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Gender pay gap figures show merit of flexible working arrangements

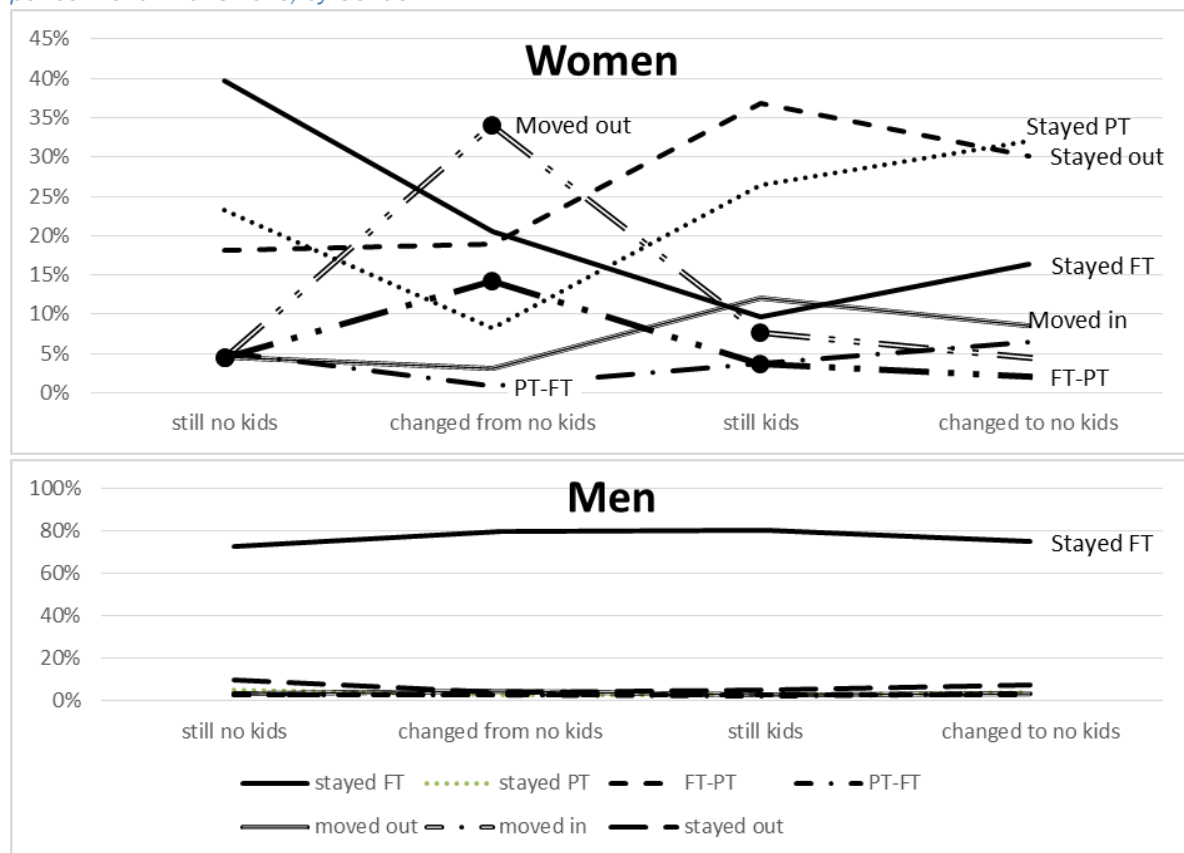
The Workplace Gender Equality Agency scorecard released today shows that flexible work arrangements like those outlined in the ACTU's Family Friendly Test Case are being adopted by a wide range of employers, despite warnings from the business lobby that this would cause huge damage to the economy.

The scorecard shows that 68.3% of employers surveyed have a policy to allow people with caring responsibilities to move into and out of casual or part time work, but much more remains to be done.

Only a quarter of workplaces which have a flexibility policy have manager training to help implement that policy, and until flexible working arrangements are available in all workplaces, women will be left worse off.

A survey conducted by the ACTU earlier this year shows that 85% of Australians have some form of caring responsibility. The lack of secure flexibility in workplaces forces women to exit and re-enter the workforce as their caring responsibilities change (see graph below). Enshrining secure flexibility in working arrangements, in the award system, would enable women to stay in the workforce for longer, and minimise lost earnings.

Employment Transitions Across Household Situations Associated with Parenthood in HILDA, 2001-2015, per cent of all transitions, by Gender



Austen, S, The Effects of Parenthood and other Care Roles on Men's and Women's Labour Force Participation and Experiences of Paid Work, May 2017, at p 25

The Family Friendly Test Case currently before the Fair Work Commission argues that flexible working arrangements should be enshrined in the modern awards system, in order to make them available for all people.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Ged Kearney:

“The scorecard released today shows that the Turnbull Government is being left behind in finding solutions for working women. We need national action now.”

This scorecard shows how far we still have to go to achieve pay equality.”

“The full time pay gap stands at more than \$26,000, women are under-represented in management, and even in new appointments to management positions.”

“Despite the increasing number of companies which are taking action to address the pay gap, the Turnbull Government has been silent on this issue.”

“The Turnbull Government has taken Australia backwards in female representation in cabinet and on the back bench, cut penalty rates and opposed paid leave for people experiencing family and domestic violence.”

“Keeping women in work for as long as possible is crucial to closing the gender pay gap. Secure Flexible work arrangements must be enshrined in the awards.”

“Almost all Australians have caring responsibilities, but they fall most heavily on women, and the ACTU has a simple and effective solution to this problem which could be implemented tomorrow and would instantly start to minimise wages lost to time out of the work force.”

ENDS

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