

October 2015

## AUSSIE WORKERS FAILING AT FLEXIBLE WORKING

Australia's long-awaited flexible working revolution is being stifled with employees failing to negotiate flexible conditions, despite 70 per cent claiming it would improve their work life balance, according to new Officeworks research.

The national study<sup>2</sup> found that almost 80 per cent of Australians who don't currently work flexibly have never asked their employer to do so because they don't believe it's possible in their role (51%) or they fear it would stop them getting promoted and affect their performance rating (32%).

And even within workplaces that offer flexible working, nearly four in ten employees are declining the opportunity with almost 40 per cent seeing it as leading to reduced productivity.

While mums of young children are seen as the stereotypical flexible worker, the study revealed that men (65%) are in fact more likely to be working flexibly than women (59%).

Officeworks spokesperson Dr Timothy Sharp of the Happiness Institute said non-traditional working practices needed a major rebrand.

"Flexible working has many benefits for the wider population, not just for parents of small children, so it's important that both employers and employees move away from the misconception that working flexibly means less productivity.

"The Officeworks research revealed that having access to the necessary tools to work flexibly is vital. These tools, combined with the right support, will ensure Australians can have a more balanced working life," said Dr Sharp.

To help employees achieve a better work life balance, Officeworks is focusing on offering products and tips that make working on the go easier.

Other key research findings include:

- Employees located in Queensland are mostly likely (69%) to be offered flexible working conditions, followed equally by Victoria, South Australia and the Northern Territory (65%) – Western Australians were least likely at 59%
- Uptake of flexible working practises is most common in the Northern Territory (67%), followed by New South Wales (including the ACT) and Queensland (63%)
- Those in arts and media are least likely to be working flexibly, with those in sports, automotive/engineering and construction the most likely
- Flexible workplaces tend to have a skew towards younger employees, yet older workers appear to be able, or more motivated, to negotiate flexible working conditions

- Australians who earn between \$90,000-\$120,000 are most likely to enjoy flexible work practices

For advice and guidance on how to work flexibly, visit [officeworks.com.au/workwise](http://officeworks.com.au/workwise)

– ENDS –

<sup>1</sup>**Flexible working** refers to the range of options available to get work done outside of standard conditions, such as versatile start and finish times, working from home and differing patterns of work such as split-shifts or job sharing.

<sup>2</sup>**Symphony Analytics and Research** conducted among 1,000 Australians (aged 18-65 years of age) who partake in full-time or self-employed work. Fieldwork took place between 21— 27 September 2015.

**For further information, imagery or interview opportunities, please contact**

Elise Erwin at Haystac:

[elise.erwin@haystac.com.au](mailto:elise.erwin@haystac.com.au) | 03 9693 6320 | 0419 131 192

**About Officeworks:**

Established in Richmond in 1994, Officeworks is Australia's leading retailer and supplier of office products and solutions for home, business and education needs. With three easy ways to shop - in store, online or by phone, you'll be sure to find exactly what you need with our widest range, when you need, and all at the lowest prices. Plus, you'll enjoy friendly expert advice and helpful services. Named Power Retail's Top Online Retailer of 2014, Officeworks offers customers more than 20,000 products on its new and improved [website](#), which is its largest trading store, and operates a national call-centre and a team of expert account managers to cater for micro, small and medium business customers. As part of the Wesfarmers' group, Officeworks has an extensive national footprint operating more than 153 retail stores and employing more than 6,000 team members. Together with Bunnings, Officeworks forms the Home Improvement and Office Supplies division within Wesfarmers. Join Officeworks' online communities on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#). For content visit Officeworks' [Work Wise](#) hub which offers big ideas for working smarter or its [Work Style](#) hub for inspiring ways to work.