

# FAMILY-FRIENDLY WORK PRACTICES

Differences within and between workplaces



Matthew Gray & Jacqueline Tudball



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## Esso and Mobil

Esso Australia Pty Ltd and Mobil Oil Australia Pty Ltd are pleased to support the publication of the *Family-Friendly Work Practices* report.

Esso and Mobil have an ongoing commitment to family-supportive work practices, and a tradition of supporting community projects that aim to enhance the quality and character of life in the communities where the companies operate.

Research projects such as this report by the Australian Institute of Family Studies are one of the target areas for Esso and Mobil's Contributions Program, together with safety, environment and education.

In addition to the provision of child care facilities and child care and elder care referral services, paid maternity leave, and various programs supporting individual fitness and wellbeing, Esso and Mobil were recently declared a "Best Employer for Women" in Australia, awarded by the Equal Employment Opportunity for Women in the Workforce Agency.

# Foreword

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The publication of this report by the Australian Institute of Family Studies, which focuses on the availability of family-friendly work arrangements in Australian workplaces, is sponsored by Esso Australia and Mobil Oil Australia. This support follows Esso's previous sponsorship of earlier Institute research on achieving integration in work and family life.

I am pleased to be able to take this opportunity to thank Esso and Mobil for their interest in the Institute's work, and for their generous financial assistance.

One of the major economic and social changes of recent decades has been the large increases in the numbers of mothers in paid employment. While the higher rates of employment have apparently increased the choices regarding work and family that are available to women, this has often come with increased responsibility. Women are still most often the primary care-givers and house-workers as well as having additional responsibilities to an employer and workplace.

A consequence of these changes has been an increasing recognition of the importance of family-friendly work arrangements in assisting parents to balance work and family responsibilities. There is also recognition that if employers are to introduce family-friendly work arrangements then these must lead to increased competitiveness and profitability.

The Australian Institute of Family Studies has a long history of research in the area of work and family and in particular family-friendly work practices. Research has focused both on employers and employees, but the research in this report, prepared by Matthew Gray and Jacqueline Tudball, is the first which combines information from employers and employees and therefore provides a unique perspective on the incentives and constraints employers face when deciding which work practices to make available to which employees.

This research is the first large-scale analysis of the extent to which employees within organisations in Australia have differential access to a range of family-friendly work practices. The findings presented in this report raise important questions about the extent to which family-friendly work practices are being provided to the employees who need them the most.

David I. Stanton  
Director  
Australian Institute of Family Studies

# Contents

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Foreword	vi
Acknowledgments	ix
About the authors	ix
<b>Summary</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Family-friendly work practices</b>	<b>3</b>
Work arrangements analysed	3
Control over start and finish times	3
Access to a telephone for family reasons	3
Availability of permanent part-time employment	3
Type of leave used for the care of a sick family member	3
Brief introduction to the literature	4
Employee needs and preferences	4
Employer rationales or incentives	4
The determination of access to family-friendly work practices	4
<b>3. The institutional context</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4. Data</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5. Differences within and between workplaces</b>	<b>11</b>
<i>Within</i> versus <i>between</i> workplace variation	11
Variation within workplaces	13
<b>6. Modelling the determinants of access to family-friendly work practices</b>	<b>17</b>
Estimation method and model specification	17
Results	19
Control over start and finish times	20
Access to a telephone for family reasons	21
Availability of permanent part-time work	23
Overall patterns and implications	24
<b>7. Concluding comments</b>	<b>25</b>
Appendices	26
Endnotes	36
References	38

## List of tables

Table	1. Variance in family-friendly work practices, overall, within and between workplaces	12
	2. Determinants of access to family-friendly work practices, marginal effects of key variables	22

## List of figures

Figure	1. Distribution of <i>within workplace</i> variation in control over start and finish times	14
	2. Distribution of <i>within workplace</i> variation in access to telephone for family reasons	14
	3. Distribution of <i>within workplace</i> variation of availability of permanent part-time work	15
	4. Distribution of <i>within workplace</i> variation in types of leave usually taken to care for a sick family member	15

## List of appendices

Appendix	A. Family-friendly work arrangements employed by firms	27
	B. Variable definitions	28
	C. Distribution of <i>within workplace</i> variation in access to family-friendly work practices	31
	D. Variable means and standard deviations	32
	E. Random effects (RE) probit estimates	33
	F. Conditional logit estimates	35

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