

It's About Time:
Key findings from the
women, men, work and
family project



Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission



Time pressures

“It [time pressure] is having a huge impact on children. Fundamentally there is less time ... now you are not only time poor ... you are also bugged.”

(Community consultation,
Perth)



Time pressures

“ How can a woman work with four weeks leave and have kids at school which has 12-14 weeks leave – it is clearly impossible”
(Submission 176)



“I end up doing the bulk
of the unpaid work at
home because my
husband ... gets home
at 7-7.30”

(Focus group 4)



“I get accused of being an absentee father even when I’m at home, as I’m ‘still at work’.”

(Focus group 9)

“I looked for a part time, three day a week job but I couldn’t find it. I’m envious of the time she spends with our baby.”

(Focus group 10)



“My dad sometimes has to work on weekends and doesn’t spend that much time at home because he is a manager ... I wish I could see him a bit more on the weekdays.”

(Focus group 15)



A new framework for meeting paid work & family responsibilities

- allows for changes in caring needs and responsibilities across the life cycle;
- addresses equality between men and women; and
- reflects a “shared work – valued care” approach (Appelbaum et al, 2002)



Striking the balance in the home

“... I believe that equity in parenthood doesn't exist and from my experience, I will only be having as many children as my mum and I can cope with!”

(Submission 13)



“... it was humbling and at times humiliating to be a stay at home father. I found my self socially isolated and lonely....”

(Submission 58)



Signs of change

“I want to be more involved with my child’s life.”

(Focus group 16)

“Even when I was ... working full time I always left work early one day a week to pick the kids up from school to spend the afternoon with them.”

(Focus group 16)



“I’m a part time parent, I work 3 days a week, and my daughter’s mother also works a three day week as well ... I want to encourage men to ask for ‘sharing the load’ ... No father should miss out on this time.”
(Submission 4)



Education & cultural change

“Role modeling can have an impact – the more men doing the primary care the more they see it as ok to do.”

(Community consultation, Hobart)



Caring for family members other than children

“I was looking after my mother for a year, after my father died. My two brothers didn't help look after mum. One brother was overseas and the other brother would visit once a month or call me to go around and see her.”

(Focus group 2)



The relationship between workplaces and care

“... We need to link unpaid caring work with paid employment and to draw attention to the extent to which the economy depends on unpaid caring work to subsidise paid work.”

(Submission 98)



Certainty and flexibility in the workplace

“Insecure, unreliable casual
employment is corrosive to
family life”

(Submission 161)

“If you make life difficult
that does have an impact
on productivity and
retention”

(Male middle manager, Focus
group 9)



Structural changes to support gender & carer equality

- Leave entitlements
- Quality part time work
- Improved pay equity
- Cultural change in the workplace



Expanded legal rights: Paid Maternity leave

The Australian Government as a matter of priority introduce a national, government funded scheme of paid maternity leave of 14 weeks at the level of the federal minimum wage
[Recommendation 13]



Expanded legal rights: paid and unpaid carer's leave

- That the Personal/Carer's Leave Standard be increased from 10 days to 20 days per annum with 10 days to be non-accumulative

[Recommendation 15a]

- That the Australian Government consider introducing a new 12 month unpaid Carer's Leave Standard for employees who need to care for a seriously or terminally ill dependent. This new standard should be job protected and available to employees who have 12 months continuous service

[Recommendation 15b]



Expanded legal rights: a new Act

- *Family Responsibilities and Carers' Rights Act*

- a right to request flexible work arrangements due to family/carer responsibilities

- Encompasses all forms of carer responsibilities and available to men and women workers of all age

[Recommendation 4]



Further information

It's About Time Final Paper
available at

www.humanrights.gov.au/

Send feedback to
its.about.time@humanrights.gov.au

