources, such as on-line government forms, and information on the organisations that provide support for carers. www.carers.net.nz was developed by Carers New Zealand as part of a suite of new disability services funded by the Ministry of Health.

Australian benchmarking survey

For a summary of findings of the annual Australian benchmarking survey of work/life initiatives go to www.worklifebalance.com.au. Key findings include: participating organisations say that after introducing work/life strategies they reduced staff turnover by an average of 3.7%, reduced absenteeism by an average of 3%, and increased the return rate from parental leave by an average of 23%.

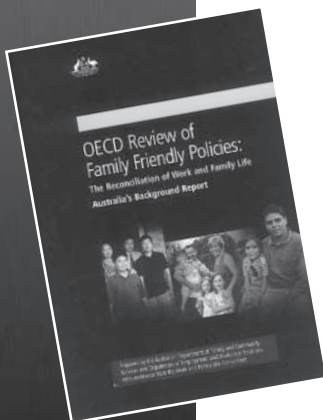
Australia prepares for OECD work

In preparation for Australia's participation in the OECD review of policies to support work/family balance, two government agencies have just launched a review of family friendly policies in Australia. The report gives an overview of policies and programmes that support people to reconcile their work and family responsibilities.

It concludes that there is a significant level of support for families, allowing them to make choices about how they manage their work and family responsibilities.

OECD Review of Family Friendly Policies: The reconciliation of work and family life
www.facs.gov.au, www.workplace.gov.au or www.oecd.org.

carersnetnz



Funding for work/life balance research available

The Future of Work (FoW) Research Fund is accepting requests for research funding with the deadline for submissions on 1 October 2002.

The FoW programme aims to gather, produce and disseminate non-partisan information to enable people involved in the world of work to plan better for the future.

A total of \$150,000 is available in the 2002/03 financial year for research that assists in building a future-focused knowledge base about the nature of work and working in New Zealand. This knowledge base will be relevant and useful across society, not just for policymakers.

The funded research will be associated with:

- The evolution of skills and occupations
- Labour force participation rates
- Work/life balance issues
- Economic growth and labour market outcomes

Collaborative projects and projects covering more than one theme are encouraged and the project is particularly interested in sponsoring proposals which investigate how these issues impact Maori labour market outcomes.

For more information contact William Dillingham of the Labour Market Policy Group on 04 915 4561 or william.dillingham@lmpg.dol.govt.nz.

Work, family and parenting study

The Ministry of Social Development is embarking on a work, family and parenting study which will focus on work as one key influence on family functioning and parenting in New Zealand. The study is supported by funding from the Departmental Contestable Research Pool administered by the Ministry of Research Science and Technology.

The aim of the study is to increase what is known about how the paid work life of women and men impacts on family life (including impact on children and parenting) and how women and men manage the interface between family life and paid work life. The results from the study will assist policy makers, employers, employees and unions to develop policies, practices and programmes which can assist and support people to manage the family life/paid work life interface in ways that are likely to benefit children in New Zealand.

Work has begun on a scan of the literature and available New Zealand data, specifying the objectives for the study, and developing a detailed research design. Data collection, analysis and reporting will be undertaken during 2003. It is planned that the final research report for the study will be available early in 2004.

A reference group of experts, including EEO Trust executive director, Trudie McNaughton, will advise and support the research team in the ministry to develop, design and undertake the research.

The programme leader for this project is Nicolette Edgar at the Ministry of Social Development. If you would like to be kept informed about this study, e-mail nicolette.edgar001@msd.govt.nz.

Upcoming Events

Celebrate Children's Day

October 27 is the national day for children. The key messages of Children's Day this year are giving time and new experiences, with a theme of "how we help grow a healthy environment that will support children in their development."

Children's Day is an opportunity for workplaces to celebrate children and families, perhaps with a family picnic or a children's party at the workplace. October 27 is a Sunday so it could be worth thinking about how employees who work Sundays can celebrate the day. More information at www.childrensday.org.nz.



Plan around school holidays

The calendar below gives details of next year's school holidays so you can plan meetings, training sessions and other events to ensure they don't clash with holidays. And don't forget your local Anniversary Day. Just a reminder that you're welcome to send the *Work & Life Bulletin* to others in your workplace so they can think about planning 2003 around the school holidays.

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